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Correlates of War and Sino Revisionism

Douglas Sanders

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Correlates of War and Sino Revisionism

by

Douglas Sanders

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2020

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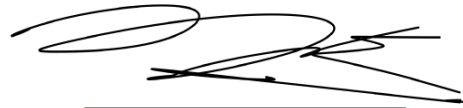

Douglas Sanders
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College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences


This dissertation was submitted by Douglas Sanders under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to those that have had the greatest impact on my life. To my wife Kim, you are the best person I know. To my children, Douglas and Chloe, you are the reason I exist. To my mother Althea, you are the strongest person I know. To my dear sister Elizabeth, you are truly missed. To the men and women that I have served with, who defend this great nation, you are the true burden bearers.

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Lastly, there are two organizations that must be recognized. Not only is the U.S. Marine Corps a premier warfighting institution, but also a learning one. Throughout my 24-year career as Marine, the importance of life-long learning was imbued upon me. This principle instilled the courage in me to take the ultimate step and pursue the doctorate. The Faculty and Staff of the Department of Conflict Resolution Studies is the other organization. Their professionalism and patience indeed made the difference. No question was too small, and no request was too big for this august group.

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Abstract

Some conflict resolution and national security professionals contend there is no shortfall of qualitative research on Asia, China, Realism, or war. That said, this doctoral dissertation has two overarching purposes: first, an empirical study of interstate conflict at the regional and systematic levels. Second, is to examine the extent to which the Correlates of War covariates associated with the People's Republic of China's revisionist strategies. Combining these objectives led to the formulation of the main research question: What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia? Realism contends that strong national capability and displays of military resolve guarantees safety. A counterargument, provided by the steps-to-war (STW) theory, is these power politics increases the chances of war. This dissertation empirically explores the latter by examination of 461 dispute dyads that cover a fifty-year period, an inductive statistical method was used to determine the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionism. Although there were several research findings, three are indeed salient: 1) There was no statistical evidence that the STW theory, territorial revisions, rivalry, alliance-making, or arms races increase war onset chances; 2) When war onset was substituted for low-intensity interstate violence as an outcome variable, there was strong empirical evidence that the Correlates of War were statistical significant; and 3) China was essentially interstate war-adverse, but violence-prone. In short, this scientific study of war expanded the correlation knowledge of war onset, particularly in Asia.

Chapter 1: Introduction

War, the military clash of imposing wills is the greatest calamity in human endeavors. Its conduct is riddled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and lethality. The outcomes are often momentous, having imposed exuberantly high economic and moral costs on the belligerents. History is filled with empires, great powers, and even minor states that fell victim to this scourge of humankind, and therefore no longer exist. Yet, despite these known facts, not only have humans managed to retain an appetite for destruction but also have remained largely misinformed why war happens. This dissertation is an attempt to remedy this perception. More pointedly, the research will explore why war happens to highlight the means of avoiding it. War comes in many guises. The typology is quite diverse. Quincy Wright is considered the father of war-studies and argues that war is comprised of international, imperial, colonial, and Civil (Vasquez, 2009). Others claim it is either dyadic or complex (Vasquez & Valeriano, 2010). Even still, war is categorized as interstate, intrastate, or extrastate. It is pertinent to distinguish interstate which are armed conflict between systemic, sovereign actors and this is the focus of this dissertation (Lear, 2012).

Although there are currently more intrastate and extrastate conflict prevalent, arguably interstate war poses the greatest threat to both the regional and international order (Szayna et al., 2017). There are several reasons: specifically, a return to great power competition. China and Russia in a fit of revisionism are challenging the international status quo. In turn, the U.S. national security apparatus has declared that near-peer competition is the new normal for foreign policy (O'Rourke, 2019). Another rationale is destructive capacity. States have a wide range of military capabilities. For

example, most great powers have nuclear weapons, strategic bombers, and large-scale expeditionary forces capable of toppling regimes and capturing territory. The abilities are perhaps what makes them a great power. Lastly, states remain the most predominant actor in the systemic international order. They have the preponderance of power over their populations and the ability to externally influence other entities. One can see why interstate conflict will drastically matter in the future.

Summary of the Topic

Upfront, this dissertation concerns war onset on the continent of Asia, specifically as it pertains to China. More pointedly, it is a scientific endeavor to use the empirical study of war to ascertain the correlatory impacts of how realist behavior promulgates war between states. That said, one of the essential and foundational aspects of this dissertation is the Correlates of War (COW) project. Founded by political scientist John David Singer and historian Melvin Small in 1963, it is an intellectual movement of peace-based researchers dedicated to the empirical study war and its onset attributes—i.e., correlates. Initially charged with data collection on interstate armed conflict, Singer and Small's body of work (Singer & Small, 1972; Small & Singer, 1982) was published in two seminal books that galvanized the war-studies, peace-research, and international relations fields. In fact, the COW project grew to include empirical research that vastly improved the scientific knowledge of war (Izmirlioglu, 2017).

Since the late-1960s, COW research has grown. It now consists of 13 datasets that provide empirical information on war correlates that illuminate why warfare occurs to include interstate, intrastate, and extrastate conflicts. There have been over 274 empirical scientific studies conducted base on the concepts and theories of the COW

project (Izmirliloglu, 2017). What is important to remember is that COW research is solely quantitative, which is in contrast to the conflict resolution and international relations study fields mostly qualitative-based inquiries.

Equally important are the four core research activities associated with the COW project. They are: 1) theoretical rationale and research strategy; 2) correlate construction and data generation; 3) model/hypothesis testing and data analysis, and 4) practical implications for policy (Suzuki, Krause, and Singer, 2002). All of them, to various degrees, will be used through this dissertation.

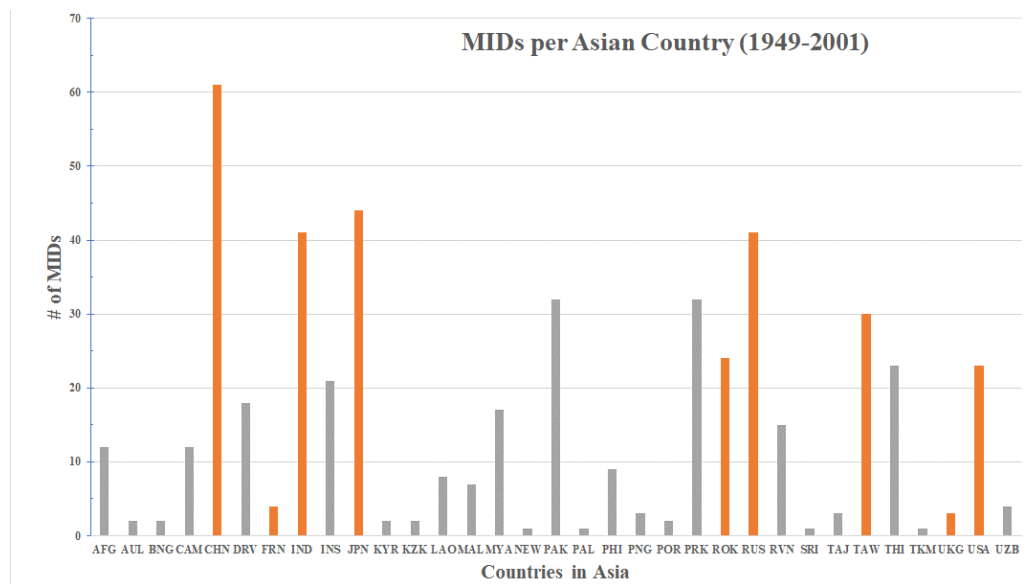


Figure 1. Militarized Dispute by Country in Asia.

Asia

Some would argue that Asia, not Europe or North America, is the focal point of this planet. It is by far the largest continent in terms of both area and population with geography covering 17.2 million square miles, whereby 4.2 billion people live (Sawe, 2019). The continent houses five major regions and 48 states. For clarification, the subregions are Central, East, South, Southeast, and Western Asia (Pariona, 2019).

Regarding domain status, Asia contains great, major, and minor powers. China and Russia are considered great powers, whereas the seven major powers are Japan, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The remaining states fall into the minor category (Rogers, 2019). Economically, Asia is equally distinct. The G-20, which is an intergovernmental forum of finance ministers and central bankers, has eight member states that reside on the continent (Rogers, 2019). The strongest, rising economies have been historically in Asia. With respect to GDP, China, Japan, and India are globally ranked in the top ten. Indeed, Asia's aggregated GDP is a staggering \$31T. This is twice the size of the U.S.'s economy (International Monetary Fund [IMF] World Economic Outlook, 2018).

It is also worth mentioning that Asia has a history of interstate warfare. Outside of Europe, there has been more interstate war and battle deaths in Asia on the planet (Singer et al. 1972; Szayna et al., 2019). In fact, three of the five great powers; specifically, China, Russia, and the United States are in some form of violent armed conflict on the mainland and littorals (Szayna et al., 2019; The Asia Foundation, 2017). For further evidence, it is necessary to examine Figure 1. The chart outlined Asian countries by the number of militarized interstate disputes in which participated. The orange bars are major powers; the grey is minor ones. One could easily determine that Asiatic major powers conflict disputes outweigh those of smaller states. This disparity is meticulously assessed throughout this doctoral study. What is more important is that outside of Europe, Asia has the greatest number of states that have formal defense treaties with the United States. The U.S. Department of State website identified South Korea, Japan, Philippines, and Thailand as treated partners, which means if one is attacked the

U.S. will come to its aid (Department of State, 2019). More voluminously, all of them are involved in some form of militarized dispute with China (The Asia Foundation, 2019).

China

China is vital to regional and global stability. Considered by many states as a great power, China has spread its influence and power throughout Asia and the global community, including locales such as Africa and the Middle East. Jablonsky (1997) contended that countries needed to increase their national power to either maintain or increase their position in the international order. He, in turn, qualified national power as the state's required resources to obtain their national objectives and goals. These resources are further defined as natural and social, which is the construct used in this dissertation.

Using Jablonsky's typology, Sino quest for national power could be examined on a two-axis approach. Natural determinants, comprised of geography, population, and natural resources, is one. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took multiple measures to improve these power attributes. Here are a few examples. First, the CCP laid claim to the entire South China Sea including several contested islands, and then built artificial islands to protect it (Jablonsky, 1997; O'Rourke, 2019a, 2019b). Second, the party was instrumental in incubating nationalist fervor within the Sino-population, a common governmental technique to disguise bad governance and garner collective cooperation against a perceived threat. Last, China secured natural resources near and abroad. Close to their home borders, China built an elaborate road network through Bangladesh and Myanmar (O'Rourke, 2019a; Pehrson, 2006). In the Middle East and Africa, scrupulous

oil deals were made without any concern for the long-term harm to the sellers' domestic audience. Social determinants, which consisted of economic, military, and diplomatic elements, was the other national power subset (Jablonsky, 1997). Although there are significant literature and research on these topics, only the economic and defense aspects are addressed here. China has the second-largest economy after the U.S., fueled by an abundance of low-cost labor, manufacturing, and debt financing. Their current Gross Domestic Product per capita is a staggering \$16.8T (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2019).

Militarily, the People Liberation Army (PLA) is China's 2,000,000 person armed forces and has made unprecedented gains. Case in point, the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense reported, "China's announced military budget increase continues more than 20 years of annual defense spending increases, sustaining China's position as the second-largest military spender in the world." (U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD], 2019, p. 93) What this equates to is \$170B expended on war materiel each year (U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2019). With this type of spending, PRC has increased its warfighting capability.

Since the turn of the century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has increased its national power by building offensive, expeditionary weapons. These armaments are capital investments, which are defined by a massive expenditure of resources in terms of dollars (i.e., \$1B or more) and time. They include H-6 strategic bombers and aircraft carriers. It is also to note that the PLA has a credible nuclear force (Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA], 2019). In fact, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports the PLA Rocket Force's nuclear arsenal is the third largest on the planet behind

the U.S. and Russia (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019). Although these weapon platforms can be used for defense, their main purpose is offensive in nature. Meaning, they allow the PRC to project power beyond their territorial borders, allowing them means to achieve their national security aims.

With respect to the PRC, all the above actions and activities are geared toward a myriad of geostrategic priorities. According to various international relations scholars, they are 1) Finish building modern society under CCP control; 2) Become the global leader in innovation, 3) Resolve the Taiwan dilemma, 4) Modernize military capability for power projection and 5) Return to great power status (Bosbotinis, 2010; Erickson, 2016; Krepinovich, 2015). Chinese President Xi Jinping further contended, “[China is to] become a global leader in terms of national strength and international influence.” (Erickson, 2016, 75). The aggregation of these strategic goals indicates a grand strategy rooted in revisionism. More important, these five objectives should be considered as Sino vital interests; meaning, the 80 million-person strong CCP would be willing to initiate a conflict or even war to achieve them. Figure 2 is a testament to this proposition.

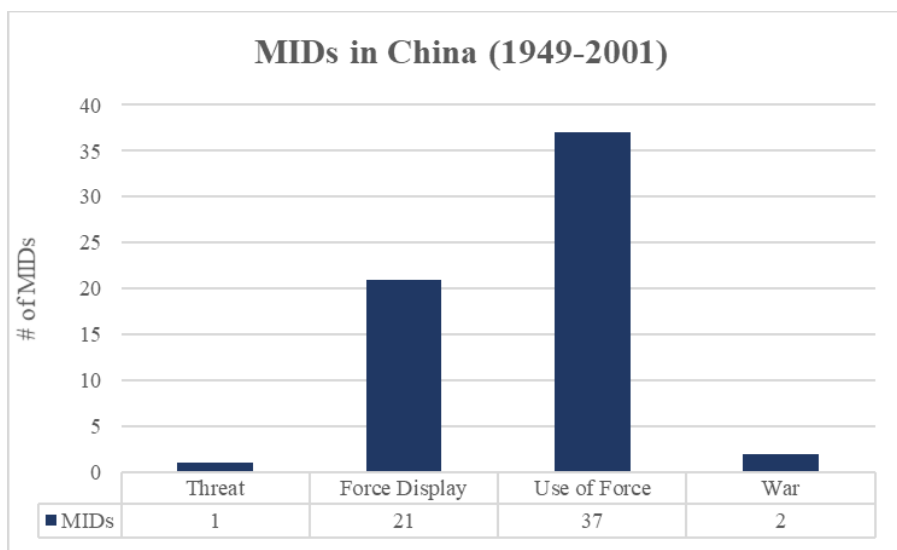


Figure 2. Sino Militarized Interstate Disputes.

The U.S. Government (USG) contends Chinese goals are two-fold. First, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to establish China as a great power to shape the international order to its benefit. Second, regional hegemony within its part of Eurasia. Revisionist states' main geopolitical and strategic aim is to change the status quo because they are not satisfied with their position in the global construct. When it comes to China, they have embarked on a whole-of-society approach to achieving their goals near and abroad (Wright, April 2017).

Steps to War

The Steps-To-War (STW) theory is one of the most profound byproducts of the COW project. John Vasquez, credited with its formulation, postulated that it is grounded on the behavioral and relational impacts of when two states, who are initially involved in a territorial dispute, experience repeated conflict, form alliances and increase military capability, all of which intensifies the likelihood of war onset (Senese & Vasquez, 2005, 2008). Moreover, there are three distinct characters that distinguish the STW model from other international relations (IR) and conflict theories. First, it is empirically based. This construct allows for statistical evaluation of why interstate interactions are either war-prone or peaceful, Second, it is dyadic. A characteristic that fosters descriptive and inferential assessment. Last, it is not exclusively sequential. Meaning, step order is not imperative instead it is their mutual reinforcement (Mitchell & Vasquez, 2014; Senese et al., 2005). That said, an example will help comprehension. In one way or another, the steps of war involve territorial disputes, rivalry, alliances, and arms races. For clarification, the terms State A and State B is used to delineate belligerents. To start, State A is involved in a territorial dispute with State B. They use power politics to

address this budding security issue, making defense pacts and improving armies. The combined effect poses a security dilemma, a stalwart in realist literature. Next, State B feels threaten and becomes more hostile toward State A, which is now considered a rival. As a result, State B responds in kind by making counter-alliances and building up their own defense forces. The overall effect is a heightened level of escalation, which could spiral into a violent interstate conflict. That said, this plausible STW scenario undeniably outlays Chinese geopolitical activities in Asia, which is why it is the theory of choice for this dissertation (Jones et al., 1996; Senese et al., 2005; Mitchell et al., 2014).

Need for Study

There are four key reasons why this study is necessary. The first one is renewed great power competition. Since September 11, 2001, which fostered an era of extrastate and intrastate warfare, the war onset study-field focused on those two phenomena. Al Qaeda (AQ) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) execution of violent conflict captivated the international community. Regarding intrastate war, the Libyan civil war had the same effect. Understandably, these conflicts created a demand signal for political scientists, international relations scholars, and policymakers. However, Beijing, Moscow, and Washington's declaration of the return to great power interstate conflict necessitates that the academic field follows in suit. And arguably, the conflict resolution field should lead the way. The second rationale is Asia. For reasons previously explained, Asia is an important region in the international order. China's overt and covert hostility towards the U.S. and its allies is foreboding. Equally germane is the PRC's revisionist alliance making and defense spending, which has had an escalating and threatening effect on the region. In short, if war breaks out in either East or Southeast

Asia, then it would potentially lead to widespread destruction and human suffering on a scale not experienced since World War II. The third justification entails the COW project and conflict resolution fields of study. The former was instrumental in war. One must remember that Singer's overarching goal was to prevent war and by default, increase peace (Singer, 1979). Conflict resolution is about alleviating all forms of disputes, from the individual to the state, in that way promoting peace. It is therefore almost providence that both research areas should be conjoined in a dissertation. The last key reason for the need of this dissertation beholds empirical analysis of war onset. There is no shortfall of qualitative research on Asia, China, realist's ideals, and war. The adage that extremes lead to disaster is perhaps applicable here. A modern quantitative assessment could afford different findings on war and peace, which in turn might inform governmental leaders and policymakers.

Problem /Purpose Statement/Research Question

Taking these gaps and shortfalls in deliberation, the problem summation is there are missing literature and empirical analysis on war onset in Asia and China. So then, the purpose of this quantitative study is to explore the steps-to-war correlates as they pertain to Sino power politics in Asia. At this stage in the research, steps-to-war correlates will be generally defined as a series of power politics actions and activities between states in response to a territory-related dispute that when aggregated increases the probability of war onset. With the above mentioned in mind, this dissertation will answer one main research question: What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia? More so, there are three supporting research questions that are imperative to understanding that relationship. They are: 1) What is the probability of

war onset based on associated militarized interstate disputes in Asia? 2) What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia? and 3) What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia? As with most momentous endeavors, specific goals are critical for success and the following are the goals of this project: 1) Use COW project ideals and STW theory to evaluate how specific correlates increase the chances of war in Asia; 2) Develop a rudimentary, reliable research design to empirically assesses individual states and how they relate to war; 3) Introduce empirical war-studies to the Department of Defense strategic leaders and Conflict Resolution professionals; and 4) Review war causation literature and develop empirical analysis skills.

Definition of Key Terms

Correlates of War project: A cohort of political scientists and peace researchers dedicated to the systematic accumulation of scientific knowledge about military conflict in order to end it. Their work is exclusively empirical in nature (Morrow, Clark, Diehl, Ray, & Reid, 2010, p. 591).

Alliance: A formal-signed agreement between states concerning the conditions under which they will or will not employ military force. Alliances are classified as defense pact, neutral, and entente (Levy, 1981, p. 587).

Arms Race: A simultaneous abnormal rate of growth in the military outlays between two or more nations, based on the competitive pressure of eternal military rivalry (Wallace, 1979, p. 5)

Challenger: A state that challenges another state over either an issue or revision (Dorf, 2004).

Composite Index of National Capability: An index that utilizes six indicators of national power: energy consumption, iron and steel production, military expenditures, military personnel, total population, and urban population. The computed power capabilities for each state are then ranked making a prioritized list.

Dyad: A pair of states who both are members of the international system. Dyads allow the measurement and analysis of interstate behavior and other relational aspects (Senese & Vasquez, 2008).

Dyadic Dispute: An interstate dyad engaged in a militarized interstate dispute (Senese et al., 2008).

Dyadic-History: One interstate dyad that has been constructed from the history of dyadic interaction. It often records the total and type of MIDs, war history, rivalry and alliance status, and so forth (Senese et al., 2008).

Dyadic-Year: A dyad measured by what occurs in a one-year timeframe (Senese et al., 2008).

Defender: A state that defends itself from either a challenge or attack from another state (Dorf, 2004).

Dominant State: A hegemonic state that has the preponderance of power within either the international system or specific region (Dorf, 2004).

Extrastate war: Wars conducted between a system member and a nonstate entity. The U.S. fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is an archetype (Sarkees, 2010)

Interstate war: Wars conducted between or among members of the interstate system. The Gulf War (circa 1990), where Iraq battled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATOR) is an example (Sarkees, 2010, p.1)

Intrastate war: A civil war conducted between a state and a group within its borders. The violent conflicts in Syria and Libya are examples. (Sarkees, 2010, p.2)

Great Power: A dominant state that can effectively influence the global order and international politics with respect to domestic, economic, and security-related issues. Operational indicators of Great Power status are 1) possession of a high level of power capabilities (strong economies and often nuclear weapons); 2) heavy participation in the international arena; and 3) identification as a Great Power by the international community (Levy, 1981, p. 587). China, Russia, and the United States are great powers.

Major Power: A state with relatively superior power capabilities, has global interests, and must be recognized by other major powers as a major power (Levy, 1981, p. 587). France, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and India are examples of major powers.

Militarized Interstate Dispute: An aggressive, dyadic interaction between states that is characterized by threat making, force displays, use of military force, and hostility—i.e., open warfare (Senese et al., 2008).

Minor Power: A state with relatively moderate to weak power capabilities, which can only influence within their respective region (Levy, 1981, p. 587). Philippines, Oman, Nigeria, and Guatemala are considered minor powers.

Revisionist State: In power transition theories, a revisionist state is defined as an actor that is not satisfied with its circumstances and domain placement in either the international or regional order. As such, they use power politics to change the geopolitical dynamic to their satisfaction, and if pressed, could use military means. For

example, in World War II, Germany and Japan were revisionists states that sought war to change the international order (Kohout, 2003).

Rivalry: The competitive interaction between states (i.e., rivals) that is centered spatial consistency, duration, militarized interstate disputes, and linked conflict (Wallace, 1979, p. 333). There are three types of rivalry: isolated (1 MID < 6 years); enduring (6 or more MIDs ≤ 20 years); proto (1 MID within 10 years) (Vasquez, 2004, p.10).

Status Quo State: In power transition theories, a status quo state is defined as an actor that is satisfied with its circumstances and domain placement in either the international or regional order. To maintain this dynamic, they use power politics, which might include war. Case in point, in the Gulf War, the U.S. was a status quo state and used military force to expel Iraq out of Kuwait (Kohout, 2003).

Steps To War Theory: A realist-based theory, founded by one of the original COW project members John Vasquez, which explains the phenomenon of interstate war onset as either a step-wise function or simultaneous aggregation of territorial disputes, rivalry, alliance building, and arms races (Vasquez, 1997, p. 111).

Target: A state who is the focus of either behavior, activity, or action from another state. These attributes could be either positive or negative. For example, State A targets State B to join then against State C is considered a positive situation for State A and B. However, from State C's perspective it has a negative connotation (Dorf, 2004).

Territorial Dispute: An interstate dispute over the control of salient land and maritime terrain. It is often manifested over territorial borders, strategic access to resources, cultural saliency, and economic value (Diehl and Goertz, 1988).

War: The violent use of arms between states to achieve political objectives, characterized by sustained combat, involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle-related fatalities in a 12-month period (Sarkees, 2010, p. 10).

Methodology

The primary research method is quantitative analysis. Herein, there are both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques employed to answer three supporting research questions, which allows synthesis on Sino revisionism and war causal attributes. The research design has a straightforward, inductive quality. Each key question has specified the research goal and associated statistical test. The first goal was to illustrate the relationship between war onset and militarized disputes. Central tendencies and variance analysis are used to both describe and infer facets of that interaction.

The second question's aim is to ascertain how Asiatic revisionism correlates to interstate military violence and warfare. Bivariate analysis will be instrumental in assessing the concept of major powers, national capability, and power domains as they correspond to war. Last, and the centerpiece of this research is exploring war onset as it corresponds to the steps to war theory. Stepwise, logistic regression is imperative in testing if Asia is congruent with the other COW research.

Limitations

Thus far, three critical limitations of this dissertation have been identified. The first constraint involves the ability to construct a methodology to statistically examine a specific state. After nearly 60 years of COW research, it became evident that regional and country-specific empirical research is at a minimum. In reading and reviewing over 200 sources, one problem encountered was there are very few studies to use as an example.

There was only one related to regions and none in which a country was the focus. What was more troubling was the regional study, which focused on Latin America, did not employ any inferential statistical test (Suzuki, 2002). Even though most COW peace researchers remain concerned with the systemic level of analysis, there is indeed a requirement for the scientific study of war within a regional framework. This shortcoming will pose design and analytical barriers.

Validity is another limitation. By concentrating on China for a period of seven decades, the frequency of militarized interstates disputes and war remains relatively small. In fact, the war tally is approximately two. This circumstance will essentially create a low-N dataset, which could negatively impact the ability to draw reliable conclusions. After some initial research, the number of militarized disputes associated with China totals 61 cases. As a comparison, most COW research studies have a sample size of 380 or more cases. The low number of MID cases could cause others to question the validity, which leads to the last limitation (Bennet & Stam, 2000; Kendrick et al, 2013; Maoz et al, 2018).

The last EUGene_v3.2 compatible MID dataset ends in 2001 (Bennet & Stam, 2000). The COW project released an updated version time-stamped 2011. Inside, there are an additional 300 more MIDs that represent militarized incidents from 2001 to 2010 (Kendrick et al., 2013). However, there is an issue with its compatibility with the EUGene_v3.2 dataset generating. What this means is this dissertation is currently limited to MIDs that transpired before 2001. This circumstance will undoubtedly impact findings. Of significance, there has been contact with the COW dataset stakeholders concerning the matter.

Scope

To accomplish these objectives, this remainder of this dissertation follows the standard doctoral format. As such, there are four more chapters that require delineation. Chapter 2 is a literature review. This dissertation's research centerpiece entails the COW project and the steps-to-war theory. There have been over 250 scholarly articles published on the scientific study of war, which affords a vast repository of literature, and therefore knowledge. That said, this chapter describes what subject material has been previously studied, identify the linkages between various empirical studies, and establish context on the correlates of war, steps-to-war theory, and the key analytical techniques used in research (Hart, 2009).

Chapter 3 is the research method. All-in-all, this chapter is arguably the most vital to this dissertation based on two key reasons. Because this research is quantitative, which is not frequent in peace research and conflict resolution fields, there is a considerable amount of energy expended on outlaying the data requirements, hypotheses formulation, and statistical test. The net result is a comprehensive, research roadmap, which should lead to insightful and impactful results on five hypothesis and five propositions (Hart, 2009).

Chapter 4 is the data analysis. Outside the introduction and conclusion sections, this chapter is organized by research questions. As a reminder, the overall research approach is inductive. So, findings are communicated by the three research questions. Wherein, in addition to the statistical results, a descriptive analysis of the frequency of militarized disputes, revision types, and wars will also be displayed in chart and table format. Of significance, the dissertation's main research question is also answered.

Through inductive reasoning and synthesis, the statistical war onset results from the ten suppositions are integrated to formulate an answer in which the relationship between the correlates of war attributes and Chinese revisionism (Hart, 2009).

Chapter 5 is the discussion and conclusion. Basically, the central theme here is repetition. The purpose of the study is restated. Next, there is a summary of the dissertation where the conceptual framework, literary review, and research methodology are discussed. Then, findings and results are again reviewed for context and validity. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research (Hart, 2009).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Upfront, this dissertation examines peace as it relates to war. Perhaps a better explanation is that this scientific effort involves the empirical study of war for the purpose of peace. The research centerpiece entails the Correlates of War (COW) project and the correlates of war, which is perhaps confusing. As a cursory primer, the former is a cohort of political scientists and peace scholars, who exclusively concentrate on the empirical study of war. The latter is framed by war correlates; that is, the proven factors in which the chances of interstate war is increased.

Since 1963, there has been a plethora of literature and research on the correlates of war. Of the 250 research studies, almost all are predicated on three constants: focus on the interstate system, quantitative methodologies, and seek to prove that realist behavior is war prone (Izmirliglu, 2017). The COW project affords the most effective and efficient mechanism to conduct applied research. By that, this dissertation attempts to use both the COW project and steps-to-war theoretical insights and delineate a plausible path to war on the Asian continent, thereby highlighting signposts where action could be taken to prevent such a calamity. It is key to mention that the research goal is to explain a credible connection between the war correlates and Chinese revisionism, with correlates being the keyword. Simply put, this literature review will not focus on China per se but on the empirical aspect of investigating war.

To accomplish these preliminary objectives, several explanations are required. The literature review will describe what subject material has been studied up to this point, identify the connections between those various empirical studies, and establish context on the war correlates and key research techniques used. More pointedly, this literature

review's chief goal is to provide a comprehensive, overarching examination of the empirical study of war within the COW historical and theoretical framework.

Before proceeding, a succinct scope of what this literature review entails is merited. It is germane to mention that there are four primary sections, which outlay pertinent subject material, as well as the associated COW scholars. First is a discussion on the originators of peace research and the war study field. Aside from a brief overview of their empirical achievements, this section details how the discipline was initially conceptualized to include the research and validity challenges.

The next literary review area outlines the COW project. There are several topics discussed, therein. First, a detailed view of David Singer, the COW project's founder, is afforded. It includes his two key seminal works and long-term goals for the empirical study of war. Second, this section chronicles how dyadic statistical analysis became the centerpiece for peace research within the COW community. Lastly, the conceptualization of militarized interstate disputes is outlaid. The latter is one of the key concepts that must be comprehended to fully understand the STW theory.

The third section defines the four tenets in which comprises the steps-to-war theory. Using a historical timeline framework, territory, rivalry, alliances, and arms buildups are meticulously discussed. Each concept is addressed in a two-prong manner, whereby the key COW researcher and their respective study findings are first delineated and then examined. More importantly, the overall goal is here to showcase the various foundational studies and associated researchers that metastasized the COW project into the steps-to-war theory.

The literature review's last area delineates and explains the steps-to-war theory. It is the inductive culmination of the four tenets as they relate to militarized disputes and power politics, wherein the discussion of realism occurs. This task is divided into three steps. First, a general overview is provided that identifies the STW theory's founder and research rationale. Second, each tenet is described in a linear fashion, while simultaneously stressing correlatory impacts on war onset. Third, a plausible path to war is outlined. Here is the heart of the dissertation because the steps-to-war theory is finally synthesized. Last, criticism is articulated. Since the COW project and STW theory is relatively new and controversial in the IR field, it is indeed subject to many critiques. With the literary review roadmap delineated, it is appropriate to continue by examining the birthplace of the empirical study of war.

The Early Years

After the turmoil of World War I, the scientific study of war causation became popular in the 1930s. It can be accredited to two social scientists. Quincy Wright and Lewis Richardson contended that the study of war was unscientific. That is, they both thought the field lacked empirical data and analysis to either prove or refute war causation. Wright and Richardson, as a result, brought research techniques from the physical and biological sciences to the social disciplines. In succession, with Wright being the vanguard, the researchers created respective data sets that classified war and its causes (Vasquez, 2009). What is possibly more unique is that both Englishmen were unaware of each other's work and the long-term radical change it would produce in the peace and war research fields (Singer, 1981).

Quincy Wright, a University of Chicago professor, seminal work classified wars from the 1480-1964 time period. Using the litmus of 50,000 troops involved as magnitude and his own war taxonomy, Wright compiled one of the most comprehensive, groundbreaking datasets. The data included initiation/completion dates, belligerent identity, and the number of key battles. Also, in his groundbreaking work *A Study in War*, Wright provided battle frequencies, casualty totals aggregated across all major European Powers (Singer & Diehl, 1990). Wright's data repository had its shortfalls. There was a question of validity because some wars were not included, while others were summarily discounted. Another gap, according to some scholars, was that the rudimentary dataset did not include war severity data, which is considered the number of battle-related fatalities (Singer et al., 1990). In Wright's defense, the severity would not be addressed until later by another scholar.

Lewis Richardson followed in Wright's steps. Richardson, a fellow British scholar, expounded on Wright's research by concentrating on the magnitude, dates of initiation and termination in years, belligerents, and identification of initiators as a true measure of war (Singer et al., 1990). More so, Wright, in his analysis, did not distinguish the various forms of violence. Domestic violence was equally included with state sponsored. Lewis did not believe this constituted war. Consequently, his research focused on interstate violence, which also included imperial and civil wars. (Singer, 1972). Perhaps, what Richardson is most known for is incorporating interstate dyads in his dataset and subsequent analysis. This technique would be the cornerstone for future war study studies (Vasquez, 2009).

The Correlates of War Project

As an extension to Wright and Richardson, the Correlates of War (COW) project was a renaissance in data generation and quantitative war studies, particularly concerning interstate conflicts. Suzuki, Krause, and Singer attested, “Numerous scholars conducting quantitative empirical research in international and comparative politics have cited and used the extensive work of the COW project.” (Suzuki, Krause, and Singer, 2002, p. 69). The initiative was implemented in 1963 with a financial grant from the Carnegie Corporation to the University of Michigan’s Center for Research on Conflict Resolution (Vasquez, 1987). Its main aim was to quantify war and its causal factors. The primary output was a holistic databank that was revolutionary in scope and size.

Two key professors and researchers are considered the forefathers of the COW movement. David Singer was a political scientist at the University of Michigan, whereas his colleague Melvin Small was a renowned historian and professor at Wayne State University (Singer & Small, 1972). Singer dissatisfied with the lack of analytical rigor in violent conflict sought to answer a simple research question: Why war? Singer contended the best way to answer this question was to build a catalog that covered the international system for a substantially long period and under meticulously defined selection criteria and variables (Singer & Small, 1972).

First and foremost, to accomplish this feat, Singer and Smalls had to resolve what is a state and what is precisely is war (The Correlates of War Project, Oct 2019). The former was articulated in terms of international system structure, capability distribution, and ranking states by their material possessions (Suzuki et al., 2002). More so, researching the occurrence of war meant gathering information on various attributes of

the international system that theorists argued were indeed the causes of war. With Smalls amassing war data from 1815 to 1960 from historical texts, the COW founding fathers assembled a data set, which identified characteristics such as the number of participants, battle deaths, and duration (Singer, 1979).

According to Singer and Diehl (1990), there was also a second focus area, which he deemed more important than constructing the COW database. The correlates of war can be defined as those factors that are covaried and thereby associated with the occurrence, duration, and magnitude of war. These independent variables, when properly operationalized and statistically tested, could afford key synthesis on the dependent variable, war and its causes. The outcome of this opening effort were two groundbreaking books. *The Wages of War* was published in 1975 and later in 1982 with *Resort to Arms* (Izmirliloglu, 2017). Both literary works listed the data and studies that occurred in the early years of the COW project. Indicators and datasets on interstate membership, incidences of war between states, military alliances, and national capability were ascertained.

The Correlates of War project continued to expand in the 1970s. With the data repository established, researchers conducted landmark empirical studies. These empirical investigations used realpolitik political models at the system-level. Focusing on primarily on polarity, military buildups and arms races, Singer and his acolytes refined predictors to war. These findings were encapsulated in two volumes, *Correlates of War* and *The Correlates of War II*. More importantly, a key update to the previous COW dataset was accomplished (Suzuki et al., 2002).

During the 1980s, progress continued. Even though testing realpolitik models were still common, dyad-level analysis became vogue. COW scholars focused on capability differentials, expected utility, and deterrence theory. What was different is that predictors were garnered towards crisis short of war. This is where the term militarized interstate dispute first entered the COW lexicon. Equally relevant was the dataset grew. Variables such as civil war, militarized interstate disputes, crises, military allocation, and contiguity were added (Suzuki et al., 2002; Senese, 2005).

Regarding the COW project, the 1990s proved equally productive. Multivariate models, which encompassed alternative realist and liberal hypotheses, were used in quantitative research (Suzuki et al., 2002; Vasquez, 1996). Dyad-level accretion was still the preferred methodology, and the notion of different levels of aggregation was introduced. Of further significance during this timeframe, enduring rivalries and recurrent military escalation became critical research topics. There were also new data sets on territorial change, trade, enduring rivalries, and an updated data repository on militarized interstate disputes (Jones, D., Bremer, S. & Singer, J.D., 1996; Suzuki et al., 2002).

Since the turn of the century, the COW project has become more than a dataset. It remains a wellspring for modern war studies and correlation. According to Izmirlioglu (2017), there are approximately thirteen datasets, providing vital detailed information on the various indicators that illuminate state conflict. Some improvements in the COW data repository were interstate conflict geographic locale, national material resources, and trade flows. In totality, the current COW project variable set numbers an astounding 395 and over 250 research studies (Izmirlioglu, 2017). These attributes were lumped into

four core research activities. They are theoretical rationale and research strategy, data and indicator generation, model/hypothesis testing, and practical implications for policy and teaching. As this dissertation proceeds, each one is addressed in various degrees, with model and hypothesis testing being the most extensive.

Foundational Studies and Prominent Researchers

Over the years, delineating war causation and correlation has taken numerous guises. This section outlines that evolution, including several milestone studies that dictated the theoretical framework and research design many subsequent scholars leveraged. One of Singer's early studies sought to accelerate the scientific study of war prior to the completion of the COW project. Based on his initial assessment, Singer argued there were two key areas that should be immediately examined. These topics were addressed in *The Wages of War 1816-1965*. As an aside, the year 1816, coincidentally the end of the Napoleonic Era, was significant because it marked when war records were sufficiently maintained by countries.

Continuing, Singer's first area was the quantification of war. One should remember that Richardson also measured this attribute (Singer & Diehl, 1999). As the war study and peace research field grew in number, various researchers did not agree with Richardson's methodology and selection criteria. Singer and Small (1972) felt that it was immediately necessary to rectify this shortfall before scholars proceeded to use the COW dataset. To that end, they settled on three sets of indicators: magnitude, severity, and intensity. Here is a brief synopsis. Magnitude was intended to operationalize the spatial and temporal aspects of war by counting belligerents and how long military

conflict lasted. It was the simplest of the three because it was merely a sum of the months and a list of participants for each war.

Regarding severity, it was meant to gauge the toll of human suffering—the number of combat deaths. Whereas Richardson included civilians' deaths in his research, Singer used only military personnel. The latter's rationale was due to insufficient data on civilian fatalities. He proposed a more effective methodology to derive severity. Most nations, even during the early-1800s, kept detailed records on the number of soldiers and sailors killed in war. Intensity, a ratio, reflected the battle deaths against other baseline measures. For example, one might ponder if a war was brief and bloody or vice versa. Singer and Small (1972) believed an intensity ratio would provide key insight on that premise. To achieve this indicator, which was based on a state's battle-deaths, a baseline of magnitude, size of armed forces, and total population were considered. In short, these three indicators were foundational in the scientific study of war and peace, setting the stage for future research.

Pairwise frequency, or dyad, was the other topic. Upfront, it is worth noting that Singer contended that war, by definition, involved at least two parties and therefore should be examined as such. Meaning, war cannot be accurately observed in isolation but rather as a relationship. As an example, he stated, "In many social sciences it is becoming increasingly clear that much more is to be learned from the relationship between and among our objects of analysis than from an exhaustive investigation of their discrete properties." (Singer et al., 1972, p. 299).

The methodology used by Singer was imaginative. Taking COW data into account, he matched every country within the international system with their respective

war-time opponent. The dependent variables were war duration in months and combined battle-deaths. Pairs were alphabetically arranged, eventually forming a list with each step. The result was 200 pairs with at least one war where they were collaborators. Once complete with delineating wartime partners, Singer et al. used the same methodology to derive opponents. The analysis provided 209 pairs sorted by one war where they fought on opposing sides (Singer et al., 1972). In sum, these dyadic relationships afforded tentative evidence for the idea of traditional amities and animosities (Bremer, 1992).

The Wages of War 1816-1965 was not without critics, having two major contention points. First, some claimed this body of work was haphazard in overarching aim and framework. Singer and Small, as previously mentioned, wanted to make their war data available prior to the completion of the COW project. To that end, *The Wages of War 1816-1965* was heavy on data collection and selection criteria and contained tomes of tables, which critics argued made the book tiresome (Singer, 1979; Gibler, Miller, & Little, 2016).

Secondly, there was criticism of data validity. Other researchers questioned the accuracy of the dataset, arguing it was impossible to collect and authenticate all military statistics and battle-deaths, especially from the pre-industrial age. Singer and Small countered, “if we were to refrain from doing the historical analysis because of the unreliability of the available evidence, some of the most important work in archaeology, zoology, and astronomy...would also come to a halt.” (Singer et al., 1972, p. 7) According to the COW founders, one must remember the scholar's job is to sift, evaluate, and collate procedures to satisfy their and others' skepticism. Singer et al. (1972) proclaimed they did just that in their first book.

In short, this foundational book was an important book because of several reasons. It offered a roadmap that articulated future studies. Provided the foundation for alliances, which later became a cornerstone in the steps-to-war theory. Demonstrated how to conduct a dyadic analysis to determine behavioral and relational attributes between states. Finally, Singer and Small's book showed how to capture historical data accurately and objectively. Even with these achievements, Singer believed a more historical justification was needed. David Singer's *Correlates of War* was a landmark. It articulately defined the chronological and intellectual origins of COW. Within this book, Singer (1979) mused over individual and nationalistic values in the international system, subjectivity of realist theoretical thought, policy, the role of scientific knowledge, and data/indicator generation. The last two subject areas were indeed salient to the correlates of war.

As earlier discussed, scientific knowledge about war was a motivating influence for the peace researcher. Singer had an interesting viewpoint on knowledge of war studies. Knowledge, as far as he was concerned, was existential, correlational, and explanatory. Singer stipulated that existential was merely facts. Correlation delineated the extent two or more conditions are associated. Explanatory, the most difficult of three, is the degree an outcome is caused by one or more conditions. Singer contended these knowledge forms are imperative, ascertaining why states go to war. As such, fact-based correlations and explanations were the design backdrop in subsequent peace research (Singer, 1979).

Equally important was the question of war prediction. Singer (1979) contended the decision to go to war was predicated on three factors. Deterministic is the first.

These events were beyond the ability to exercise any control. Singer does not explicitly mean that violence is impending but rather there are constraints that compel policymakers to operate within bounds. Probabilistic factors reflect stochasticity. Since war is inherently human, and humans are capricious, then there are unpredictable or random factors in which a policymaker can do nothing about. Of note, some COW critics were of this mindset.

The last element is voluntaristic. Singer contended that humans are thinking beings. Case in point, he stated, “[P]recisely because humans are different from lemmings, we need not act as certain scientific models predict we will act.” (Singer, 1979) Another point was that the better informed about the process by which groups enter a violent conflict, decision-makers could determine which factors are within and beyond control. Even so, the more accurate predictions are made, then there is an increased chance to avoid war.

So far, the material showcased how David Singer and his viewpoints formulated into modern peace and war study research. His first book delineated the methodology and selection criteria that generated empirical data on interstate war. The second book clarified what type of research is possible on that dataset. Meaning, the study of war should be empirical, correlatory, and explanatory. Even more, Singer contended COW scholars and practitioners should develop a theory in which hypothesis testing and other quantitative analysis could occur. That said, it is important to explore the foundational studies and researchers that metastasized the COW project into the steps-to-war theory.

Dyads and Militarized Interstate Disputes

From his initial research work, Singer contended there were five areas that needed further investigation. They are dyads, territory, militarized interstate disputes, and arms races. The upcoming material outlay Singer's desires, starting with a dyadic look at interstate war, followed by the four concepts instrumental in the formulation of the STW theory. To start, Stuart Bremer is responsible for advancing war quantification with two landmark studies that ascertained dyadic methodology and militarized interstate disputes. The first one, "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965" can best be explained as who fights whom. Dyad research was a major topic that flourished from the COW project. Bremer, a colleague of Singer and early COW contributor, sought to further explore the relational aspect between states and the conditions that affected the likelihood of war.

To start, one must remember that a dyad is a pairing of two entities. It can be as simple as two people or more complex such as a state. Dyadic data analysis affords the ability to examine interactions between pairs, which early COW scholars believed was a necessary condition (Frey, 2018). Bremer's (1992) research characterized dangerous, war-prone states and their attributes in a dyadic construct. Although there were five findings from his research, three are mentioned here. First, the preponderance of empirical war studies was at the systemic level. Bremer believed that looking at war through a nondyadic lens would render evidence, at best, inclusive (Bremer, 1992).

Second, most empirical studies were limited in the spatial-temporal domain. This supposition that narrow temporal domains afforded a weak basis for drawing conclusive evidence. Instead, Bremer advocated for an expansive time period to collect as much

evidence as possible. Last, bivariate analytical methods often masked relevant statistical associations. Despite multivariate analysis inherent shortfalls, which are war's low frequency and statistical degrees of freedom, Bremer (1992, 1996) strongly insisted multivariate analysis would best answer who fights whom.

All the above-annotated issues were hold-overs from Singer's (1972,1979) earlier work. As such, Bremer intended to rectify by incorporating a broad timeframe, interstate dyadic pairs, both bivariate and multivariate analysis on seven key predictors of war that warranted empirical testing. Before continuing, it is necessary to give a brief overview of each. Proximity is the first predictor. Here, the main point was that war occurred between nations within close geographic proximity to another (Bremer, 1992; Johnson & Toft, 2013).

The second indicator was the notion of power equality. There are two sides to this argument. One is that power preponderance promotes peace; the other is that power parity encouraged peace. According to Bremer, numerous studies have examined the relationship between war and power, but few have done so on a dyadic level (Bremer, 1992; Braumoeller, 2008). Power status concerned major or minor powers. There is substantial evidence that major power, who possess the industrial, population, economic, and military capabilities, are more prone to war than minor powers (Bremer, 1992; Singer & Small, 1972). The fourth predictor of interstate war were alliances. Here, Bremer (1992) contended state friendships were key to the initiation of war.

Regime type is fifth. This variable tested what type of governments were likely to pursue war. The sixth indicator involved a state's economic status. Economically advanced polities, according to most research rationale, possessed the necessary means to

conduct war, thereby making it a valid variable. Bremer's last predictor was militarization. This measurement entailed state resources outlaid to military preparedness. In other words, Bremer, like numerous other peace researchers, believed that arms races were instrumental in the onset of war. (Bremer 1992; Colaresi & Thomas, 2005; Singer, 1972). Taking the seven predictor variables into account, Bremer delineated requisite propositions to test.

The methodology was straightforward, entailing two analytical regression techniques. Using bivariate analysis, Bremer (1992) calculated and then compared the conditional probabilities of war initiation. To clarify, bivariate regression is arguably the simplest form because it delineates the relationship between two discrete variables. (Field, 2013) All seven propositions did support correlatory dyadic analysis, and some results were indeed perceptive. From strongest to weakest, the correlation and size effect of the factors proved profound. Here is the ranking: 1) proximity, 2) power status, 3) alliances, 4) arms race, 5) regime type, 6) economic, and 7) power equality (Bremer, 1992). What is important, according to Bremer, was that power differentials were the weakest predictor of war and a direct contrast to core realist thought.

The other analytical technique was multivariate. This regression form is more advanced, involving inferential statistical tests that afford comprehension in what manner multiple predictor variables are related to an outcome variable. (Field, 2013) Admittedly, Bremer suggested bivariate analysis could hide relational impacts between the aforementioned factors. Case in point, he stated, "Under this condition, apparently strong relationships with war may be spurious and weak relationships with war may become strong when the effects of other factors are removed." (Bremer, 1992, p. 331) To alleviate

this shortfall, each factor was transformed into a binary variable that correlated to a specific dyad. For example, the alliance variable was either assigned as “1” if the dyad was allied or “0” otherwise. This variable transformation was repeated for each variable, allowing Bremer to implement a multivariate linear regression.

Taking the statistical ranking of each factor, a stepwise regression was completed. The results were mainly aligned to the bivariate analysis with a few unexpected outcomes. The war onset ranking was adjusted. Here is the new list: 1) proximity, 2) regime type, 3) economic, 4) power status, 5) power equality, 6) alliances, and 7) arms races (Bremer, 1992). What was more profound was the association regarding two key independent variables. There was a negative correlation between states with advanced economies, meaning states that have robust markets are less likely to go to war. The other observation was alliances and arms build-up were not statistically significant, which countered previous research results. Bremer surmised this result not necessarily valid and dictated further research on alliances and arms races impacts on war onset (Bremer, 1992; Croco & Teo, 2005).

There were four key findings in this study. First, disputes over territory when coupled with contiguity had the highest probability of resulting in war. Second, states with advanced economies were not prone to fight each other. The rationale is that since both have much to lose, they seek alternative conflict resolution techniques. Third, democratic states were less likely than other government forms to engage in war. The reason here is that democracies often are more developed and therefore decision-makers are beholden to the domestic populace than oligarchies or dictatorship (Bremer, 1992; Mitchell & Vasquez, 2014). That said, this study's impact is it marked the first time a

coherent, empirical explanation of the war onset correlation factors were achieved. The development and subsequent use of dyadic research techniques were instrumental in determining both the relational and behavioral aspects between conflict-laden states. This accomplishment led to Bremer's next major study.

Bremer's second pivotal contribution was documented in the aptly titled "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns". Published in 1996, this article's purpose was a review of the COW project's latest dataset and improvements therein. Equally vital was that Stuart Bremer, along with fellow researchers Daniel Jones and David Singer, developed a clear, detailed understanding of what constitutes militarized disputes, thereby increasing correlational knowledge thereof. Whereas Bremer's other study examined key predictors and inferential statistics, this one instead focused on the catalysts to conflict. Conflict and disputes come in numerous guises; therefore, Bremer bounded them within a military taxonomy. His rationale, "States do not engage in militarized actions unless they perceive that the issues at stake are important." (Jones, et al., 1996, p. 170) So, the term militarized interstate disputes could be considered as a historical conflict case in which there is either a threat, display, or use of force by one state directly towards another member state. The following provides more clarification. First, a dispute is regarded as a sharp disagreement or clash of interests between two state entities. Second, according to the COW lexicon, disputes come in three varieties. Threats are considered verbal indications of hostile intent, displays are a military demonstration, and force usage summarized by a military operation.

Lastly, another key category was added to the militarized interstate dispute typology. When a MID escalated into open combat, resulting in 1,000 battle deaths, a threshold was crossed, signaling the conflict was now an interstate war (Jones et al., 1996; Singer et al., 1972). In sum, one should remember that military incidents form the building blocks for MIDs. Bremer and his colleagues were indeed instrumental in either defining or classifying four foundational MID tenets that would have far-reaching implications in war onset and the steps-to-war theory.

Equally relevant, and accredited to MIDs, was two new COW research areas. The first one involved the examination of revisionist states and interstate war correlation. Revisionism, according to this artifact, is a government's dissatisfaction with its circumstantial status quo in the international order and decided to engage in conflict to alter it (Lebow, 2010; Wright, 2015; Yoon, 2003). To classify as a revisionist state in the COW framework, however, the state had to challenge by either: 1) making territorial claims, 2) attempting to overthrow a regime, or 3) declaring the intention of not abiding by either a target state or international order rules (Jones et al., 1996).

Dispute outcome was the other focus area. The correlation between conflict outcomes and war onset was an important topic, yet non-existent. They established a sound technique to determine this relationship. Bremer and company coded outcomes based on the challenges made against the status quo (Bremer, 1992; Jones et al., 1996). Although there a total of six categories, only a few are discussed. First, victory is whenever a state secured a favorable change in the status quo by application of force. Yield is where one state capitulated by accepting concessions from the challenger prior to

military conflict. Last, stalemate is characterized by an unchanged status quo. (Jones et al., 1996).

In short, the 1996's Correlates of War MID dataset was instrumental in furthering peace research. It was the first major update. Prior to this point, Singer and Small's (1972) earlier version only identified war participants, start and end dates, fatality totals, and hostility levels. Revisionist's claims of territory, regime overthrow, or challenging the status quo effectively changed the paradigm in which MIDs could be evaluated. Likewise, outcome clarification was contributory. By deriving what states won or lost, Bremer effectively filled a knowledge gap in how dispute behavior ultimately culminated. Settlement methodology afforded critical operationalization of variables, thereby illuminating how negotiations, treaties, and ilk could impact MID outcomes, thereby advancing peace research. Some pertinent information on the analytical methods used in this study will foster greater comprehension. Bremer's use of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was more advanced than previous COW research. Bivariate & multivariate regression was improved, which resulted in five key findings. Using explanatory statistics, Bremer correlated that the frequency of conflicts and MIDs decreased as the number of states in the international system decreases. This finding was justified using the Collapse of the Soviet Union as an example. The conflict duration was equally revealing. Weibull probability distribution showed that the longer a dispute continued, the lower its probability of termination. Bremer expounded, "They have a feud-like quality such that the longer they last, the more difficult it is to bring them to a close" (Jones et al., 1996, p. 181).

Fatalities were the third finding. Here, a bivariate survival analysis, a common statistical test in the medical field, revealed that two-thirds of all MIDs ended with no deaths (Jones et al., 1996; Bradburn, Clark, Love, & Altman, 2003). That aside, there were noteworthy findings regarding conflicts characterized by battle deaths. Using the power status framework, major-major and major-minor disputes where battle deaths were relatively low. More interesting was the fact that minor-minor conflicts had the highest fatalities, which Bremer equated to the end of colonialism and the Cold War that fueled numerous civil wars (Jones et al., 1996). Fourth was the size of conflict. A negative binomial regression illustrated that most disputes are one-on-one affairs between minor powers. Again, this circumstance is indicative of the fall of the Soviet bloc and European imperialism (Jones et al., 1996).

The fifth finding was just as relevant. Escalation involved Singer's taxonomy of escalation. From lowest to highest, it is a threat, display of force, use of force, and full-scale war (Sample, 1997). Descriptive statistical tests revealed higher hostility levels between powers signified an increased probability of escalation (Jones et al., 1996). Meaning, most states adopted tit-for-tat strategies when dealing with issues of territory, policy, and regime differences (Carlson, 1995; Vasquez, 1987; Senese et al., 2003).

The last key finding was dispute settlement and outcomes. Here, predicted probabilities discerned when the conflict was between a major power and another major power, there was a significant correlation as to it ending in a negotiated settlement. Minor-minor clashes also resulted in the same. However, when a major state faced a minor one the settlement ended with the latter accepting the former's imposed will. Perhaps, the greatest insight that Bremer and his fellow researchers determined entailed

outcomes. There were two salient points. First is that most major powers were victorious in war; the second was that decisive outcomes were of the past (Jones et al., 1996; Senese et al., 2003).

To sum up Bremer's above contributions, there are three pertinent improvements that advanced war study research. Bremer's main aim was to articulate new operationalized variables and techniques used to generate them. Another improvement was the identification of new research topics. With over 2,000 data points, there were innumerable potential patterns in the COW militarized interstate dispute datasets. (Jones et al., 1996). Key subjects, such as revisionism and dispute outcomes, were introduced to the discussion. What is important is that the peace research and war study fields had moved beyond war onset, fulfilling of Singer's initial goal. Last was the methodology. Bremer showcased advanced statistics in both descriptive and inferential techniques. For example, predicted probability was key to correlating dispute settlement with power status, as well as bivariate survival analysis regarding battle fatalities. The overall impact was these bodies of work were instrumental in defining the connective tissue as to why states fight.

The next four subsections inductively construct the steps-to-war theory. The COW concepts of territory, rivalry, alliances, and arms races are first independently analyzed and then synthesized into the theoretical framework. As with dyadic militarized disputes and Stuart Bremer, each concept is referenced in a historical manner by the key researcher.

Territory

Territory was the first prominent steps-to-war subject area with roots in the COW project. Since it had numerous researchers, it is best to examine it through a longitudinal, thematic lens versus the researcher-based one. After compiling the war causal factors in their earlier work, Singer and Small discerned that territory was by far the most prominent (Singer et al., 1979). This implication was only the precipice because both researchers surmised that further analysis was needed to unveil why it was so prevalent. This section synthesizes several territorial taxonomies, thereby showcasing the importance of the war and peace studies field.

John Vasquez (1995) furthered the territory dialogue with “Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, Or Territoriality.” His main premise was that the clustering of war among neighbors may be conceptually significant; however, there is a territorial aspect that must be accounted for. Territoriality, a term fittingly coined by Singer’s former research assistant, is key to explaining that relationship. According to Vasquez, there is a human tendency to occupy, and, if necessary, defend territory—in essence, the meaning of territoriality. In other words, two states that border another used aggressive displays to establish boundaries in areas where they meet (Vasquez, 1995; Senese & Vasquez, 2003). This theory was in direct contrast to realism, which posited that nations fought to gain power and thereby assure their survival.

Prior to territoriality, the two main factors were proximity and interaction. The former is nothing more than the distance between states. More pointedly, proximity correlated with opportunity. Meaning, if states were contiguous there was a higher probability of war. On the other hand, interaction entailed relationships. Here, Vasquez

stated, “As the number of interactions between states increases the number of disagreements is apt to increase.” (Vasquez, 1995, p. 280). These interactions led to learned behavior on how to settle disputes. Case in point, if a state had previously used war to settle a conflict, then there was a higher probability it would do so again. Contrarily, if negotiation or mediation was used, then the opposite would occur. So then, territoriality concerned the motivation on how to handle territorial disputes.

Research design was straightforward. Vasquez used six propositions that were cross walked along three fronts: territoriality, proximity, and interaction. For brevity’s sake, each proposition is not addressed (Vasquez, 1995; Senese et al., 2003). It, however, is important to remember that a key premise is that humans engage in collective violence over territory not because of contiguity or relationships but from the learned behavior of trying to defend borders or acquire new territories. And once those boundaries were fully accepted by belligerents, then peace would ensue. If not, then violence conflict would surely continue. To prove these propositions, a mix of descriptive probabilities and linear regression was used. The key result was indeed interesting (Hensel & Mitchell, 2005, 2015; Johnson & Toft, 2013; Vasquez, 1995).

Vasquez statistically proved that war onset was avoided when there was an acknowledgment on how to resolve territorial disputes. This finding answered the key hypothesis that states fight over territory and not changes in power, which debunked the realists’ claim of power-seeking (Vasquez, 1995). Proximity (i.e., opportunity) and interaction were not the sole reasons that states fight but rather how they handled mitigation of territorial disputes. What is important to remember is that Vasquez moved the correlate of war debate beyond borders into the dispute resolution. The latter was

critical in the development of peace studies (Hensel et al., 2015; Senese et al., 2003, 2008).

In 2001, Vasquez again with “Mapping the Probability of War Analyzing the Possibility of Peace: The Role of Territorial Disputes” advanced the territory discussion. This scholarly article was rooted in criticism. At the time, there was a consensus amongst international relations scholars that the territory correlate did not actually predict war onset. They gave three key deficiencies as to why not. First, there were not many numerical cases of war. Vasquez acknowledged, “[W]ithin the MID data, there are 2034 disputes but only 102 that escalate to war, and several of these disputes that result in the same war.” (Vasquez, 2001, p.147). This relatively low-N dataset did not lend well to correlational analysis.

Second, there were just too many independent variables that impacted what causes war. Of note, this is a major critique afforded by traditional IR theorists who believed war could not be quantifiably studied (Singer, 1980). Last, war is not usually instantaneous, rather it is a long process, making it difficult to understand. Vasquez (2001) begrudgingly acknowledged this shortcoming, stating correlational analysis does not do well with the longitudinal or stepwise processes. However, taking all of these knowledge gaps into account, Vasquez countered with the notion that territorial disputes indeed increased the probability of war, which is different from correlation (Vasquez, 2001; Senese et al., 2003, 2008).

Research design was predicated on testing whether territorial disputes increased the likelihood of war. To accomplish, Vasquez's research methodology entailed comparing conditional and base probabilities. He stated, “By comparing the conditional

probability of territorial disputes escalating to war to the overall base probability, one can make a valid inference about whether territorial disputes increase the probability of war more than other types of dispute do.” (Vasquez, 2001, p. 150) Vasquez used the COW project’s MID dataset and a dyadic unit of measure to create a series of probability tables. The results supplemented his main hypothesis

There were three key findings. It was found that dyads dominated by territorial disputes had a relatively high probability of having fought one war. In fact, there was a probability was 25% higher than the base (Vasquez, 2001). Another interesting fact was that territorial disputes do not make war inevitable, which was shown by the low number of wars from states characterized by minimum territory-related issues. Lastly, Vasquez controlled for major powers and regionalism in the context of territorial disputes. What he found was that regions with a dominant state had fewer territory MIDs. Meaning, major powers established or enforced the rules and norms that limit the number of territorial wars (Vasquez, 2001).

In sum, this research had central far-ranging implications. It addressed the academic criticism that plagued the COW project from its early days, which was there was no valid method to correlate war. The shift to probability-based quantitative methods was indeed accurate and repeatable. Equally important, Vasquez statistically tested how a regional power impacted the territorial conflict with its sphere of influence. This was a first and became the wellspring for other peace studies, especially the steps-to-war.

Walter (2003) introduced intractability into the territory discussion. In “Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict”, she focused almost exclusively on

the intra-state conflict. Until then, previous COW research was almost exclusively on the interstate war. One should remember that Singer (1972), who was a product of his time, stressed the importance of determining why nations fought. However, by the early-2000s, characterized by the Chechnyan separatist movement, increased extremism in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) regions, and other non-state actor violence, the geopolitical landscape had changed (Huth, 1998). As such, Walter wanted to examine how governments acted in territorial disputes with non-state actors.

The research design was simple and easy to follow, which afforded readers the ability to comprehend and synthesis territorial impacts in intrastate conflict. The research blueprint used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Taking the results from the Center of International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) global survey, Walter compiled a robust dataset and operationalize several key variables. They were the number of ethnopolitical groups, economic value, strategic value, psychological value, and balance of power. Linear regression was used to test four interlocking hypotheses that primarily detailed a government's willingness to accommodate demands for territorial autonomy (Walter, 2003).

That said, there were three major findings. The first one is the number of ethnic groups. If there was more than one revisionist subgroup, then the government did not accommodate. In fact, Walter stated that these situations led to greater intensity because governmental leaders did not want to set a precedent of being weak. Second are democracies. Walter's research delineated that democracies were more willing to accommodate or seek resolution over territorial issues. Her rationale was that democratic leader was beholden to an electorate, thereby they could not act without impunity

(Walter, 2003; Hensel & Mitchell, 2005). Military expenditure was the last finding.

Here, a compromise was based on the monetary cost of war. As costs increased, Walter (2003) statistically showed that governments were willing to accommodate the demands of non-state actors. The primary reason was the continuation of war expenditures only made the state weaker and more susceptible to loss or forced into an undesired outcome.

Although Walter's work did not involve interstate conflict, it did further the advancement of territory in the war onset discussion. More so, the simplistic, and yet elegant design was not cumbersome as several previous COW research studies. Perhaps most importantly, Walter proclaimed that China with its many contiguous states should be significantly less willing to negotiate any territorial dispute with its neighbors or the various ethnic groups residing with the Yellow Kingdom. This summation, according to her, should be further researched.

Senese (2005) returned to the territorial debate when he released "Territory, Contiguity, and International Conflict assessing a New Joint Explanation." In 2005, he injected the concept of territoriality. Hitherto, there were two territorial explanations for the onset of war. Contiguity is the first. It is nothing more than two states that are adjoined by a common border (Senese, 2005; Vasquez, 1995; Senese et al., 2003). Since these entities were neighbors, then there was a greater possibility of disagreements. The other explanation was territory. The idea here was that domestic populations were more concerned with protecting the integrity of their land and willing to fight to do so (Sense, 2005). What Senese aimed to accomplish was to cumulatively examine both contiguity and territory and how they led to conflict escalation and war.

Before discussing the research design, it necessary to outlay two important concepts that were integral to Sense's hypotheses formulation. Star's (1978) opportunity and willingness framework afforded plausibility on how states entered war. Opportunity, which is dependent on geographical proximity, stipulated that closeness equated to numerous occasions to enter conflict. Willingness, according to Starr, was the degree to which an interstate actor would pursue a prescribed policy (Senese, 2005; Starr, 1978). These constructs were amendable to sequential hypotheses. The first test was dispute onset, whereby Senese questioned whether contiguity and territorial claims would lead to a dispute. The next one entailed war onset. Here, the researcher queried if proximity and geographic conflict would indeed lead to war.

To remain aligned with the sequential nature of the abovementioned hypotheses, the research framework was stepwise. Senese constructed a two-stage estimation procedure, which relied on a dyadic unit of measurement, as a primary means of testing his hypotheses. The first stage used MID data to derive if a dyad had a territorial dispute and was contiguous, whereas the second included a test to determine if the dispute led to war. The censored Probit technique produced expected probabilities, whereby a ranking of four predetermined excursions: 1) not contiguous, no territorial disagreement; 2) Not contiguous, territorial disagreement; 3) contiguous, no territorial disagreement; and 4) contiguous, territorial agreement) could occur (Senese, 2005).

The findings were mixed. Based on the presence or absence of contiguity and territorial claims, dyads that were contiguous and possessed land-based claims had higher a higher probability of conflict than those without. This meant that bordering states with territorial issues entered a militarized interstate dispute on a greater frequency. Senese

(2005) revealed that the second stage result was unexpected. As support, he stated, “[I]t does not support the explanation’s notion that contiguity will have some positive impact on the likelihood of MIDs escalating to war.” (Senese, 2005, p. 777). In simple terms, territorial MIDs escalating into full-scale combat was inconclusive. Why is this article relevant? Senese clearly linked the territory discussion with MID and war onset. This joint account is important because previous work was arguably cumbersome and complex (Senese, 2005; Senese & Vasquez, 2003). Equally significant was highlighting war onset as it related to national resolve. Research on a state’s willingness to enter war is not new; there have been numerous qualitative accounts thereof. What Senese managed was a quantitative outlook on resolve as it pertained to war onset, especially contiguous and non-contiguous states. Meaning, countries that do not border each other tend not to engage in territorial MIDs. However, when they do, non-contiguous belligerents clearly signal their resolve through escalation. This salient point does allow providence on Sino activity in the South China Sea.

The last territory-related subject area encompassed a multifaceted typology of territorial linkages to militarized interstate disputes. Gibler (2017) outlaid the classification of states involved in territorial disputes from 1816 to 2001. He primarily differentiated between cases where territorial ownership was disputed and instances whereby the status quo distribution of land is acknowledged. As a refresher, it is important to remember that MIDs are divided into four specific categories—territory, policy, regime, and others (Bremer, 1992). Gibler contended this division is important because a subnational number of studies, over 240 to be exact (Singer, 2002), have demonstrated that “territorial issues are more difficult to resolve, more likely to repeat,

more prone to fatalities, and more likely to cause wars than other types of issues” (Gibler, 2017, p. 194).

In “What They Fit For: Specific Territorial Issues in Militarized Interstate Dispute, 1816-2001”, Gibler (2017) had two main goals. First, he provided an extensive listing of the types of territorial issues that countries fight over, which he divided between location and uncertainty levels of ownership. Homelands, islands, and colonies were examples. Second, the scholar showcased which land-related issues were more serious than others. The types of territorial issues in military disputes were expansive. However, there were five subcategories that necessitate further analysis. The first one was disputed ownership of a territory. Gibler expounded that border areas, islands, colonies, and maritime areas constituted this conflict category. Of significance, the delineation of sea-based conflict was new to the COW project. Second is the time-tested border issues, which was straightforward. Opportunity-based territorial conflict was third. It is characterized by revanchism, weak states, predatory states, and general. Fourth is state system changes, which is comprised of new and disintegrating states. Gibler’s last territorial conflict classification was border violations. Land, maritime, and air personified this subset (Gibler, 2017). To analyze the territorial issue distribution, a simple frequency technique was used. There were three cases in which conflict incidents were binned: number of disputes, the number of fatal MIDs, and the number of wars. As expected, disputed ownership, particularly over border areas, resulted in the highest percentage (21%) of fatalities. What was unexpected, according to Gibler, was that island disputed resulted in the highest number of wars (Gibler, 2017).

The research design to test the seriousness of land-related issues was more sophisticated than the distribution type. Gibler relied on dyadic analysis and multi-linear regression to examine five distinct outcome variables, which were purposefully aligned to the distribution list. The predictor variables were contiguity, democracy, defense pacts, and capability differentials. The results were enlightening and because of its statistical significance across all outcome variables, contiguity, by far, was the best predictor of conflict. In fact, Gibler correlated that territory related MIDs did escalate to fatal disputes and war. Democracies had a negative effect on conflict onset. Meaning, democratic government was less likely to enter an opportunity-based territorial conflict, which is consistent with most peace study literature. Capability mattered in opportunity cases; however, it did not impact any other cases. Defense pacts were not significant in any category (Gibler, 2017; Jones et al., 1996). In sum, Gibler's major contribution to territorial disputes was the expansion of knowledge. His subdivision of the territorial MID into numerous variables showed how ownership and opportunity were integral to the onset of violent conflict. Furthermore, his use of state status—i.e., new or disintegrating was a fresh look at the international system as it pertains to territorial issues.

Rivalry

Rivalries are the second essential topic associated with the steps-to-war theory. In the early-1990s, the term was conceptualized by COW stalwarts Gary Goertz and Paul Diehl. At its crux, a rivalry is recurrent-conflict between states that significantly impact interstate-relationships and -behavior in a negative manner (Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Klein, Goertz, & Diehl, 2006). Although it comes in many forms, here, interstate

competitiveness is manifested in four dimensions: spatial, duration, competition severity, and repeated conflict (Mitchell & Vasquez, 2014). For most states, rivalries are expensive in terms of economic and opportunity cost because of the need to increase military and other power capabilities. More importantly, interstate enmities have been statistically linked to war onset. Below is a 35-year account of the rival-war correlation research organized by key rivalry-war researchers. It starts with enduring conflict in the spatial and positional domains, moves to strategic long-term competitions, and finally ends with rivalry maintenance and recurring issues (Goertz et al., 1993; Klein et al., 2006, Sarkees, 2000).

Goertz and Diehl (1993) sought to define and explore the concept of enduring rivalries. The latter was described as a competition between states that is comprised of various degrees of competitiveness, time, and spatial aspects. The contest is military-oriented and geared towards either obtaining a tangible good, such as territory, or an intangible one akin to prestige. Time, in this case, has a far-ranging temporal aspect (Goertz et al., 1993; Goertz et al., 2000; Wayman, 2000). Goertz et al. (1993) posited it was greater than three to five years. More so, enduring rivalries do not endure forever but have a beginning and end. With a few exceptions, the spatial attributes were mostly dyadic. But the scholars were clear to point out that a good definition of rivalries should not have a limit on the number of belligerent and should account for multi-lateral interstate conflict.

That said, this qualitative study was an exercise in comparing the operational definition of rivalry from various authors using a framework of time, dispute number, and termination comparison metrics. Prior to analyzing the results, it is necessary to identify

and provide a succinct overview of the four selected authors' definitions. Wayman (1990) is the first. He used a minimum of 11 years, two disputes, and termination of the rivalry of 10 years without disputes to operationalize rivalry. Next, there was Diehl. He defined rivalry as no minimum length of disputes, three disputes, and rivalry termination as 10 years without conflict (Diehl, 1985). Then, there was Gochman and Maoz (1984) whose definition had no minimum length, included seven MIDs, and no time period for termination. Finally, the COW project articulated rivalry as 25 years of conflict, a minimum of 5 disputes, and 10 years with no open hostility. All in all, Goertz et al. (1993) clearly articulated the various rivalry definitions. It is now time to examine their results and the findings were undeniably informative. Based on the above criteria, there were numerous rivalry totals. Wayman led the list with 276 dyads. He was followed by Diehl whose tally was 148 rivalries. Gochman and Maoz were third with 52 cases and followed by the COW project relatively low 30 enduring competitions (Gochman et al. 1984; Goertz et al., 1993).

Equally important was Goertz and Diehl's synopsis on these definitions and suitability for research. According to them, Gochman and Maoz were the worst because of the lack of a temporal aspect and inability to delineate the start and finish of rivalries. Both Diehl and Wayman's operational definitions were best suited for research where rivalries are the background material (Goertz et al., 1993). Unsurprisingly, Goertz and Diehl (2003) proclaimed that the COW definition was for studies where enduring rivalries were the focus. In sum, what is important to remember is that Goertz and Diehl (1993) closed knowledge gaps by clearly articulating what rivalry definitions were best

suiting for requisite studies. This effort was an attempt to lessen some of the criticism over rivalries in the context of war causation.

Colaresi and Thompson (2002) further explored the rivalry debate with their analysis of how protracted conflict was relevant in crisis escalation. It is important to remember that Colaresi's focus area was conflict escalation, whereas Thompson purported strategic rivalries. When teamed together, the researchers argued for the idea of rivalry possessing fewer limitations than protracted conflict (Colaresi & Thompson, 2002). There were two key tenets to the abovementioned supposition. Strategic rivalry, which is the proclaimed enmity between countries, is one (Thompson, 2001). Equally important was escalation. When merged, the key hypothesis was that rivalry crises are more likely to become violent.

To test this support, the research design was quantitative in nature. Brecher and Wilkenfeld's (Colaresi et al., 2002) escalation model, which used to identify 16 independent variables, to account for war. After deriving several propositions, chi-square tests of independence were used to explore bivariate relationships. The test results showcased that out of 204 identified rivalries, 94 of them were strategic, which is an astounding 67%. More interestingly, there were two key findings. The researchers determined a small number of dyads were responsible for a disproportionate amount of total conflict in the international system. Second, a crisis between rival dyads as compared to non-rival crises was more prone to threats, militarized action, and ultimately war (Colaresi et al., 2002; Thompson, 2001).

In the same way, Goertz, Jones, and Diehl (2005) posited that rivalries were maintained through the failure of realist strategies and conflict management techniques.

This initial exploration study focused on the former. Continuing, the research team believed that most repeated-conflict studies, which were common in COW research, were myopic in their persistence in identifying past influences. Moreover, the scholars argued the time horizons for recurring-conflict studies were perhaps too broad and linear and therefore should be narrower (Goertz & Diehl, 2000). Goertz et al. further expounded, “This is often theoretically unappealing because of the connection between conflict, sometimes more than a hundred years apart, is frequently tenuous.” (Goertz et al., 2005, p. 766) On top of these viewpoints, rivalry-specific studies were regarded as short-sighted because of the sole dependence on conflict initiation and outcomes to understanding rivalry continuation. The research team posited that what between the endpoint was perhaps more important (Goertz et al., 2005).

Goertz and his colleagues were not proponents of realism as a viable theory to examine rivalry maintenance. Their rationale is nuanced. Since realist strategies often included coercive tactics and power politics, it made determining rivalry causality difficult. Meaning, the issue becomes is rivalry a product of or accelerant for conflictual behavior between states (Goertz et al., 2000; Goertz et al., 2005). As one can see, this conundrum does not facilitate valid and reliable research. Therefore, the academics adopted the punctuated equilibrium theory as an analytical framework to explore conflict maintenance. The theorem postulated that rivalries go through several stages, invoking that these competitions follow a path of dependence. Goertz and the other scholars (Goertz et al., 2005, p. 763) categorized the path into four disparate steps; they were initiation (first two disputes), lock-in (third through fifth disputes), stasis (sixth dispute and beyond), and culmination.

When it came to research design to answer how are rivalries maintained, a two-model quantitative construct was implemented. Model I centered on the impact of previous disputes on rivalry maintenance, whereas Model II focused on life cycles. Data was accessed via the COW rivalry dataset, which at the time was a relatively new addition to the COW information catalog. A total of 1,166 rivalries were identified for further testing. The statistical test applied was linear regression. The outcome variable was dispute recurrence. There were several maintenance predictor variables: stalemate, victory, severity, territory, and duration (Goertz et al., 2005).

Taking the above-mentioned overview into account, there were a few pertinent outcomes. Model I proved that stalemates in militarized hostilities are the most statistically significant indicator as to why rivalries are maintained. It was more than either victory, severity, or the other predictor variables. The rationale is that a stalemate signals the conflict strategies have not succeeded and thus disputants continue their rivalry. Equally pertinent was the fact that disputes mainly occur in rapid fashion, usually within two years. Regarding Model II, it revealed that dispute outcomes mattered in the early stages in the rivalry, but quickly dissipated during the later stages. What is most important was the only clear indicator in the late-stage rivalry maintenance was territory, which meant that states that fought over geography remained enemies. This result aligned with most war-study literature (Goertz et al., 2005).

All in all, this study expanded rival-war analysis by investigating interstate conflict maintenance. To start, the use of the punctuated equilibrium theory was new and novel. As a reminder, one of the key criticisms of COW research was the lack of theory. This form of equilibrium theory stressed that hostile interstate relationships enter a stasis

phase after six or more MIDs, and it would take a political shock to culminate the rivalry (Goertz et al., 2005). Second, this study illuminated that indeed rivalry context mattered in predicting future disputes. The predictor variables (victory, stalemate, dispute severity, territory, etc.) were critical indicators as to why nations continue to compete. The research team stated the only non-statistically significant predictor was a victory. A fact that is believable because a state winning a military contest does not equate to the vanquished being pacified. Last, this body of work successfully demonstrated that rivalry maintenance was not linear, which previous repeated-conflict research ascertained. Rather, Goertz and his colleagues statistically displaced that rivalry maintenance varied over the life cycle of the rivalry. When these three findings are combined, the expansion of knowledge did improve the understanding of rivalry in the war studies context (Goertz et al, 2005).

One last piece of rivalry literature concerned problem aggregation and militarized incidence. Dreyer (2010), a major proponent of strategic rivalries, believed issue accumulation increased the likelihood of militarized conflict. Hitherto, most research tended to examine and compare disputes in isolation (Bremer, 1992; Senese et al., 2005). Dreyer contended this technique was not valid because most issues between states aggregate over time. In fact, he surmised that after an initial conflict, states would develop an image of “enemy” toward another as multiple issues transpired. This effect eventually would lead to an enduring strategic rivalry, which Dreyer claimed must be studied (Dreyer, 2010).

Another reason Dreyer wanted to explore strategic rivalry dynamic was both temporal and escalatory in nature. The academic was particularly partial to the notion of

the volcano model as an explanatory justification as to why strategic rivals go to war. The idea here is that as disputes occur over time they tend to escalate and spiral out of control. As such, Dreyer argued that tempo was an essential element in issue conflict accumulation and war onset (Dreyer, 2010).

Using the Issues Correlate of War (ICOW) database, Dreyer amassed four distinct issues that fuel strategic rivalry (Dreyer, 2010; Hensel & Mitchell, 2015). Spatial issues involve territory, as mentioned is stable in the war-studies. Positional issues aligned with realist claims that states seek power to maintain their security (Colaresi et al., 2005; Thompson, 1995). Third, is ideological. The point here is that states compete in the best way to organize a global or regional system. The Cold War is a prime example (Dreyer, 2010; Thompson, 1999). The last issue, which was added by Dreyer, is identity. This contention is based on either ethnic, religious, or racial strife. In all, there were 98 instances of issue accumulation of strategic rivals (Dreyer, 2010).

Dreyer's research design was commensurate with other rivalry studies; he used linear regression to test premises. There were four hypotheses developed for statistical analysis via two models. One excursion assessed issue accumulation, while the other addressed the tempo of escalation. The key dependent variable was the occurrence of an interstate war. The independent variables were tenets of the ICOW database, which are spatial, positional, ideological, and identity. Before covering the results, it is important to note that the timeframe was from 1816-2000, a substantial expansion from previous rivalry research (Dreyer, 2010).

The study findings were varied. With respect to issue accumulation, Dreyer derived, "Overall, moving from a single-issue conflict to the accumulation of two issues,

the probability of a militarized dispute changes from .091 to .198, an absolute difference of .107 and a 118% increase over the baseline." (Dreyer, 2010, p. 789). This result supported the notion that strategic rivals would often bear the burden of developing military capability and engaging in militarized conflict to overcome their respective opponents (Wayman, 2000). Another key discovery concerned rapidity, whereby most states become rivals within in the first year of a MID outcome. In fact, the significance of long-term issue accumulation is that it demonstrated states become locked-in as they compete, using tit-for-tat power politics until war breaks out. This result supported the volcano model in which a gradual increase in issue accumulation tended to increase the chances of interstate war (Dreyer, 2010).

What is important to remember is that Dreyer's treatise expanded knowledge on issue accumulation and conflict escalation within a strategic rivalry. The further development of existing issue typology could impact future research. More so, Dreyer's use of the volcano model supported Goertz et al. (2005) viewpoint. Whereas the latter stipulated that it took six or more disputes for states to enter an enduring rivalry, Dreyer also empirically showed that salience of the issue extrapolated over a relatively long time period could lead to interstate armed conflict. A fact that bolstered the steps-to-war argument that rivalry does increase the probability of war.

Overall, the abovementioned context has delineated considerable gains in rivalry research. Both Diehl and Goertz (2000) effectively categorized rivalry dimensions, advancing study techniques beyond dyadic MIDs. Thompson and his colleagues' body of work on strategic rivalries was pivotal in expanding the rival-war study field away from spatial and positional competitions to more conclusive content (Thompson, 1995,

1999, 2001). Dreyer's issues research successfully updated and solidified what exactly entailed a rivalry, effectively bringing the rivalry-war field of study into the modern era. Perhaps most importantly, the empirical work on rivalry has proven that it instrumental in bringing about war.

Alliances

Alliances have been a key component and an integral study area for steps-to-war research. More so, it is the third supporting premise of the STW theory. There remains debate on whether formal interstate agreements contribute or prevent war. It is also worth mentioning that several scholars contend that alliance polarization promotes the commencement of hostilities amongst states (Gibler & Vasquez, 1998; Levy, 1981; Singer et al., 1972). This section examines some vital literature on alliances as it pertains to war causation. As with other steps-to-war attributes, most alliance-war analyses have leaned toward qualitative investigations. This circumstance is not the case here. The four below-listed scholarly articles are indeed seminal, having created, corrected, or expanded knowledge with respect to treaties and military conflict. But what is more relevant is their empirical nature and advanced quantitative research methods. Similar to other literature review sections, the first treatise is from a long-standing scholar in the COW project.

One of the seminal alliance studies was performed by Jack Levy, an influential member of the COW project. He desired to examine whether alliance formation contributed to peace or war with respect to Great Powers. Up until Levy's study, alliance literature was mixed. There was a school that contended alliances promoted peace because of reduced uncertainty in the international system, thereby alleviating state

misperception and miscalculation. The other scholar group believed alliances generated counter-alliances, which furthered mistrust and tensions between states, leading to arms races and ultimately war (Levy, 1981; Singer et al, 1972; Small & Singer, 1990). With this mind, Levy argued recent empirical studies were rendered inconclusive. A situation in which he wanted to rectify.

Levy concentrated on relational theories the balance of power and power transition, to ascertain war causation. He, therefore, focused on the Great Powers because they were the primary actors in most interstate wars. As such, a succinct summary of what entails a Great Power is warranted here. According to Levy, a Great Power is a state that played a major role in international security-related politics. Key attributes are possession of a high-level of power capabilities; participation in the international system; recognition by that system as a Great Power. (Levy, 1981).

To start, the research question queried whether high periods of alliance formation were followed by war. The chronological aspect was an expansive 500 years. Levy went further left in time to the 1500s to start his analysis, which was different from the 1815 timestamp that was prevalent amongst war studies at the time. He advocated, “A more extended temporal domain would increase the number of cases and, by increasing the variation in underlying international conditions, facilitate comparative historical analysis” (Levy, 1981, p. 585).

With the COW dataset as the repository, Levy chose the occurrence of interstate war as the independent variable. There were several dummy variables operationalized to broaden examination. These war indicators were frequency, duration, extent, magnitude, severity, intensity, etc. all of which were transcribed from Singer's *Handbook of War*

(Levy, 1981; Singer et al., 1972). Although there were other war types, Great Power military action was deemed more statistically important. This conflict form was derived from historical accounts and COW's power capability index. The dependent variable was the international alliance formation. It is necessary to mention the sole alliance type tested was defensive in character. That said, the research design was correlation analysis (i.e., Kendall's tau b). Here, Levy conducted a statistical analysis to test the relational strength between the independent variable and the prescribed dependent variables. The results, at the time, were groundbreaking (Gibler & Sarkees, 2004; Levy, 1981).

Levy's study encompassed two key findings. The first concerned the relationship between alliance and war. According to him, nearly 80% of the great power treaty formation was followed by war. This outcome was aligned with power transition theorists and those scholars that contended alliances destabilized the international system. Even more profound was Levy's other finding that delineated alliance formation was associated with peace, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, rather than war. These results were duplicitous. Levy gave no formal justification as to why they were not conclusive, which would further "muddy" the alliance and war onset debate (Gibler et al., 2004; Levy, 1981).

Although arguably inconclusive, Levy's study did have three salient accomplishments within the alliance-war study field. First, it expanded the modern-day international state system from 1815 to the late-15th century. This action added further historical context and increased the number of cases. Second, Levy focused on the Great Powers. This explicit emphasis was one of the first of its kind in empirical war causation research within the confines of dominant state interaction. Last, according to Levy, his

work expanded research techniques from simple correlation analysis toward more advance descriptive forms that afforded greater refinement in alliance-war research (Levy, 1981).

In 2000, the alliance-war research became more intricate and expansive when Leeds, Long, and Mitchell aimed to explore alliance reliability under a revised set of obligations. Upfront, this study is a replica of Alan Sabrosky's, an acolyte of the COW project movement during the early days, work on alliances wherein the premise was that alliance reliability is predicated on war performance opportunity. Meaning, treaties were measured on whether the respective allies fought together in a war (Leeds, Long, & Mitchell, 2000; Sabrosky, 1980).

For clarification's sake, it is necessary to offer a brief overview of this foundational study. Data collection and research design were straightforward. The COW dataset was the information bank used to obtain treaty data. Alliances were divided into three categories: defensive, non-aggression, and entente. Sabrosky coded each war participant as one who belonged to an alliance and subsequently fought in a war as either honored, violated, or abstained. The overall results were 27% of the time allies fought for one another; neutrality was prevalent 61%, which left 12% of the identified cases as allies who fought against another. More pointedly, the key takeaway from Sabrosky's research was that alliance obligations were only met 24% of the time (Gibler, 2000; Sabrosky, 1980). This discovery cast a long shadow on the alliance study, and to a greater extent, war causation research, for years. Leeds and his fellow researcher desired to illuminate and resolve Sabrosky's unintentional research shortfalls.

Concerning alliances and war onset, Leeds et al. (2000) believed there was a gap between theory and empirical evidence. Meaning, with only 24% treaty obligation completion rates, then why would any sane state leader enter an alliance with another country. More so, Sabrosky's work did not account for the differences between neutrality and consultation, treating both the same (Leeds et al., 2000). Another shortfall was the assumption made that alliance requires a fight, thereby taking into consideration that war context matters. As such, Leeds and his colleagues deemed it necessary to redo Sabrosky's seminal study (Gibler, 2000; Leeds et al., 2000).

There were two major research modifications. The first one necessitated a new alliance dataset. Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) was created to improve information on alliance treaties. To clarify, Leeds et al. (2000) defined alliance as a written agreement, signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, with three key tenets: 1) promise to aid an ally in military conflict; 2) remain neutral; 3) refrain from military conflict, or 4) consult one another before fighting. This construct was more detailed than Sabrosky's defensive, neutral, and entente typology. After operationalization, there was also a case difference. Or rather, the COW data repository included 146 recorded alliances between 1815 and 1944, whereas ATOP contained a more robust 213 cases (Leeds et al., 2000).

The second alteration involved adding context. Leeds et al. (2000) argued there was a level of assistance with associated treaty conditions, which meant there were more attributes than COW's three types of pacts. Therefore, they created five dummy variables of defense, offense, neutrality, nonaggression, or consultation to help examine treaty provision. Alliance obligations were the other added framework. They were

substantially more numerous in the updated study; however, there were some key ones. Specific adversaries, specified locations, and pertinent ongoing conflict are a few examples of different types of obligations that shape alliance formation (Leeds et al., 2000).

Keeping the previous research methodology constant, Leeds et al. (2000) discovered a sole, distinct finding from Sabrosky. The addition and examination of obligation into the research technique revealed that 75% of alliance obligations were indeed met, which is a significant difference from 24%. What is perhaps more important is that a key knowledge gap on alliance reliability was filled by delineating the relevance of treaty obligations. By updating Sabrosky's work with a new alliance classification and more robust dataset, Leeds et al. (2000) corrected some spurious data within the COW dataset and help bring consensus that alliances do matter in war causation studies (Gibler et al., 2004; Kimball, 2006; Leeds et al., 2000).

Leeds returned to alliance-war debate, in 2003, when he published his second study. The main research aim was to examine the different types of alliance commitments and the probability of military conflict. There were several factors as to why Leeds felt his study was relevant. Since scholars could not establish a robust empirical relationship between alliances and war, the alliance-war political scientist believed this knowledge shortfall should be addressed (Leeds, 2003). According to Leeds, there were two main reasons for this deficiency. Alliance behavior is undeniably duplicitous, encouraging some states to embark on military conflict while deterring others. The other flaw entailed the dichotomy between targets and challengers. Targeted states with allies are mistakenly less willing to concede to challengers. Challengers with

alliances are less easily deterred from war. What is interesting is that both cases might be in the best interests of these states (Leeds, 2003).

A key component of this study is how Leeds characterized alliances. He contended, they were "written agreements, signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, which include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of a conflict, to refrain from a military conflict with one another, or to consult in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict." (Leeds, 2003, p. 429) This definition was reminiscent of his previous research with the addition of an international crisis segment—an attempt to stymy criticism.

To accomplish the study objectives, there were three hypotheses. Here is a brief description of each. The first one opined that challengers would not initiate conflict with a target if the latter had allies. Conversely, Leeds tested if a challenger would start a military conflict with a target if they had offensive allies. The last one, centered on neutrality interstate neutrality pledges, involved a case in which the challenger would remain neutral and not instigate conflict upon a target (Leeds, 2003).

Hypotheses were assessed with two primary statistical tests. Inferential techniques used regression with MIDs as the outcome variables. Power capability, democratic regime, contiguity, and alliances were the predictors. On the other hand, descriptive tests, which primarily centered on the percentage differentiation in probability, measured states with dispute initiation against various alliance types. Of significance, alliance and conflict data was pulled from the ATOP dataset (Leeds et al., 2000; Leeds, 2003).

For greater clarity, results are addressed by the statistical test. There were two inferential findings. First, strong challengers who possessed credible power capabilities and were contiguous with the target state are more likely to start a military conflict. Second, states with similar alliance types were less likely to initiate conflict amidst themselves or against others. The tenet that states with a small number of capable allies often exist in a relatively stable geopolitical environment is arguably applicable in this case (Leeds, 2003).

Differential test results were equally profound. Leeds proved target states with defensive alliance agreements had a 28% lower probability of being attacked. Another outcome illustrated that a challenger that was a signatory of an offensive alliance treaty had a 48% higher chance of starting a conflict with another country (Leeds, 2003). Perhaps the most illuminating finding was that challengers with neutrality agreements from outside states have a 58% higher probability of initiating a war. This result coincides with the premise that states enter neutrality alliances to keep external states from interfering with the former's military and political aims against a target state (Leeds, 2003).

According to Leeds (2003), he achieved two key goals in this study. He adequately expanded the knowledge on the theory of alliances beyond the normative deterrence models. By that, the research showed that states were often encouraged to initiate conflict based on treaty obligation. The other accomplishment was the provision of empirical support that alliances do indeed influence interstate behavior and relationships as it pertains to war onset.

In totality, it was made clear that alliances do contribute to war initiation. What this section has illuminated is that treaty obligations and the level of agreement are integral to quantifying if, and when, a state enters a defense pact (Levy, 1981; Siverson & King, 1980). From there, the literature also purported the clarification if warfare would soon follow alliance formations (Gibler & Vasquez, 1998; Gibler et al., 2004; Leeds, 2000, 2003). More importantly, some of the validity issues associated with the earlier alliance-war research and spurious data were either reduced, clarified, or outright eliminated.

Arms Races

Arms races are the last key indicator of war onset addressed and premise of the steps-to-war theory. In 1979, peace researcher Michael Wallace, an original member of the COW project, conducted a study on arms buildups. The main research objective was to determine whether arms races affected the probability that serious dispute between Major Powers would occur, especially as it pertained to conflict escalation (Wallace, 1979; Siverson & Diehl, 1989). One of the first items, Wallace had to accomplish was defining an arms race, which was controversial at that time. His definition was two-fold. According to Wallace (1979, 1982), a buildup amongst states involved an abnormal, simultaneous increase in expenditure on war materiel coupled with a competitive rivalry. From here, Wallace examined militarized disputes between major states from 1816 to 1965, thereby creating an intricate index that encapsulated MIDs, arms buildups, and war.

To answer the research question, a simplistic analysis design was used. Wallace used 2x2 contingency tables to determine whether arms race escalated to war (i.e., dependent variable). The predictors (i.e., independent variables), ascertained from his

index, were domain, serious disputes, and war. What Wallace discovered was that 23 of the 26 disputes that escalated to war were preceded by arms races (Wallace, 1979; Sample, 1997). In another context, there was an 82% chance that if an arms race was ongoing between two countries when a MID materialized, then they went war (Wallace, 1979).

There was much criticism on Wallace's findings because of its challenges to traditional assumptions about political relations between states. Siverson and Diehl (1989) reported that Weede, a major political science scholar circa 1980, had two major objections. First, Wallace's sample did not account for the two World Wars, which overweighed arms buildups and escalation. Second, the study did not account for unilateral buildups. Meaning, some countries increased their military capability independent of rivalry and this is based on the need to protect their newfound prosperity. Weede contended that this circumstance was "roped" into Wallace's index. Last, there was a critique that Wallace's initial work was not theoretically based or used an accepted model to test. In short, there were serious concerns regarding the validity and reliability of Wallace's initial work (Sample, 1997; Siverson et al., 1989).

Despite these shortcomings, Wallace's initial studies accomplished three things. It was the first serious empirical analysis on the impact of arms races and war causation. The stepwise examination on how countries' military expenditures and hostile relations were indeed revolutionary, expanding the knowledge gap in war studies. Second, and perhaps most interesting, Wallace's treatise dominated the war and peace study field as it pertained to arms races for nearly 20 years. It prompted near-constant debate and criticism from a host of scholars (Sample, 1997; Wallace, 1979, 1982).

In the late-1990s, Susan Sample (1997, 1998, 2002) forayed into the arms race debate. She resolved much of the debate with several studies. One of her first goals was to end the Wallace logjam in arms buildup discourse. She stressed, “Far too much time was spent arguing about minor methodological issues rather than resolving those and progressing naturally to the questions now addressed.” (Sample, 1998, p. 122).

To this end, her first major study’s main research objective was to test whether ongoing military buildups increased the chances of a MID. More importantly, the professor stressed the necessity to move beyond bivariate to multivariate analysis techniques. With slight modifications to the arms race definition in which acceleration and a ten-year year military growth period were interjected, Sample (1998) setup a multilinear regression. The independent variables were territory, defense burden, nuclear weapons, and power transition, whereas the dependent one entailed escalation. Of significance, both variable forms were dichotomous, rendering familiar outcomes.

Research results were conventional. First, countries involved in on-going arms races and disputes are more than twice as likely to escalate to higher conflict. More so, the probability of a dispute escalating to war with the stepwise addition of territory, defense expenditures, and weapons of mass destruction, was 59%. When power parity and transition are added, the percentage increased to 69% (Sample 1997b, 1998). More importantly, Sample did two key things for the advancement of knowledge. Although dichotomous and therefore somewhat simple, the switch from bivariate to multivariate analysis incorporated other factors in which not only impacted the outcome variable but also relationships between predictors. Another key accomplishment was finally

advancing the arms race debate beyond Wallace's seminal 1979 article (Sample, 1997, 1998).

A few years later, Sample (2002) again enhanced upon earlier military buildup research in the context of the balance of power and deterrence theory, particularly in the post-World War era. Sample's (1997b, 2002) main aim was to identify different domains influenced by arms races and conflict escalation. The former can be viewed as the dichotomy between major and minor states, including the combination of both. Using a logit regression model to test numerous propositions, Sample's key finding was that mutual arms races increased the escalation of war for both major (i.e., major-major) and minor (i.e., minor-minor) state disputes, but not for mixed conflict (i.e., Major-Minor). Aside from this monumental finding, Sample expanded the war study field. Her examination of post-World War II escalation between interstate domains was path-setting. More pointedly, she contended the notions of balance of power and deterrence strategy were not limited to major states and hegemony but require a concerted recognition that minor states have a role in conflict escalation (Sample, 2002).

In sum, Sample helped resolve much of the arms race controversy by conducting myriad tests, holding the military buildups constant, while simultaneously controlling for other key factors such as territory, nuclear weapons, and domain status. Her findings led to numerous scholars, in both international relations and war studies, to admit that arms races have a modest, positive, and significant association with conflict escalation (Sample 1997a, 1997b; Colaresi et al., 2005; Rider, Findley, & Diehl, 2011).

If Sample dominated the arms buildup dialogue in the 2000s, then Rider propelled it for the 2010s. Rider's first study dealt with arms race onset. Particularly, he contended

states entered arms buildup over salient issues, which are rivalry, threat, and territorial competition (Rider, 2009). This supposition is because arms races are costly endeavors, prone to escalation. Rider argued the impacts were two-fold. Short term impacts are spent resources; the long term is economic decline. Gibler, Rider, and Hutchison (2005) defined arms race as an “interactive competition between two rival nations using their military. This definition is what Gibler used to test his two prime hypotheses. The first test sought to discern if heightened threat levels equated to greater probability for arms races. Similarly, the second one contended territorial threat correlated to rivals entering a military buildup versus other disputes, such as policy and regime (Gibler et al., 2005; Rider, 2009).

The research methodology was more intricate compared to earlier studies. Rider developed a time-series cross-sectional design to determine if indeed arms race onset (i.e., outcome variable) was predicated on revisionist tendencies. The latter is categorized as territory, policy, and regime, which are the predictor variable. In addition, control variables such as contiguity, parity, joint democracy, and joint alliance were used to help alleviate confounding variables. They were chosen because of their momentous influence within the international system. For example, most states share a border and therefore contiguity is relevant. Another case is that power capability amongst nations is a key attribute in interstate relations. Both hypotheses arguably necessitated control variables, thereby preventing faulty results (Rider, 2009).

Rider’s two models provided some insightful results. The first one tested the threat hypothesis. Through analysis, the researcher delineated that at least one MID experienced within the last five years is a positive and significant attribute for arms

buildup onset (Rider, 2009). The second model tested the territorial threat hypothesis. As stated, states experiencing intimidations are more likely to engage in arms races.

However, it is only one type of threat that produced one, territorial. Rider explained, “This is because high costs of arms races, both immediate and potential, discourage states from using them as a tool of competition except in circumstances where the stakes are particularly salient.” (Rider, 2009, p. 700). What is key to remember from this research is that military buildup was not assessed as an outcome condition, but rather as a precursor. The importance, according to Rider, is that if one knew the onset conditions, then policy could be developed to prevent the actual occurrence of a multilateral arms buildup (Gibler et al., 2005; Rider, 2009).

Rider’s next analysis dealt with arms races as they pertained to rivalry. The main research aim was to see if military buildups are more prevalent in rivalries and are a consequence thereof (Rider, 2011). Although this study was a replica of Wallace (1979) and Diehl’s (1982) earlier work, it was more aggressive than his previous one because there were three propositions. Rider (2011) sought to assess if arms races were more frequent in rivalries, followed by the timing of such buildups, and finally if that relationship with war onset is spurious.

The research framework was advanced, characterized by curvilinear relationship and Probit regression analysis. One of the first tasks was to define rivalry, which was characterized by Political Relevant Dyads (PRDs) that encapsulated states with divergent goals (Diehl, 1992). The analysis proved insightful. First, Rider demonstrated that arms races do occur more frequently in state-based competitions. Second, he showed how military buildups usually happen in the middle and late stages of rivalry. Lastly,

frequencies of arms races are especially higher in war dyads than non-war dyads. More importantly, only when they occur in rivalry latter stages does the probability of war increased (Diehl, 1992; Rider, 2011; Wallace, 1979).

In totality, these disparate studies; specifically, territory, rivalry, alliances, and arms races have expanded knowledge of why states go to war. They provided strong theoretical and statistical evidence on who fights whom, and why, closing a critical knowledge gap. Furthermore, the correlates of war were examined in a disaggregated manner. Meaning, each one was primarily reviewed as a single factor versus the sum of parts. For instance, Bremer (1992) and Vasquez (1995, 2001, 2008) posited that MIDs over territory and revisionism lead to war. Diehl and Goertz (1993, 2006) believed rivalry were the omnipotent factor in why states fight. Levy et al. contended that alliance-making increased the likelihood of interstate violence, whereas Sample (1997a, 1997b, 2002) and Rider (2009) proclaimed that arms-races was the main reason. Most IR and conflict scholars would agree that interstate war is not a single event but rather a cumulative pathway of counter-balancing activities and power politics that manage to spiral out of control (Singer, 1972; Senese et al., 2008). That said, the next section discusses how the aggregation of interstate MIDs over territorial revisions, lead to rivalry and alliance-making amongst disputes, and the massive buildup of military capability, which culminates in war onset. can lead to war. were the critical enablers that would lead to the formulation of the steps-to-war theory.

Steps-To-War Theory

First and foremost, the steps-to-war theory's main aim was to study war to create a more peaceful world. According to COW researchers, it fits neither into liberalism nor

realism, the two primary international categories. The STW is not liberal in the sense that it does not consider international organizations and interstate cooperation as the panacea for world peace. It should not be taken as a realist theory because STW does not adhere to principles of power and global anarchy. In fact, Vasquez (2005) proclaimed his theory was essentially anti-realism. That said, a brief historical overview is a must.

If one had to make a historical assessment of the STW theory, it should be varied. Rooted in peace as it pertained to war causation, the theory was an outgrowth of the Correlates of War project. Singer and Small initial forays into war studies should be characterized by correlation (Singer et al., 1972; Singer & Diehl, 1990). What they wanted to achieve was to codify the correlates that led to the commencement of war. Both scholars, after numerous research projects, were able to derive several recurrent factors in which precluded war. However, Singer admittedly concluded war correlation was not possible based on the scientific research method (Singer, 1979; Suzuki et al, 2002; Vasquez, 1987). Instead, the COW researcher settled on the term proximate, which meant that the correlates of war were not valid enough to be considered as a causal factor.

Throughout the 1980s, empirical patterns emerged that COW researchers hoped would lead to theoretical proof of war causation. For example, territory, militarized disputes, and alliances were heavily researched for validity (Diehl et al., 1988; Jones et al., 1996; Levy, 1981; Sabrosky, 1980). Knowledge and comprehension were indeed increased. However, because of the lack of sound quantitative and statistical techniques, the causes and paths to warfare remained elusive until the 1990s.

Bremer (1992) broke through the analytical logjam. In 1992, he was the first to use dyadic analysis. This approach had two revolutionary impacts on war theory. First, the analysis was shifted from individual- to behavior-based, meaning relational. To clarify, interstate dyads could be arranged to determine interaction, which then allowed researchers to adequately examine disputes—one of the major covariates (Bremer, 1992, Maoz et al., 2018). Second, Bremer changed the research paradigm from correlation to probability. Without much success with causation, his approach allowed COW scholars to explore the likelihood of war based on the factors. Using inferential test methods, such as variance analysis and regression, researchers derived conditional probabilities of war onset centered on certain predictors (i.e., correlates of war). This breakthrough led to the formulation of the STW theory.

Vasquez is considered the founder of the STW theory. His focus involved illuminating a path to war versus trying to find correlatory factors. This subtle difference in the research approach had major implications. Vasquez combined the abovementioned empirical patterns and Bremer's inferential statistics work to prove war had a path. In 2005, and later in 2008, Vasquez, and his colleague Paul Senese, were finally able to breakthrough. The net result was a rudimentary empirically based theory on how wars could start based on a set of conditions. With this background information, it is time to examine the key tenets to the steps-to-war theory (Singer et al., 1990; Vasquez, 1987).

Overarching Premises

The STW premises were riddled with controversy, especially with the realist school of thought. Realists believed since the geopolitical world was fundamentally unordered therefore a state must use power to guarantee security. Power accumulation

resulted in an increase in economic and military capability, thereby allowing a state to become so powerful that potential adversaries would hesitate to attack. More so, when all states within a regional possessed symmetric capability symmetry then a lasting peace would ensue (Waltz, 1997; Senese et al, 2008). That said, the STW was counterfactual to this assertion.

Vasquez argued that realism and power accumulation did not lead to peace but to war. His STW theory was a testament to this argument; it was based on three premises. The first was the issues. States are a collective group of individuals with myriad interests, which are at times divergent. When one state contested the needs and wants of another, an issue ensues. The point of contention could range from territory to government. What is germane is that if these interests cannot be peacefully resolved then conflict increased (Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al, 2008; Vasquez, 2005).

The second premise entailed disputes. Unable to revolve their issues, states would engage in aggressive behavior towards another. Vasquez codified this tit-for-tat interaction as a dyadic dispute. These interstate conflicts were manifested by the issuing of threats, display, and use of force, and finally open warfare. To deal with the ordinal nature of these conflicts, a state used prescribed realism-based behaviors, which led to the last premise (Jones et al., 1996; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 1987).

Power politics are the norms, rooted in realism, a state adhered to change the behavior of another country when both were involved in a militarized interstate dispute. According to Vasquez (1987, 2004, 2008), there were three. Rivalry was dependent on the perception of threat, competition, and enmity between dyad members. It was usually the first escalatory step countries after a dispute had transpired. Next, states feeling

uneasy about their security situation would look to form alliances. This political move would usually exacerbate the issue, increasing instability. As the rivalry escalated and alliance-making became tenuous, threatened states embarked on a military buildup of war capability. The overall endstate was a stepwise increase in the probability of war. For clarity, the novelty of this STW concept requires another explanatory framework (Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al, 2008).

Prior to explaining the steps-to-war theoretical principles, a comparison against realism would help increase understanding. There are four main differences between the steps-to-war and realist schools of thought. First, STW scholars claimed that power politics behavior leads to war versus peace. The aggressive, escalatory effect of repeated interstate disputes and arm builds creates a security dilemma. This conflict prescribed that when a state feels insecure, they increase their military capability, thereby making either their rival or neighbors feel insecure and increase their security posture. The overall result is the increase in instability and a decrease in security, creating a volatile and uncertain environment (Kennedy, 1987; Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 2004).

On the other hand, realist subject matter experts deemed that power politics created either a preponderance or balance of power within the global and regional system that kept states in check. For example, a realist would say the U.S.'s dominance and relative security within the international order is due to its preponderance of military capability. It would be foolhardy for another country to challenge the U.S., according to realist logic (Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 1987, 2004).

Second, STW theorists considered the international system is not anarchic, rather it is controlled by dominant states who dictate the norms and rules. Senese et al. (2008) contended that the international system is dominated by major powers. The latter are mainly status quo countries that enjoy the benefits of the current system and therefore enact policies that promote it. Conversely, Realists believed the global order is without higher authority. This notion entailed power accumulation and real politick to acquire security (Kennedy, 1987; Senese et al, 2008).

Third, steps-to-war enthusiasts contended war is a learned behavior that states enact to get what they want. Realism proponent stressed war is the reflection of power and national capabilities that guaranteed survival of the state and its interests (Senese et al, 2008; Vasquez, 1987, 2004). Lastly, STW theory is explicitly and empirically based on territorial issues, while realism concerned almost entirely power and the manifestation thereof. With this side-by-side analysis complete, a more detailed description of the steps-to-war theory is in order.

Theoretical Description

Upfront, the STW theory contended state-related issues (or revisions) were the catalyst for military conflict. Although these revisions could be wide-ranging, three stood out. For example, countries could disagree over a specific policy, such as either support for state-sponsored terrorism or currency manipulation. Another common revision concerned regime-type where the form of government is the point of contention. The hostile discord between democratic Taiwan and communist China is one such example. (Dreyer, 2010); Senese et al., 2008).

Last, and perhaps most important, are revisions based on territory. Vasquez's research, which was aligned with other COW scholars, posited that land disputes were the most salient revisions that led to interstate violence (Frederic, Hensel, & Macaulay, 2017; Gibler, 2017; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 1987, 1996). STW research has also shown territory holds the highest instances of war outbreak than other issues. Even more, territorial conflicts are for the most part likely to be reciprocated and more apt to have higher fatalities (Senese, 1996; Hensel & Mitchell, 2005). It is worth mentioning that policy issues occur with greater frequency than territorial ones; however, the former is not statistically likely to end in interstate warfare (Bremer, 1992; Frederick et al., 2017; Vasquez, 1992, 2004).

For greater clarification, an example is warranted. State A wants to change the status quo of its relationship and position with respect to State B. There is an oil field situated along the interstate border. Of significance, both countries lay claim to the oil field. State A, however, has decided to act, which has led to conflict. To rehash, revisions are salient issues based on territory, policy, or regime, which states are willing to pursue actions to resolve. It is, however, territorial revisions that sets the STW theory into motion and this is a foundational takeaway.

Next in the path to war are militarized interstate disputes. Since states could not amicably settle the territorial revision, they soon found themselves in greater turbulent circumstances, characterized by aggressive, escalatory interactions. Threat issuance and military force displays categorized the low end of the conflict spectrum. When coupled with timing and salience magnitude, disputant states could intensify their actions to either use of military force or even open warfare. Another example could perhaps afford better

comprehension. Up until this point, the STW theory would posit that State A has a revision over a salient issue (i.e., territory) and therefore entered a militarized dispute with State B over it. This situation forces each country to address the dispute in a certain way. The realist purview of power politics was how most states chose to behave (Frederick et al., 2017; Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 2004).

The interaction of power politics is the final premise of the steps-to-war theory. When interstate rivalry, alliance-making, and arms buildups are addressed in a disaggregated manner, they are classified as the correlates of war. However, when aggregated into the STW framework, these three correlates embody the attributes of *realpolitik* (i.e., power politics). This new paradigm has an additive quality that impacts war onset. More so, this entire process is stepwise and escalatory, and each move enhances the chance that there will be bloodshed.

Rivalry between states, according to Vasquez, is the first power politics move in the STW theory. It is initially manifested after a single dispute over a territorial revision has occurred. Gibler (2017) further contended territorial issues are based on either resource allocation, strategic locale, or symbolic means. The most contentious disputes possessed more than one attribute (DIA, 2017; Senese et al., 2008). Equally important is the tit-for-tat behavior and activity by the disputants. For example, when State A acts on a territorial revision, State B feels compelled to react, which thereby increased the number of militarized interstate disputes. The overall result is a dyadic relationship characterized by spiraling conflict (Owsiak, 2017). What is germane here is the power politics backbone is now formed, defined by an enduring, hostile relationship between two states (Goertz et al., 1993; Thompson, 2001).

Alliance-making is next in the sequence. It occurred when a country feels sufficiently threatened or at risk, then it will seek an alliance with other governments. The act of joining a coalition caused the other state to feel more threatened and it responded in kind (Leeds, 2003). For instance, State B is the target of State A's territorial revision. The former feels it is in a vulnerable position and allies itself with State C to bolster defenses. State A, now feeling more threatened, partners itself with State D to alleviate the duress. Again, the net result is an increase in the likelihood of war because there are more than two potential belligerents, ever-increasing the volatility and complexity within the strategic environment. Of greater significance, if either one of the dyad members or its partners is a major power, then the chances of war increased even more. One must remember that major powers have the national capability to wage war (Gibler, 2004; Kimball, 2006; Senese et al, 2008).

Arms build-up is the last power politics move. According to Vasquez (2008), because arms races show the highest level of commitment, therefore, is the most intractable behavior for both internal and external audiences. Meaning, building up one's military forces is a major endeavor, often consuming significant resources and time, which means the political elite and populace writ large must comply. Also, entering an arms race with a rival further exacerbates the security dilemma for which they have no alternative but to increase their military capability and capacity. Case in point, State A and State B are enduring rivals who have engaged in over eight militarized disputes over territory. After making outside alliances, there remains a significant level of enmity and distrust between them. To alleviate, both disputants began a massive arms build-up to deter one another, which renders an already tenuous situation into a *fait accompli* for war.

Taking the above in totality, Vasquez's research supported the validity of his steps-to-war theory. Using the COW dataset, which codified almost 2000 MIDs from 1815 to 1965, the empirical findings reflected a stepwise increase in the predicted probability of interstate war. Here is a succinct overview. Starting with a dispute over a revision, data showed territorial revisions (.15) had a higher possibility for war than the more numerous policy-based revisions (.09). Next, the research illustrated enduring rivalries increased the likelihood of war onset (.45) when combined with a territorial dispute (.15). Then, with the addition of alliances, characterized by outside partners and major powers, the findings indicated war likelihood (.65) further increased by nearly 20 percent. The last power politics behavior of arms buildups depicted a 25 percent increase in the probability of interstate war onset (.90) when included (Colaresi et al., 2002; Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al. 2008; Vasquez, 1987, 2004). What is key here is that the war probability increased with each subsequent realpolitik behavior, meaning the aggregation of the correlates of war had a positive correlation whether states went to war.

After multiple runs and permutations of different paths, two conclusions became evident. First, territorial issues, especially symbolic and strategic, had the highest percentage of war no matter the number of combinations. Second, Senese et al. (2008) tested four alternative logic paths to war, it was the above-mentioned sequence that produced both additive and multiplicative results. The former meant that each step magnified war onset probability. The latter entailed the aggregation of power politics behavior also increased the probability of interstate warfare. Senese and Vasquez did, however, caution, "What is not crucial is not the sequence of the steps, but that they are mutually reinforcing. Alliances may precede or follow military buildups..." (Senese et

al., 2008, p 23). In short, one should remember the steps-to-war theory is grounded on the behavioral and relational impacts of when two states, who are initially involved in a territorial dispute, experience repeated conflict, form alliances and increase military capability, all of which intensifies the likelihood of war onset (Senese & Vasquez, 2005, 2008).

Critique of Steps-To-War Theory

So far, this dissertation has mentioned several criticisms as to why the COW project and associated research were lacking in some areas. Vasquez and the steps-to-war theory also have their share of criticisms in which there are four. Sampling bias is first. In most statistical research, proper randomization is almost a proverb. Since dispute dyads were selected based on time and their conflict-laden attributes, and not randomization, these samples could be viewed as biased. Some researcher's fault the steps-to-war theory because of this circumstance (Singer, 1996; Vasquez, 1996; Senese et al., 2008).

Another critique of steps-to-war is that it cannot be applied to qualitative studies, especially historical case studies. This critique arose from those scholars, which outside of World War I, could not find other examples of interstate wars that followed the theory's premise. This gap was acknowledged and registered for future research within the COW network (Senese et al, 2008). The third critique entailed the dyadic approach. Croco and Teo (2005) contended that steps-to-war heavy reliance on dichotomous continuous variables, such as MIDs and war onset, resulted in both conceptual and problems and loss of statistical information. This shortfall is especially visible in the alliance "step". Case in point, Croco and Teo stated, "We think both the statistical

inference and the inductive argument depicted above are in part driven by the assumption that bilateral interactions always underpin alliance formation, when the latter occurs both bilaterally and multilaterally” (Croco & Teo, 2005, p 8). In short, by operationalizing sophisticated concepts, such as alliances and war, into simpler forms, led to distorted and invalid findings.

Equally detrimental to the steps-to-war validity was the COW research cohort's inability to definitively proclaim issues and power politics (i.e., steps-to-war) were indeed causal factors for war onset. In fact, most realist scholars' criticism was based on this notion: since war is a human endeavor, making the premonitions of war too vast to quantitatively derive (Singer, 1996, Vasquez, 1996; Waltz, 1997). Even more, this situation was exacerbated when from 1979 to early 2000, there was no testable theory for most COW research. Many academics viewed this as a major shortfall in scientific research. In fact, the only real attempt at proving STW theory came at the expense of realism.

Sixth, and last, is steps-to-war loyalist perceived attacks on the balance of power theory, a realism cornerstone. Waltz (1997), the founder of the balance of power theory, response to Vasquez was scathing. The former contended the latter conflated new and old forms of realism into one, which is not accurate or responsible. One such example is that Waltz thought the balance of power was a byproduct versus Mearsheimer's viewpoint that balance was the goal. The realism professor, therefore, accused Vasquez of purposefully misrepresenting this key distinction to support his STW work. In short, above are several acknowledge criticisms of the STW theory. Individually, these critiques are perhaps valid and were addressed by Vasquez and other COW disciples.

That said, taken as a whole, this dissertation contends these criticisms are not enough to either stop or void research on the steps-to-war theory. The rationale is straightforward: the search for peace in a world plagued by hostile Great Powers is a must.

All in all, step-to-war is a novel and insightful theory to use in studying peace and war. One should remember the theory contended war results from issues and disputes that are managed by the realist school of thought—power politics. Territorial issues, by far the most common, festers into greater hostility. According to Owsiak (2017), this circumstance caused recurring MIDs, which led to enduring rivalries. When alliance-making and arms races are added, a geopolitical environment riddled with volatility, uncertainty, and chaos is produce or war-prone. More importantly, each part of the sequence; specifically, territorial dispute to rivalry to alliances to the procurement of weapons empirically increased the probability that there will be interstate warfare (Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez 1987, 1996).

Conclusion

All things considered, the empirical study of war for the purposes of peace is novel and steady expanding. The four above-mentioned sections are a testament to this adage. Wright and Richardson's work opened the realm of the possible. One of their signature achievements brought both biological and physical research techniques into the social disciplines. Another contribution was the classification of wars based on empirical data. Variables such as belligerent identification, battle frequency and deaths, and dyadic timelines were instrumental, influencing other pertinent peace scholars.

Equally important was that the COW project and its founding researchers provided pertinent context on the correlates of war and the onset of war. Content-wise,

Singer's creation of the initial COW dataset forever changed the scientific study of war. By determining the correlates of war, a host of research topics were introduced into war study and peace research fields. Empirically, ideas and techniques on dataset creation, dyadic analytics, and methodologies were explained. Bremer's use of dyads and the advanced statistical test was revolutionary. Years later, Vasquez's employment of stepwise logistic regression in testing the steps-to-war theory further expanded the peace research field.

Another key section regarded the foundational COW studies, there are a few salient findings that should be remembered. First, territorial issues are the most salient indicators of impending militarized interstate disputes and subsequent war. Resources, strategic locations, and culture are some factors that outline territory-rooted conflict. Second, revisions are effective in determining why states embark on such risky endeavors such as war. Territory, policy, and regime preferences are indeed explanatory in dispute onset. Third, because of their robust national capabilities, major powers are almost always involved in interstate war. Their ability to procure arms and entangle other nations into their sphere of influence often increased volatility and uncertainty within dyads. The last section formed the research backbone. The articulation of the steps-to-war theory; this is the first of its kind an illuminated depiction of how interstate conflict and power politics increased the probability of war. Going forward, it is imperative to remember the key premise is that territorial militarized disputes between states, lead to realism-based behavior, which often culminates in a higher chance of open warfare.

Overall, the meticulous evaluation of five decades of literature, covered in four sections, was undeniably insightful. It explained previous research and the linkage

between them. More so, the knowledge framework on the scientific study of war was clearly established, identifying the main COW research techniques and such. However, the literary review did illuminate one crucial knowledge gap in the COW project and associated peace research. What is missing is a regional viewpoint in which a specific country could be scientifically analyzed based on its proclivity for war. This dissertation should be viewed as an opportunity to address this shortfall. For simplification, a better justification is perhaps warranted. If the literature review chapter is considered as the “who”, “what”, “when” and “where”, then the next chapter delineates the “how”.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Some scholars would argue there is a quantitative shortfall in the analytical study of conflict. More specifically, the academic fields of international relations, peace research, and conflict resolution have not sufficiently investigated in what way regionalism, major powers, and real politick interact within a specific geographic locale. This dissertation will attempt to mitigate by quantitatively analyzing how interstate revisionism, armed disputes, and war correlates can conflate into a violent maelstrom. It will do so by using large-n datasets, testable hypotheses, and advanced statistics. To be clear, the methodological aim here is to properly outline the data management requirements, research processes, and propositional test that will afford a synthesis on the extent to which the COW covariates associate with the People's Republic of China's revisionist tendencies. Prior to methodology delineation, it is necessary to consider scope. This chapter is structured into four subsections. The first is data management. Wherein is a thorough discussion on COW datasets and the computer software used to either create or manipulate them. Equally important is that both variable operationalization and data collection are addressed therein.

Second is domain analysis. This dissertation is predicated on four domains, which form the analytical backbone for how data is accumulated and culled. Temporal and spatial aspects, as well as selected units of analysis are several topics that will guide how content is aggregated for analysis. The third section spells out the overall research design. Methodology is the focus, whereby information on the overarching process is illuminated. Important content, such as data collection, variable operationalization, hypothesis formulation, and analytical test section, are revealed in a linear sequence.

The last subsection, which is the cornerstone, overlays prescribed research questions onto the research design. Each question, including the main and three key ones, are meticulously explored in a stepwise manner outlaid over the research design. The result is a properly outlined research process that should foster the quantitative analysis of three key questions. With the roadmap revealed, it now time to shape how this dissertation will seek to explore the correlates of war attributes and Sino revisionism.

Overall Data Management

One of the main utilities of the COW project is its extensive datasets. Izmirlioglu (2017) reported that the 13 data repositories, which encompassed 395 variables, is a critical enabler in quantitative conflict research. Furthermore, interstate topics extend from dispute geographic location, instances of threats and force displays, national material capabilities, trade flows, to alliances (Izmirlioglu, 2017; Sarkees, 2000).

Each dataset has a common set of attributes. The temporal range is from the post-Napoleonic era to the late-2010s. The data tabs are organized into subdivisions and shown in either text or comma-separated values (CSV) files, with accompanying information presented in PDF files. The variables typified by either interval, categorical, dichotomous, or scale cover material such as population, belligerents, battle death, and so forth with each being displayed in a corresponding column. The COW dataset has an astonishing 395 variables. More importantly, this setup affords conflict resolution researchers the ability to manipulate and examine pertinent data to discern descriptive, correlatory, and explanatory scholarly work (Izmirlioglu, 2017; Maoz, Johnson, Kaplan, Ogunkoya, & Shreve, 2018).

Out of the 13 available COW datasets, this dissertation relies predominantly on three. National Material Capability (NMC) version 5.0 is the first. This dataset codifies the six elements of national power. According to Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey (1972), military expenditure, military personnel, energy consumption, iron/steel production, urban population, and total population are critical indicators for a state's material capability, a mainstay in most international relations analysis. It is also important to highlight that these indicators make up Singer's Composite Index of Nation Capability (CINC). This statistical tool averages a country's demographics, economic, and military strength into a single numerical measure (Singer, Bremer, & Stuckey, 1972).

The second dataset is Militarized Interstate Disputes version 4.3 (MID_v4.3). As a reminder, MID is conflict incidents that were a threat, display, military force use, and open war by one state explicitly towards another state. These historical datums range the full spectrum of conflict, from verbal threats to warfare. This repository is expansive containing information on over 2,000 disputes from 1816 to 2010, which are classified into four hostility levels. Akin to other COW datasets, MID_v4.3 has various tabs and subsets. For example, threat MIDs are further categorized as the warnings to either use of force, blockade, occupy territory, or even use nuclear weapons. Displays of force MIDs are equally subdivided into alerts, mobilizations, and border violations. Another hostility variable is the use of force. It is subcategorized into military actions such as blockades, occupation, seizures, and raids. The last MID is hostility, which is the declaration of war. The above-mentioned afford basic context. Later in this section, there is a more robust explanation of MID_v4.3 variables as they relate to the dissertation's

research questions. Before continuing, it is important to note that MIDs allows complex phenomena, such as war, to be broken down into basic interactions that can be studied.

Combining two datasets is a cumbersome and error-prone process. According to Bennet and Stam (2007), studying international relations within a quantitative framework relies on the availability and comprehensive, pliable datasets. Large-N statistical tests—common in most numerical studies—often require computer code to manipulate data, a time-consuming process. The EUGene_v3.2 (the Expected Utility Generation and Data Management Program) software program, created by political scientists Scott Bennet and Allan Stam, is a step in the right direction. The researchers stated, “EUGene serves as a tool to facilitate and simplify the process of margining and creating datasets in international relations, especially datasets created with the directed dyad as the unit of analysis” (Bennet & Stam, 2007, p. 3).

EUGene_v3.2 often serves as a mainstay for conflict scholars because of its dyadic interaction qualities. For example, the dyadic-year inquiry could include variables on the individual-, dyadic-, and system level. Subject areas such as polity type, the balance of forces, and alliances have used dyad year as the unit of analysis (Bennet & Stam, 2007; Bremer, 1997; Levy, 1981; Maoz et al., 2018).

Although there are myriad utility aspects, EUGene affords this dissertation three key qualities. First, it allows the construction of single datasets from different repositories and units of analysis. More so, researchers can convert the data into a distinct unit of analysis. This advantage is used to construct datasets applicable to the dissertation’s three secondary research questions. Second, the software reduces the need for manually writing code. Again, this process is time-consuming and requires an advanced skillset in

database programming. One must remember that the COW datasets have over 395 variables available for a researcher (Izmirliglu, 2017). The ability to select pertinent dependent and independent variables is key. Last, EUGene facilitates the selection of data based on common criteria such as time period, domain, great power status, and region. In sum, these functions allow a conflict researcher to properly frame and delimit data into functional variables (Bennet & Stam, 2007).

Domain of Analysis

To create a framework, this paper employs four key domains. Most war studies examine states on the international level (Braumoeller, 2008; Buzan, 2012; Singer, 2002; Kim, 2002). That said, a major dissertation aim is to examine state systematic interaction at the regional level. And since China is the focal point, it is, therefore, necessary to bound the dataset to the Asian continent. As with most of the COW research, there is a temporal aspect. For example, Singer et. al (1972) used 1815 to 1965, whereas Vasquez (2004) extended the timeframe out to 1992. This dissertation contracts the time domain to 1949 and 2001. The rationale is that Mao Zedong declared the People's Republic of China (PRC) into existence on this date (DIA, 2019). The right lateral limit is 2010. This period was chosen because of data availability. The most recent and comprehensive COW dataset on militarized disputes ended in 2001.

With the timeframe set, it now necessary to explain the third domain. This dissertation uses a dyadic interstate approach. More specifically, this spatial domain is based on non-directed disputes, whereby outcomes are defined by dispute interaction between two states. This pairwise technique affords the opportunity to accurately test the behavior and interactions between country pairs (Senese et al., 2008). As a reference

point, a directed dispute is codified by both an initiator country and target country, a divergent construct for the needs of this research. As such, disputing dyads are simply referred to by country code. For example, RUS and JPN are a dyad that fought a war in 1905 (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). The states used in the dyad generation are the international system members identified by the COW project (Small & Singer, 1982). The dyads are generated using EUGene_v3.2, which is a dataset generator that aggregates various databases into an applicable, user-friendly data repository.

Unit of analysis is the fourth domain. There are three. Dyad-dispute is the first. It is characterized by each observation representing a militarized dispute. This unit of analysis is most prevalent in research that compares those MIDs that go to war from those that do not (Bremer, 1992; Senese et al, 2008). Dyad-year is used to analyze what a prescribed dyad does over a year's timeframe. An example is warranted for clarification. A dyad between the U.S. and China would have observations for every year they were in existence. Of significance, dyadic years record when states are involved in a dispute and not. According to Senese et al. (2008), some datasets that use dyadic year as the unit of analysis can total upwards to 500,000 observations. On the contrary, the true benefit of dyad-year is the ability to ascertain war and peace periods between the dyad and not the large N dataset (Diehl & Goertz, 2000; Senese et al, 2008; Sample, 2016).

Last is dyad history. This unit of analysis is comprehensive, representing one dyad per the history of the dyad. The observations recorded are myriad, including 1) type and the total number of MIDs, 2) whether dyad has fought a war, 3) are the dyads engaged in a rivalry, etc. Vasquez (2008) mastered this concept in his peace research. In fact, dyadic history is the cornerstone of analysis within the STW theoretical and

investigative approaches. Unlike the other two units of analyses, dyad-history is researcher-defined versus EUGene_v3.2 generated. This fact means that considerable work is required to create the dyad. To adequately quantify and then codify these dyads will require a significant amount of time. However, the insight is indeed worth the effort. That said, it is now time to address some key design specifics.

Overall Research Design

The overall research design is predicated on the four key steps that are interwoven with each respective below-annotated research question. Hypothesis or propositional discernment is the first step. The subject material is deliberated to provide relevance and context. The “what” and “why” are explained for each supposition. As a refresher, the three supporting research questions are: 1) What is the probability of war onset based on associated militarized interstate disputes in Asia? 2) What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia? And 3) What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia?

Normally, most doctoral dissertations have data collection as the next step in research design. This paper primarily follows this construct but with one major caveat: collection is substituted with management. The main reason is the multitude of tasks required to collect data from various COW datasets, operationalize them, and construct new datasets. And since each sub-question has distinct data repository requirements, it is better to describe data collection within the management framework.

What is important to remember is two salient points. First, the EUGene_v3.2 dataset generator is mostly employed to derive a data repository for statistical testing or create a new user-made one. Second, test variables are usually operationalized. By that,

they are first defined as a concept and then transformed into either quantifiable or measured indicators prior to collecting data (Allen, 2017). There is a key difference, however. This dissertation uses established variables from the COW project; thus, the focus here is on explaining how the test variables were originally operationalized (Singer et al, 1972; Mitchell and Vasquez, 2014; Senese and Vasquez, 2008).

Model articulation is the third step. As with most COW research, models are either bivariate or multivariate constructs. The first research question and its associated hypotheses will use the former. The second utilizes multiple covariates. The last question is predicated on a comparative construct, facilitating the contrasting of China with other major powers. Variable setup is equally important in this step. This task involves arranging the test variables into dependent and independent categories (Allen, 2017; Glazek, n.d., AMBOSS, n.d.). Of significance, war onset is the most prevalent dependent variable in COW research and remains the case here. (Mitchell et al., 2014). The take-away is that research models are heavily dependent on analytical tests.

The last overall design stage entails determining the appropriate statistical test. Both inferential and descriptive techniques are used. The former correlates or predicts, whereas the other measures and describes collected data. Based on the test hypothesis and model design, the first two research questions (i.e., RQ1 and RQ2) will use either conditional probabilities, predicted probabilities, or logistic regression. The last question is solely descriptive, concentrating on mode, median, and means. Assumptions are also integral in statistical tests. The goal is to ensure covariates are indeed valid, and the chosen test is the correct fit.

In short, the overall research design is straight forward. With each respective question, there are four requisite events. The hypothesis and data management are the first two. Model design and statistical tests are the others. The pertinent details like variable operationalization, dataset generation, and test procedures are addressed in greater detail within respective research questions.

Research Questions

Since the late-1990s, China has embarked on a set-piece revisionist strategy. The DIA (2018) stated Sino aspirations are two-fold: 1) achieving great power status and 2) defense of national sovereignty and territorial sovereignty. The CCP has stated that possessing a “world-class” military is the means to success. The strategic ways are myriad. China uses its diplomatic and economic prowess to entice regional neighbors into accepting their hegemony. On the information front, Sino acumen in discrediting rivals, which are mainly the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, on the international stage is noteworthy. But most important of all and germane to this dissertation is the fact that China has shown a willingness to embark on militarized disputes short of war to achieve their national security aims.

Chain of conflict is important in understanding what the Chinese are trying to strategically accomplish. Revisionism is the prime catalyst. As stated, the PRC wants to achieve great power status and reclaim near-aboard territory. These goals are steeped in territory and policy revisionism. The former is manifested by the “One China” policy, which entails the assimilation of Taiwan, the Spratly Islands, and the Senkaku Island. The latter is characterized by challenging the status quo within the Asia-Pacific region, which involves Sino confrontation with other major powers on various issues.

Militarized disputes are the second link in the chain. Here, China has implemented an aggressive use of its armed forces to coerce potential allies and rivals alike. It has been documented that China has threatened, harassed, and in some cases, used violent force to alter the status quo. In fact, the repeated threats and stand-offs with Japan, Taiwan, and the U.S. have been well documented in the press and international relations circles (DIA, 2019; OSD, 2018; The Asia Foundation, 2017).

The correlates of war, or power politics, is the final link in the chain. Singer et al. (1972) believed states used realist-based behaviors, such as militarized disputes, alliance making, and arms buildup, to both guarantee security and achieve geopolitical aspirations. What makes the correlates germane is the combination of war causation factors (i.e., revisionism) and realpolitik behavior (i.e., power politics) under one “umbrella”, creating a ripe environment for scholarly study.

Taking these conditions into account, this dissertation desires to explore the interaction of interstate revisionism and militarized disputes in the Asia-Pacific region as they relate to China’s national security strategy. That said, the main research question is:

Main: What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China’s revisionist strategy in Asia?

Good research should include various aspects that bolster and validate comprehension and analysis. Arguably, a more clarifying way to explain this decree is a “three-legged stool” analogy. The main research question has been framed in the context of revisionism, militarized disputes, and the correlates of war. It is, therefore, only logical to examine these “legs” of inquiry in a paradoxical manner, meaning the research is disparate yet reinforcing. This construct equates to three key research questions that

when independently analyzed should answer the pertinent question of whether correlates of war and China's current strategy could possibly lead to conflict. Hereafter, the methodology section delineates the study design and quantitative statistical tests deemed necessary to explore this bold proposition.

RQ1: What is the probability of war onset based on associated militarized interstate disputes in Asia?

Militarized interstate disputes are complex. On one hand, threats and use of military forces often have an escalatory effect on conflict. Case in point, the British and German interactions during the 1930s, prior to World War II. The two countries engaged in massive displays of military prowess, which was filmed and distributed across the globe. After a tumultuous period of volatility, the maritime power and continental hegemon force display ended in perhaps the most catastrophic war in human history (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). On the other hand, there is an argument, when done properly, threats and military use can serve as an effective deterrent. The Soviet conciliation in the Cuban Missile Crisis is one such example. When the latter emplaced nuclear ballistic missiles on the island of Cuba, the United States began a series of military force displays to discourage the behavior. After much escalation, the Soviets acquiesced from the pressure of a full-scale U.S. troop mobilization, along with a naval blockade (Huth, 1998). As shown, military disputes can lead to either peace or war. However, COW researchers are ardent opponents of the latter, instead, they contend that MIDs are primary factors in war initiation (Bremer, 1992; Singer, 1979). That said, the aim here is to see if their supposition holds true in Asia.

An in-depth review of peace and war study literature has revealed there is a shortfall of quantitative analysis using COW research principles on the Asian continent (Hensel, 1994; Kim, 2002). This section will help change this circumstance by exploring MID impacts on war probability. Bivariate and univariate analysis will illuminate the factors and impacts of interstate behavior. on perceived security threats. More so, this question is one leg of the hypothetical three-legged stool on which depicts Sino strategic behavior in the sphere of influence. (Sample, 2016; Singer, 1972).

Data Management

Of the three main questions, this one is simplest with respect to design. There are several subparts to data collection and management. This first entails the unit of analysis. Dyadic dispute within the context of MIDs is what this question is attempting to measure. Therefore, this unit is selected in the user-generated dataset list. Next is the creation of a dataset that accounts for the geographic and temporal domains. The EUGene_v3.2, using COW MID_v4.3 data, will provide an appropriate baseline for research design (Bennet & Stan, 2007). Of significance, there are four researcher-defined variables added to each dyad that will assist statistical analysis. Below is an overview of each variable:

- WAR_ONSET is a binary variable. It is operationalized by *cwhost_5*. If hostility is annotated within a dyad, then “1” is coded, replicating the war has commenced. To cross-check validity, each EUGene_v3.2 war dyad is compared to the COW War Data_v4.0 data. The later has a complete list of interstate wars since 1816 (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010).

- NO_WAR is a dichotomous variable, which is also operationalized by *cwhost_5*. For all dyads that do not have *cwhost_5*, a “0” is entered into the dataset. This number represents that no war has occurred from MIDs.
- VIO_CON is a dichotomous variable. It measures the occurrence of military use within a dyad that has escalated to violence. It is operationalized by *cwhost_4* and coded “1”.
- NO_VIO is a binary variable and the antithesis of VIO_CON. It represents that no violence has occurred. It is operationalized by observing that the absence of *cwhost_4* within an interstate dyad. In sum, if there is no use of military force, then “1” is coded for that respective dyad.

Equally important are several other pertinent researcher-defined variables. These indicators are primarily operationalized by tallying subsets of *cwhost*. These count variables are key to descriptive research techniques. A description of each is listed below.

- TOT_NUM_MID is a discrete variable. It is operationalized by counting the total number of MIDs, which are ascertained by tallying *cwhost_1* through *cwhost_5*.
- TOT_NUM_WAR accounts for the total number of interstate dyadic wars. It is measured by counting the number of *cwhost_5* within each dyad.
- TOT_DYAD_YEARS is a continuous variable. It is derived in two steps. First, the duration of each dispute is totaled. The EUGene variable *dyaddur*, which measures dispute duration in days, is used in the calculation. Then,

duration days are divided by 365, effectively operationalizing the dyad into years.

The combination of the EUGene generated dataset and new operationalized variables are critical to hypotheses testing, which leads to the second subpart.

H1: Threats (cwhost_2) impacts the chances of war onset.

There are three hypotheses associated with this research question. Below annotated is an articulation of each one. Hypothesis 1 investigates war probability as an outcome from issued threats. Declaration of hostile intent by a challenger is intended to serve as a warning to the target state. Threats have an escalatory effect on interstate dyads. This dissertation contends that threats do impact the probability of war on the Asian continent. To this end, Hypothesis 1 (H1) tests if threats enhance the possibility of war.

As mentioned, each proposition outlays the variable arrangement as it pertains to the measurement. Glazek (n.d.), in his quantitative framework, contended that hypothesis statement format should assign independent variables as the subject and dependent variables as the object. An example is warranted to help illustrate his point. Looking at H1's format from above, the independent variable is *cwhost_2*, which is at the beginning of the statement. The dependent variable, *WAR_ONSET*, is near the end. The independent variable indicates issued threats between the dyad, whereas the dependent variable measures the likelihood of war onset based on those threats. The EUGene_v3.2 dataset generates the number of threats MIDs, whereas the researcher-defined variable *WAR_ONSET* ascertains war commencement.

H2: Force display (cwhost_3) impacts the chance of war.

Hypothesis 2 inserts interstate force displays into the research discourse. The display of force, as of late, is common within the Asiatic region, particularly in the East and South China Seas (DIA, 2019). Depending on the state, force displays could be perceived as either an act of deterrence or aggression. Regardless, the net effect often increases miscalculation between states, setting off a conflict spiral. Hypothesis 2 (H2) aims to test if displays of force influence the likelihood of interstate war in Asia.

Bivariate analyses dictate two key variables. WAR_ONSET, the dependent variable, indicates the presence of interstate hostilities. *Cwhost_3* is the covariate variable, representing the instances of force displays amongst Asian countries. The dependent variable is researcher-generated, while the independent (*cwhost_3*) is defined by EUGene_v3.2

H3: Use of force (cwhost_4) impacts the probability of war.

Hypothesis 3 is characterized by dyadic use of force as it influences war. The highest MID short of war is the use of force. Here, states employ their armed forces to either blockade, seize territory, or even conduct raids to achieve their political aims. Unlike the threats and force displays, force use could result in battle deaths, an occurrence that has the propensity to lead to tit-for-tat military engagements (Maoz, et al., 2018). That said, Hypothesis 3 (H3) examines if the use of force between Asians states effect war onset.

The last hypothesis is aligned with Glazek's decision matrix for the quantitative analysis framework. Meaning, the bivariate setup is akin to the previous suppositions: dependent variable (WAR_ONSET) and independent variable (*cwhost_4*). In totality,

these three hypotheses should illustrate the relationship between militarized interstate disputes and war onset within the dyad.

Research Design

Delineating the research model is the third subpart. To determine if MIDs do indeed influence war necessitates three essential tasks. In a similar study, Bremer (1992) used foundational likelihoods on whether war would ensue based on the number of MIDs. This portion of the model follows his methodology. The base probability of war onset applies the ratio between TOT_NUM_WAR and TOT_DYAD_YEAR. This quotient should provide an understanding of the prospect of war as it relates to total dispute dyad-years.

Next, the model derives the percentage of war onset based on the number of MIDs that have transpired. This fraction involves TOT_NUM_WAR divided by TOT_NUM_MID. It is worth mentioning this measurement differs from probability, mainly because of the denominator. One uses time, whereas the other frequency of incidence. Both numbers provide greater insight on how MIDs impact war's commencement. Of note, this technique differs from Bremer. He did not use MIDs per se instead of focusing on land contiguity, government type, and power domain on a global. The focus here is strictly on the military interstate disputes on the Asiatic continent (Bremer, 1992; Mitchell et al., 2014).

Lastly, this final step examines the occurrence of war against the multitude of MIDs that have occurred in Asia. Bivariate comparison affords the opportunity to determine what specific MID escalates to interstate war. Important to this assessment is

determining the total number of threats, force displays, and use of force from 1949 onward.

Statistical Test

Illuminating the statistical test needed to fulfill the abovementioned research design is the final area. Since this dissertation question relies on univariate and bivariate analysis, the primary research techniques are both descriptive and inferential analysis. For univariate analysis, it is addressed in the first two tasks of the research design where a simple descriptive test function that determines mean, mode, and standard deviation is conducted. These results should help scope magnitude and frequencies. Regarding bivariate relationships or Task 2 in research design, IBM SPSS's crosstab function will assist in determining conditional probabilities, which are the chances an event occurs given that another event has transpired. In other words, what are the chances of war given a military dispute between two Asian states has occurred?

According to Field (2013), crosstabs are vital because they summarize information about bivariate relationships. Crosstabs are characterized by rows and columns. Test setup protocol entails dependent variables entered as rows and independent variables as columns. This dissertation follows that sequence. For clarification, H1 variables will be entered as follows. WAR_ONSET is checked as the dependent variable and *cwhost_2* as the independent variable in IBM SPSS's call-down box. This procedure is enacted for each supposition, equating to a total of three times. The results are illustrated in a table matrix.

Equally relevant is a discussion on why crosstabs are appropriate to build foundational knowledge. First, it is a method that conveys percentages and probabilities

in a relatively straightforward manner. Second, crosstab caters to discrete, categorical variables, usually measured on nominal or ordinal scales. The variables used in this research question fit that assumption. Third, initial assessments predict that the dispute dyads range upwards to 1,200 cases, which perhaps prove troublesome for certain descriptive methods like scattergrams. The crosstab table is a better way of viewing the test results. Finally, IBM SPSS has a Z score and Chi-Square test functionality. Z-scores help determine deviation from the mean, especially outliers, which helps with test synthesis. Chi-Square delineates statistical impacts that support proving hypotheses. It worth mentioning that descriptive statistics are usually not enough to properly prove a hypothesis, which is why inferential statistics are so important (Field, 2013).

To address Task 3 in the research design, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is the most effective statistical procedure. It is used to quantify the differences between two or more groups by comparing means (Sawyer, n.d.). One group, as an example, is dyads that experience war, and the other is those experiences MIDs. Simply put, the ANOVA here is essentially a point-biserial inferential test. Like many impact analyses, there is a dependent and independent variable set up. WAR_ONSET is the dependent variable and relatively straightforward, whereas MIDs are represented by *cwhost*. Since *cwhost* are categorical variables identified by non-ordinal numbers, it is necessary to transform them into distinct nominal variables, a major ANOVA assumption. IBM SPSS allows a researcher to accomplish this task by reassigning text to numeric values. That said, the ANOVA factors used in hypotheses testing are NONE, THREAT, DISPLAY, and USE, which are the transformed categorical variables from *cwhost*. The Post Hoc results will

explain the statistical power of the measurement, size of effect, and sample size (Field, 2013; Sawyer, n.d.).

In short, there are a few items to remember regarding this research question. Its main aim is to identify how states respond to an issue, militarized interstate disputes. COW researchers contend that evaluating MIDs is perhaps the best way to illustrate those behaviors (Bremer, 1992; Maoz et al, 2018). This above-mentioned material attempts to follow this mindset by testing MIDs and if they escalate to war. Data is collected and managed with the EUGene_v3.2 dataset generator, which allows variable operationalization to test the prescribed hypothesis. More so, albeit with some modifications, the research design basically follows Bremer's dyadic analysis circa 1992. The main difference is that this research explores only four pertinent MIDs (i.e., threat, force display, use of force, and hostility) and refrains from other covariates such as democracies and contiguity. Equally relevant is that both descriptive and inferential testing techniques are employed. Crosstabs afford basic knowledge on MIDs and war onset with respect to scope and frequency. Point-biserial testing should facilitate the linkage of state behavior in the initial phases of war onset. The research totality is that one essential part of Sino revisionism as it pertains to the correlates of war is analyzed for validity.

RQ2: What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia?

Revisionism is the second metaphorical research leg in this dissertation. It is an important topic in both peace research and war studies because of its implications. When states are dissatisfied with the status quo in their circumstance, and if they have the means to do so, they will attempt to alter it (DiCicco, 2017; Geller, 2000). That said, this

research question's objective is to analyze the impacts and relationships of interstate revisionisms in Asia. It is the logical sequence to evaluating how war correlates associate with Sino revisionist strategy.

Before moving on, there are a few preliminary details that should be mentioned. Not only is territory salient in MID initiation, but it has also proved most volatile and quite prevalent in revisionism (Braithwaite & Lemke, 2018; Senese, 2005; Vasquez & Henehan, 2001). According to COW, there are four types of revision and most research contend territory is the number one factor in wars (Mitchell & Vasquez, 2008; Senese & Vasquez, 2008). First, territory is a proven motivator for which nations choose to impact the current geopolitical environment. It is considered the most common covariate of war onset and therefore is categorized by itself. Territory is represented by *cwrev* = 1 in most COW datasets.

Second, policy concerned disagreements on one or more salient issues. China's belief that Taiwan is essentially part of the PRC is one example (Fravel, 2010). EUGene_v3.2 indicate policy revision as "*cwrev* = 2". Third, regime entailed governments. This revision is the removal of a target's governing body. The U.S. disposal of Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party is an instance (Kaplan, 2013). Regime is signaled by "*cwrev* = 3" in the databases. Last, other is a catchall. It represented revisions that cannot be binned in either territory, policy, or regime. It is codified as "*cwrev* = 4". Of note, this category is rare. With revisionism explored, it is now appropriate to discuss major powers.

There is a belief that major powers are more prone to war—simply because they can (Corbetta & Dixon, 2004; Sample, 2002). Research Question 2 explores this

supposition, a key method is investigating a state's national capability index and domain status against the onset of war. Lastly, Small and Singer (1982) strongly believed this measurement was a key factor in war initiation. Even though capability studies within the COW framework has gradually subsided over the last few decades, this dissertation will once again bring it to the forefront. With the overview complete, it is now time to examine RQ2's second section.

Data Management

Data management is perhaps more complex than the previous research question. There are two key subsegments entailed in this section, with the first being data collection. It is perhaps best to cover comparable collection methods from RQ1 and then migrate to those attributes that differ. The unit of analysis, which is a dyadic dispute, remains the same in this question. Also, utilizing EUGene_v3.2, a similar dataset is created that allocates for country codes, interstate disputes, national capabilities, power status, and politically relevant dyads. To clarify, these COW-defined, software-generated factors are identical to those housed in RQ1.

Continuing, the differences are most prevalent in researcher-defined variables. As a reminder, revision is the central theme in this research question. Since the COW dataset has only one variable that measures revisions, it is necessary to create more to adequately address the study question. That said, there are two requisite lots to further define state-based revisionism. One batch is power domain-oriented; the other pertains to national capability percentiles. Starting with the power domain, it is a dichotomous variable (i.e., POW_COM) that measures interstate dyad power status. There are three

levels to POW_DOM that are essential for hypothesis testing. A succinct overview is provided below:

- MAJ-MAJ is a dichotomous, discrete variable. It represents that a dyad is comprised of two major powers. This discrete factor is operationalized by sorting the EUGene_v3.2 generated dyads for ones that are comprised of two major powers. Once the criteria are met, a “1” is coded.
- MAJ-MIN is a binary variable that signifies that a dispute dyad contains one major and one minor power, a “1” represents this case. It is discrete and ascertained by separating software-generated dyads for this criterion.
- MIN-MIN is a discrete variable. Dyads that contain no major powers are classified as minor minor. A “1” is coded to represent this measurement.

National capability is the other researcher-defined group. Since it involves capability and quartiles, it is appropriately titled CAP_QUAR. Unlike POW_COM, this categorical variable is ordinal, numerically ranging from 1 to 4. Here is a brief synopsis of each one:

- CAP_QUAR_1 is a discrete variable. It symbolizes that the dyad has one state with a capability inside the first quartile. This factor is operationalized by performing a descriptive statistics function on *capindex* (N = 193). IBM SPSS provides 5, 10, 25, 50, 75, and 95 percentiles. Taking these figures into account, the top quartile (0 to 25%) will equate to “1”.
- CAP_QUAR_2 is an ordinal variable. It is operationalized by the second quartile in the national composite index (25% to 50%) and thereby codes as a “2”.

- CAP_QUAR_3 is a discrete variable. It includes dyads who fall into the third quartile (50% to 75%) on the national composite index scale. A “3” represent this level of measurement.
- CAPI_QUAR_4 is an ordinal variable. It measures the bottom (75% to 100%) of the composite index and subsequently coded as a “4”.

These two researcher-defined variable groups are important for several reasons. First and foremost, they are essential to hypothesis testing. Most correlatory statistical techniques require categorical variables that are nominal or ordinal. Second, the binary nature of these variables affords transformation. Meaning, numerical values can be recoded to reflect text. This feature is critical to ANOVA and crosstab analysis. Since data collection is explained, it is now appropriate to address the next subarea in the framework.

Delineation of the hypotheses is the other data management section. For clarification, this question has two propositions and two hypotheses, totaling four testable suppositions. It is important to remember that there is a subtle difference between them both. Hypotheses are, as a rule, testable and measurable and thereby subject to falsification. Whereas a proposition is not, instead it suggests a linkage between two concepts that cannot be adequately proven (Glazek, n.d.; Mourougan & Sethuraman, 2017). Following each discussion on test suppositions, both dependent and independent variables are outlaid to foreshadow suitable statistical tests, which are revealed in the next section. Continuing, since interstate war remains a rarity in human history and its volatility does not lend itself to adequate quantification, a considerable amount of war

onset research remains in the propositional realm. This shortfall was identified decades earlier by Singer and his colleagues (Singer & Diehl, 1990; Vasquez, 1987, 1993).

P1: Territorial revision has the highest probability of violent conflict

Territory is unique in that it appears both steps to war covariates and revision type. A fact that arguably supports the saliency of this issue as a harbinger to war. Asia, like many other global regions, has its share of territorial disputes. China's dispute with Taiwan over unification and Pakistan and India's longstanding violent clashes over the Hindu Kush territory are a few examples. More so, it well documented by many leading war study scholars that territorial disputes possess the necessary conditions for interstate disputes to escalate to violent conflict (Rasler & Thompson, 2006; Vasquez, J. & Henehan, M., 2001).

Since wars in Asia are characterized as low (N =13), perhaps a more thorough examination entails military use of force as an analysis factor (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010). Of significance, most COW research focuses on war onset, which is perhaps shortsighted. Instead, an intermediate step that explores violence short of war is required. As such, this dissertation proposes that territory is more violence-prone than policy, regime, and other revisions on the Asian continent.

Proposition 1 variable arrangement is nuanced. The dependent variable is VIO_CON, which is a researcher-defined dichotomous variable. To use in the statistical test, it is transformed into a categorical variable (VIO_CON = Violent Conflict). The independent variables commensurate with *cwrew_1* through *cwrev_4*, reflecting COW's four revision types. Because these revision variables are discrete, they require

transformation. For clarification, the process is *cwrev_1* = Territory, *cwrev_2* = Policy, *cwrev_3* = Regime, and *cwrev_4* = Other.

P2: Territorial revision has the highest probability of war

War and revisionism go together. Vasquez (2009) contended interstate war is learned behavior. For instance, through the course of history, states have realized that a costly, but viable method of guaranteeing their security and achieving strategic goals entails warfare. These goals often take the form of revisions. Through some initial analysis with the EUGene-generated dataset, policy (N = 476) is the highest. Despite this fact, steps-to-war theory and peace researcher has proven that territory, not policy revisions create the conditions for war (Bremer, 1992; Diehl, 2000; Fravel, 2017; Yoon, 2003). Even though the study findings were on the global domain, this dissertation offers that territorial revisions do in fact lead to war on the Asian continent. And that, Asia, is aligned with previous research.

Proposition 2 variable structure has similarities with its counterpart. The independent factors remain the same. *Cwrev* is transformed into categorical variables that represent the revision type. The dependent variable is WAR_ONSET. These adjustments could be used in either descriptive or inferential statistical tests.

H4: National capability has no impact on war onset

Equally important is that economic prosperity has increased national capability in all Asian subregions for nearly twenty years (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, April 2019). An occurrence that has boosted military spending and expanded the industrial base in China, Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and numerous other countries. Reviewing the COW National Material Capabilities dataset, it

is not surprising that 15 out of the top 25 countries were in Asia. (DIA, 2019; Singer et al., 1972). Within this context, this dissertation paper contends that national capability does impact war initiation.

Hypothesis 4 variable construct leans towards correlation. WAR_ONSET, the dependent variable, is a categorical variable. The independent factor is researcher-defined. CAP_QUAR is an ordinal-scale variable, operationalized by a numerical range from 1 to 4, with one being the highest. Each sub-level represents dyad national composite index scores categorized into quartiles. Since CAP_QUAR is ordinal, a variable transformation using IBM SPSS is in order. The respective numbers are substituted with CAP_QUAR_1, CAP_QUAR_2, CAP_QUAR_3, and CAP_QUAR_4.

H5: Dyad classification has impacts on war onset

Keeping within the same thread, power domains are essential indicators in IR studies. There have been numerous studies that reflect that major powers are more likely to engage in war than other nations. Sample (2002) contended that arms build-ups were unique to major powers. Chiba et al. (2012) argued that major powers had the means to operate as foreign policy activists in both international and regional context. Starr (1978) claimed that major powers often possessed the willingness to exploit opportunities that enhanced their security. If these claims are true, then dyads that incorporate major powers should be more war-prone than others on the Asian continent. Consequently, this paper hypothesizes that dyad classification does impact war onset.

Hypothesis 5 variable setup is straightforward. Since the aim here is determination if war occurs, WAR_ONSET is the applicable dependent variable. It is dichotomous and categorical in the level of measurement. Following suit, the

independent factor is POW_DOM. This researcher-defined variable is nominally quantified as MAJ-MAJ, MAJ-MIN, and MIN-MIN. Both WAR_ONSET and POW_DOM are categorical, which should steer testing towards correlational analysis.

In most national security circles, there is the cliché-ish Ends-Ways-Means mantra. Ends equate to strategic objectives, ways are the methods, and means involves capabilities. Arguably, the most relevant attribute is the latter. The rationale is that having a preponderance in ability and resources is preferable than not. Before the COW project, Singer's main contribution to war study research was his in-depth analysis of national capabilities and war-making. He posited that national capability equated to opportunity. Meaning, countries with relatively strong economies and defense forces could indeed impose their will on others (Small & Singer, 1982, Singer et al., 1972, Singer et al, 1982).

P3: Major powers with territorial issues are more prone to war

Major powers are predominantly involved in interstate wars than most. More interestingly, territory is a constant factor in a nation's strategic calculus whether to wage war or not. Asia is home to share of global violence. In fact, The Asia Foundation (2017) promulgated that conflict and violence are prevalent in every country in Asia. The hangover from European colonialism, the Cold War, and old interstate rivalries when coupled with territorial volatility is a recipe for war onset. The Asian continent contains nearly 8 major powers (Chiba, Machain, & Reed, 2012). Each with their revisionist ideals of territorial adjustments centered on what they believe is rightfully theirs. So, this dissertation proposes that major power with territorial revisionist beliefs are more war prone.

Proposition 3 variables need modification. The dependent variable is WAR_ONSET, indicating its namesake within a dyad. The primary independent variables are *majpower* and *cwrev*. Both are categorical with numeric identifiers. Given that P2 hints at relational statistics, *cwrev* will have to be altered into dummy variables.

Altogether, Research Question 2's data management is somewhat substantive. There was a total of two hypotheses and three propositions delineated for the test. The former will examine revisionism, low-end conflict, and war onset, whereas the propositions explore major powers and national capability. Equally important was the EUGene_v3.2 generated dataset where key covariates were identified. More so, this section meticulously discussed researcher-defined variables and their criticality to facilitating analytical rigor. Operationalization of national capability, for example, into quartiles is novel and should provide some interesting findings. To achieve that end, the research methodology must be sound.

Research Design

An optimal way to discuss research design is a bifurcation into revisionism and major powers subject areas. The former is comprised of two tasks that explore violence and war onset as they pertain to revisionism. Proposition 1, or task one, entails revision type and dyadic violence. Task two, or Proposition 2, investigates how dyadic revisionism corresponds to war onset. To test these suggestions, bivariate analysis is perhaps the best technique. The rationale is that this method depicts all revision types while affording the flexibility to compare them to multiple outcomes. Frequency distribution, measures of dispersion, and the central tendency will set the foundation for revisionism as it pertains to Asia.

The other part of the research design is delineating relational aspects between Asiatic major powers and territorial revisionism as they apply to conflict onset. There are three prescribed sequences needed. The first subsequence (i.e., Hypothesis 4) is to determine if the national capability is an important determinant of warfare. The second subsequence (i.e., Hypothesis 5) also involves connectivity. Ascertaining what dyads are war-prone is critical to proving that major powers are more likely to wage war, which previous research has proved (Fravel, 2007; Fravel, 2010; Lebow, 2010). Equally relevant is that both H4 and H5 aim to show impacts, which is necessary for determining the power domain. The last subsequence is fusing major powers involvement with territorial revisionism. Here, Proposition 3 is the focus. What is important to recall is that these research steps showcase a vital linkage to the Sino-revisionism argument.

In brief, RQ2's research design is straightforward. It is a two-step process. The first sequence looks to examine Asian countries' revisionist tendencies as they relate to both military violence short of war and full-scale interstate war. Bivariate analysis was deemed best suited to achieve this goal. The second sequence includes major powers, the concept of national capabilities, and territorial revisionism. Likewise, this step relies on bivariate analysis in which there are several available techniques are discussed in the next section.

Statistical Test

Revisionism relies on both descriptive univariate and bivariate tests. Prior to examining Proposition 1 and 2 for correlation, univariate analysis on revision types will occur. Descriptive, univariate tests afford relative and cumulative frequency distributions on territory, policy, and regime revisions, whereby numerical totals and

percentages are denoted. More importantly, the main purpose of this test is to outlay some foundational knowledge on revisionism on the Asian continent, which is critical to deriving the implications for China's strategy.

Proposition 1 and 2 are also subjected to bivariate analysis that further induces on how important territory is to violence and war. The central technique here is crosstab analysis, a rudimentary form of bivariate inquiry. That said, some particulars on crosstabs are in order. First, this technique is used to test significance as well as showcase the central tendency. Crosstabs are used to aggregate and display the distribution of two more variables (Field, 2013). Within this research question, there are two crosstab tables. The first illustrates violence onset against how many dyadic revisions are observed, as well as percentages, which will be displayed in a matrix table.

Second, crosstabs have a simple setup. Dependent variables are assigned to columns, and independent variables are aligned with rows. For example, P1's setup is as follows: violent conflict (VIO_CON) and no violent conflict (NO_VIO) are annotated on the top of the table and revisions (Territory, Policy, Regime, and Other) across the left side. In a similar manner, P2 will have war onset (WAR_ONSET) and no war (NO_WAR) as columns and revision categories depicted as rows. Each proposition will then be displayed in a 2X4 contingency table (Field, 2013).

Third, crosstabs require categorical variables. Or rather, they must pass two assumptions. The first is that test variables are either ordinal or nominal. The second is that variables must consist of two or more categorical, independent groups (Field, 2013). Since both P1 and P2 test variables are labeled as discrete in the dataset, IBM SPSS is used to transform them into the requisite categorical format (Field, 2013).

Last, there are two tests that will afford synthesis on crosstab results. For the scope portion, Z scores are utilized to conceptualize the difference between the observed revision and the mean. where revision types lie in the greater distribution. The main assumptions are: 1) Data is continuous and 2) Data aligns with the normal distribution. In short, Z scores afford conceptualization of the difference between the observed revisions and overall mean.

For the magnitude aspect, Pearson chi-square is the most common form of test that answers whether a crosstab result is statistically significant. More so, Pearson chi-square indicates the strength of that association. The parametric test delineates the association between war (or violence) and revision type. There are four key assumptions: 1) Randomness, 2) Large N dataset, 3) Observations are independent, and 4) Observations have the same distribution. Of significance, this research dataset met all assumptions. The results are depicted in a table format, annotating value, and significance.

In sum, testing revision type involves both descriptive univariate and bivariate. By design, both tests are kept to a rudimentary level to provide a solid foundational knowledge base. Frequency distribution and crosstabs will outlay how violence and war are associated with dyadic revision on Asia. Now, it is time to ascertain how respective nations interact with these findings.

To address major powers, statistical testing is more comprehensive. As stated, the research design specifies that investigating whether national capability has any impact on war onset is sequence one. Inferential statistical methods, especially hypothesis testing, is the preferred method here. The main reason concerns the fact that there has been

considerable work on national capabilities impact on war onset to constitute it as bona fide theory. Arguably, this classification is a rarity in most war studies (Senese et al., 2008; Singer, 1972; Singer, 1979).

Hypothesis 4 is determining the impact of national capabilities on warfare. Here is how the dissertation attempts to achieve this goal. First, a point-biserial is the preferred technique here. The analysis of variance between war and capabilities reveals if any significant difference exists between war and capability. By examining the delta, a synthesis could be made if the hypothesis holds true (Fields, 2013; Murphy, n.d.).

Second, H4's setup mirrors crosstabs. The columns are marked by war (WAR_ONSET, NO_WAR) and rows depict dyad capability quartiles (CAPI_1, CAPI_2, CAPI_3, CAPI_4). Whereas the rows are dependent variables, the latter comprises of independent variables. Of note, independent variables are called factors in ANOVA testing. So, this test is a four-factor analysis (Field, 2013; Murphy, n.d.).

Third, the crosstabs' assumptions are straightforward. The first two are that datasets are random and large N. Observations between the onset of war and capabilities are equally important. What this means is that the amount of data dispersion needs to be comparable and independent between the groups. The last assumption is that capability quartiles are indeed independent (Fields, 2013; Murphy, n.d.).

Last, crosstabs results are checked by Pearson chi-square. Murphy (n.d.) stated that chi-square is used to infer whether the relationships between groups (i.e., war onset and capabilities) are significant. The procedure used in statistical hypothesis testing, where the Null equates to no correlations and alternative implies there is an association. For clarification, the Null hypothesis is rejected when $p < 0.05$ and the Alternative is

accepted. Regarding this test, the aim is to determine if war onset is associated with greater national capability. The post hoc power analysis should reveal the statistical power, the extent of the effect, and sample size (Field, 2013; Murphy, n.d.). With dyadic capability in Asia addressed, it is time to analyze power domains.

Hypothesis 5 is tested with binary logistic regions. First, the aim here is to derive if Asian dyads that go to war are associated with the three categorical power domains. Second, the testing arrangement is three-fold. The outcome variable is WAR_ONSET. The independent factors are dyad type (i.e., MAJ-MAJ, MAJ-MIN, MIN-MIN).

Third, H5 assumptions entail five key assumptions. The outcome variable must be continuous and dichotomous are the first two parameters. Next, the dataset should contain no outliers. The final two assumptions require the continuous variable is both normally distributed and of equal variance. It is worth mentioning that after the initial analysis that H5 variables meet the assumption requirements. Last, null hypothesis testing and post hoc tests remain in effect. In particular, the research wants to evaluate the magnitude that dyad power domains have on war commencement. This three-covariate test should reflect those specified parameters (Field, 2013; Murphy, n.d.).

Proposition 3 is the last item of inquiry for this research question. That said, the following details are key to how P3 is examined. First, the statistical test used is regression. The latter is a common technique in STW research where an outcome variable is predicted based on one or more predictor variables (Field, 2013; Schroeder, Sjoquist, & Stephan, 2017).

Second, the regression setup is somewhat nuanced. The outcome variable is war onset (i.e., WAR_ONSET). The predictors are major power (i.e., *majpower*) and revision

types (i.e., *cwrev*). Since there are several predictors, a simple test that can analysis multiple independent variables is necessary. Based on COW research, the more opportune approach to regression is logit techniques (Bremer, 1992; Mitchell & Vasquez, 2014; Senese et al., 2008).

Logit regression requires a reference group when categorical variables are divided into a series of dummy variables. In IBM SPSS, this method is contingent on dichotomous or binary variables. Although *majpower* is binary, *cwrev* is categorical, an assumption that logit does not support. As such, *cwrev* is transformed into dummy variables, whereby the numerical values are assigned to the level of categorical variables. For example, *cwrev* = “2” equates to a policy revision in the EUGene generated dataset. To create a dummy variable, *cwrev* = “2” is transformed into a “1” and all other variables are coded as a “0”. This construct allows the statistical package to perform a logit regression a total of four times, which equates to the number of COW revision types. (Field, 2013).

It is also important to note that each regression is subject to four independent runs. For example, in the first run, the variables are major power and territory, and the second is major power and rivalry, continuing until the last revision is regressed. One must remember the aim here is a simple bivariate analysis that identifies if war ensues based on major power status and their respective revisions.

Equally pertinent is the assumption of logit regression. There are four key assumptions that apply here (Field, 2013). First, the dependent or outcome variable must be binary. The dataset and model framework ensure this requirement. Second, observations must be independent of another. The COW datasets use the dyad construct

which is indeed independent. Third, the predictor variable should be linearly related to the log odds—i.e., the log of odds of an event occurring. Last, logistic regression implies a large sample size. After preliminary sort of the COW datasets using EUGene_v4.3, dispute dyads range upwards of 800 in the Asian geographic region. This number is well within logistical criteria (Bennet et al., 2000; Field, 2013; Glazek, n.d., Grace-Martin, n.d.).

Last, the logit regression test used is Walds. The statistic determines whether a predictor variable is significant in relation to the outcome. Like many regression tests, Wald statistics use null hypothesis testing. If the number is $p > .05$ or greater, then the predictor is summarily rejected. All post hoc information is presented by IBM SPSS in a simple matrix table (Field, 2013; Schroeder et al., 2017).

In any event, Research Question 2 is a critical component to COW covariate and Sino strategy discussion. The main goal here was to quantitatively derive what revision type causes the greatest propensity for a war on the Asian continent, which can be summarized into two subject areas. Revisionism on the Asian continent has not been adequately studied to claim the STW theory is indeed valid here. So, this dissertation used propositions to both describe and infer how war and violence are impacted by a nation's revisionist ideas. The chosen test method is bivariate crosstabs. Major powers are the other subject area. Here, the research methods were to show a correlation between state national capability and power domains with respect to dyadic violent conflict and interstate war. Analysis of variance and regression are the statistical tests that will provide insight. When these quantitative aspects of Asian regional armed disputes are considered in totality, a greater understanding of China should be attained.

RQ3: What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia?

Research Question 3 is the last leg of the research stool. The purpose of this question is to test war onset in the Asian spatial domain with the Steps-To-War theory. This is accomplished in a two-fold effort. The first involves investigating the entire Asian continent writ large, which includes war-torn areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The second is a more detailed look entails East Asia with its major powers, such as China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. With some minor adjustments, the research design replicates Paul Senese and John Vasquez's STW model and regression techniques (Senese et al, 2008; Vasquez, 2009). As mentioned, there has been no research on war onset on the Asian continent using the COW dataset and research techniques (Senese et al. 2008, Mitchell et al., 2014). Below is a major attempt to address this knowledge gap.

Data Management

Research Question 3 data management is the most complex of all dissertation questions. It is a three-part effort. The first involves observation. Unlike RQ1 and RQ2, where the dyadic-dispute measurement was appropriate, it is insufficient here. The main reason is the lack of a long-range outlook in which MIDs and intergovernmental interaction are encapsulated. Furthermore, since this research is primarily based on retrodiction rather than prediction, a historical purview is indeed necessary. A dyad history is the more valid unit of analysis. That said, the issue becomes COW databases do not account for dyad histories (Senese & Vasquez, 2008).

Equally, there is a high degree of data manipulation to create a suitable dataset. COW dataset utility caters to dyad analysis with respect to dispute event and year, which

does not support this proposition's unit of analysis. As such, a dataset must be created that accounts for dyad history. This task is accomplished in two steps. First, EUGene software generates a base dataset from MID_v4.3 and Formal Alliances_v4.1, forming a data collection backbone. Initial analysis indicates a total of 13 researcher-defined variables are requisite for this new dataset. Here is succinct synopsis:

- TOT_NUM_MID is an integer variable, measuring the total number of MIDs that have occurred within a dyad. This number is achieved by counting (Diehl & Goertz, 2000; Senese & Vasquez, 2008, 70). The variable is essential in the determination of rivalry.
- TOT_NUM_TERRIT_MID is an interval variable. It accounts for the total number of territorial MIDs within a dyad and denoted by merely counting.
- TERRIT_OCCUR is a binary variable. It uses *cwhost_1* to delineate if a dyadic territorial militarized interstate dispute occurred, which is coded as a "1". This predictor is a primary input into the STW model.
- RIV_CLASS is a categorical variable meant to annotate rivalry typology. Like other variables in this dataset, it requires a few intermittent steps. First, dyads are divided into 20-year time blocks. Second, within each block, the total number of MIDs is accounted for and classified based on 1 = Isolated, 2 = Proto, 3 = Enduring. Diehl and Goetz (2000) interstate rivalry typology are used here, where isolated rivalry is two or fewer MIDs, proto is two to six, and enduring is greater than six disputes. In sum, this variable is a numerical, categorical variable that can be transformed into a test if the need arises.

- END_RIV is a binary variable. This number explains whether a dyadic enduring rivalry is present. It uses RIV_CLASS and codes a “1” if an enduring rivalry is present. This covariate is the second key predictor in the STW model.
- ALLIED_PATTERNS is an ordinal variable that represents a state’s alliance status. To ascertain this variable requires three events. Using COW Formal Alliance_v4.1, the dyad variable type is identified. Next, the alliances are recoded as follows: 0 = None; 1 = Allied to each other; 2 = One outside; 3 = Both outside; and 4 = Allied to each other but with outside (Senese & Vasquez, 2008, 68). Finally, the dyad alliance patterns are tallied. The total effect is a numerical, categoric variable that can be transformed using IBM SPSS.
- HR_ALLY is a dichotomous variable, which stands for a high-risk ally. It is based on two parameters. First, ALLIED_PATTERNS is used. The criteria here is that both belligerents are allied to other states. The second parameter entails *majpow*, which infers this ally possesses the high national material capability and the willingness to act. If there is a “3”, then HR_ALLY is coded as “1”. This covariate is one of the primary predictors in the STW model.
- ARMS_RACE is also a dichotomous variable. It represents if an arms race between two countries has occurred. As with other complex variables in COW, it needs further operationalization. Using Sample’s (2002) data and coding technique, there is a two-step process or rather criteria. The first task

is to ascertain the military build-up of personnel within a dispute dyad. This entails counting the increase in armed force size. If an increase is present, the first criteria are met. The second task is based on military spending. Similar to army growth, it is a comparison of a state's defense budget at the beginning of the decade to that of the end. If the budget increased, then the second criterion is achieved. When both criteria are present, a "1" is entered into the dataset, annotating that an arms race did occur.

All of the above are key covariates to the STW model. With data collection and management now addressed, it is time to outlay the dissertation's seminal arguments.

P4: War onset on the Asian continent is congruent with COW power politics behavior

Asia has a history of conflict.

Colonial aftereffects, religious intolerance, territorial disputes, political differences, and economic disparity are several factors (Asia Foundation, 2017). Asian states, like Europe and Africa, deal with these issues in power politics fashion, which entails conflict escalation, alliance building, and military buildups. It is also worth noting that region location more than the international system arguably dictates interstate behavior (Buzan, Weaver, & Wilde, 1998; Buzan & Weaver, 2012). China, as a member state within Asia, embodies these above-mentioned attributes and behavior. With closer examination, both are closely related to COW politics behavior of territory, rivalry, alliance making, and military buildup (Senese & Vasquez, 2008). This statement is qualitative conjecture, which does not meet the rigor need for in-depth analysis. To that end, here is the first proposition that attempts to placate this analytical shortfall:

Proposition 4 variable arrangement must cater to congruency. The outcome variable is WAR_ONSET, which represents war onset on the Asian continent. There is a total of four predictor variables: 1) Territory_Rev (*cwrevt11* = 1), 2) END_RIV, 3) HR_ALLY, and 4) ARMS_RACE. Of significance, unlike the other research questions, this proposition relies solely on researcher-defined variables.

Research Design (P4)

Model design is next in the propositional framework. As a reminder, this outline follows suite with STW's four models. Previous research has shown this combination was indeed additive. What this research question is trying to determine is if these four critical steps hold true in Asia. That said, it is time to replicate Senese and Vasquez's theory. The first model is a base comparison of dyads with territorial disputes versus other revision types (Senese et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 2014)). This step is necessary for logit regression research tests. The independent variable, which is the same for all four models, is war onset. It is represented by WAR_ONSET. The dependent variable is *Territory_Rev*. As a reminder, the purpose of this model is to establish a baseline probability of war onset based on territorial disputes against other interstate disputes. This design steps closely follow Senese and Vasquez's research methodology (Senese et al., 2008).

Model 2 involves alliances. Unlike Senese et al. (2008), this segment only tests for relevant alliances where both states having outside partnerships. The outcome variable is WAR_ONSET. The predictor covariate is HR_ALLY. The research goal here is to look at the effect of alliance configuration within a dyad and the probability of war.

Model 3 pertains to rivalry. This research is altered from the original design. Senese et al. (2008) used several categorical variables that were scaled to explain rivalry, essentially ranging from an isolated event to multiple incidents. This dissertation refrains from using that methodology instead of concentrating on dyads that have an enduring quality. That said, the dependent variable is WAR_ONSET, whereas the independent variable is END_RIV. The chief aim is to examine the impacts of enduring rivalry on the possibility of war onset on the Asian continent.

Model 4 is the last step in the process, addressing how war initiation is influenced by interstate arms build-ups. The researcher-defined operationalization of arms races combines the effects of war materiel increase and defense spending into a single dichotomous variable. So, in this model, the dependent variable remains WAR_ONSET and the independent variable is ARMS_RACE. Of significance, this model was the most difficult to construct and should provide some useful insight into the steps to war on the Asian continent.

In short, it is important to account for a few things. First, the testing of the STW theory is a replica of Senese and Vasquez's research design (2008) Their design hinges on dichotomous variables, stepwise regression, and additive. Second, these models are additive, which means as each one is added the probability of war should increase. Lastly, Vasquez stressed that the STW is not necessarily about the steps, but the cumulative addition of power politics behavior within the dyad annotated here by each model (Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez et al. 2001). That said, it is time to discuss numerical tests.

Statistical Test (P4)

As a result of this research design's complexity and the simplicity of the variable measurement, a multivariate inferential approach is a necessity. Logit regression, both predicted probabilities and odds ratios, is the main technique. Logistic analysis is specifically designed for dichotomous variables. Within this dataset, each covariate has been operationalized into a binary number, where "1" equals yes, and "0" equates to no. According to Grace-Martin (n.d.), logistic or logit regressions estimate the probability an outcome falls into one of those two possible categories. For example, logistic regression is common in politics where pollsters want to determine if a candidate will win an election. Meaning, "yes" the candidate wins the vote and "no" they lose. In this dissertation, whether war occurs or not is the primary research aim and logit regression affords valuable insight (Field, 2013; Senese et al, 2008).

Continuing, odds ratios are useful exploratory research. It is the estimation of occurrence given an independent, categorical variable and quantification of the strength of association between outcome and predictors. The odds ratio is commonly reported as a magnitude. For clarification, an example is warranted here. Say after running a logit regression that territory is assigned an odds ratio of 7.32, it would mean that Territorial MID is seven times more likely to end in war compared to the baseline model, which was Policy MID. What is key to remember is that logit testing will be repeated four times to account for each step in the war onset process.

Equally pertinent is the assumption of logit regression. There are four key assumptions that apply here. First, the dependent or outcome variable must be binary. The dataset and model framework ensure this requirement. Second, observations must be

independent of another. The COW datasets use the dyad construct which is indeed independent. Third, the predictor variable should be linearly related to the log odds—i.e., the log of odds of an event occurring. Last, logistic regression implies a large sample size. After preliminary sort of the COW datasets using EUGene_v4.3, dispute dyads range upwards of 800 in the Asian geographic region. This number is well within logistical criteria (Bennet et al., 2000; Glazek, n.d., Grace-Martin, n.d.)

To summarize, Proposition 4 main purpose is to test if war onset in Asia is congruent with COW power politics. The latter entails territorial disputes, alliance, rivalry, and arms races. Each covariate is modeled as a step to war. Where Model 1 and 2 examine how revision type and alliance making impact war, and the other two models explore dyadic rivalry and arms buildup. Logit regression is used in a stepwise manner to investigate if the addition of one covariate does, in fact, increase the probability of war.

P5: East and Southeast Asia subregions are more prone to conflict than Asia wide large

East and Southeast Asia is a hotbed for conflict. As stated, there are five major powers, including the United States that are active in the subregion. More so, nearly every power there has an active territorial dispute. For instance, South Korea is at odds with the Democratic Republic of Korea, which is commonly known as North Korea, over peninsula unification. The Peoples' Republic of China is hostile towards the Government of Japan concerning the Senkaku Islands. Also, the latter is greatly concerned with Taiwan's independence and the "One China" policy. Equally relevant in East Asia is alliances. The U.S. has a signed defense pact with South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. China has defense and trade agreements with North Korea.

Perhaps most dangerous is the fact there are multiple ongoing arms races. It is well-known that the U.S. and China are actively increasing their military capability and capacity. However, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan have also increased military spending. In fact, defense spending per GDP has risen above the normal 3% threshold. Taking all these attributes into account, Proposition 5 contends:

Proposition 5 variable arrangement is like Proposition 4. The variable arrangement still caters towards congruency. The outcome variable is WAR_ONSET and the four outcome variables are: 1) Territory_Rev (cwrevt11 = 1), 2) END_RIV, 3) HR_ALLY, and 4) ARMS_RACE.

Data Management (P5)

With most of the explanation provided in the previous proposition discussion, there is no need to go into detail. Therefore, data management is by exception. One of the first changes is spatial domains. Proposition 5 concerns the 15 countries that make up the subregions of East and Southeast Asia. Another adjustment entails the EUGene_v3.2 dataset and the researcher-defined variables. This proposition requires one more researcher variable to operationalize. Here is a succinct explanation:

- ASIA_SUB is a numerical, categorical variable. It describes what Asian subregions that a dyad belongs to, according to the COW dataset. Of note, the Middle East, although technically part of Asia, is its own category. The COW-defined subregions are southeast, south, east, central, and Oceania. Within IBM SPSS, the categories are coded as (1 = Southeast, 2 = South, 3 = East, 4 = Central, 5 = Oceania). Of note, this variable arrangement affords transformation into dummy variables, key enablers in logit regression.

This additional variable setup is indeed critical. It allows for a relatively seamless comparison between East and Southeast Asia and the entire Asian continent. This task is done by filtering the prescribed subregions from the EUGene_v3.2 dataset. The cumulative effect is fundamental in this research framework.

Research Design (P5)

Research design leverages the existing work on the previous research questions. Proposition 5's framework is a straightforward three-step process. The first step involves establishing a foundation baseline of conflict with the East and Southeast subregions. Here, the research will explore both MIDs and revision types as they relate to military violence and war onset.

The second step involves using the four STW models and the modified subregion dataset to determine war probability. As before, Senese and Vasquez's research techniques are used.

The final step is a simple comparison between Proposition 4 and 5 statistical results. The goal is to build a mental and statistical model that allows a quantitative-based inference whether the subregions that China routinely uses power politics is indeed ripe for warfare.

Statistical Test (P5)

To gain some insight, Proposition 5 is subject to both descriptive and inferential tests. Crosstabs are used in univariate analysis, determining central tendencies, scope, and magnitudes. As with the other test questions, the bivariate analysis will examine war onset as it pertains to both militarized interstate disputes and revisions. For MIDs, the rows are marked by WAR_ONSET and NO_WAR and columns by *cwhost 1* through

cwhost 4. The crosstab on revision uses the same variable arrangement but substituting the *cwrev 1* through *cwrev 4* as independent variables. The net effect is a solid understanding of observed and expected counts and strength of association between the war onset and the prescribed correlates of war (Field, 2013; Murphy, n.d.).

Inferential analysis is a replication of the logistic regression used to test the steps to war in the previous proposition. It entails regressing war probability against the additive effects of territorial dispute, alliance, rivalry, and an arms race. As a reminder, assumptions and tests for fit remain the same from earlier analysis.

In sum, Proposition 5 is perhaps the most illuminating supposition of this dissertation. It narrows in on the Asian subregions that have the greatest propensity for conflict with regards to the Peoples Republic of China. The overall research framework was efficient. Data management leveraged the EUGene dataset and another researcher-defined determinant. Equally pertinent was research design and the applicable statistical tests. The three-step sequence, which included both propositions, was invaluable in establishing a testable conflict model. The total outcome is a thorough process in which key findings can indeed be ascertained.

Conclusion

All-in-all, this chapter is arguably the most vital to this dissertation based on two key reasons. Because this research is quantitative, which is not frequent in peace research and conflict resolution fields, there is a considerable amount of energy expended on outlaying the data requirement, hypotheses formulation, and statistical test. The net result is a comprehensive, research roadmap, which should lead to insightful and impactful results.

Another reason for this chapter's importance pertains to Sino revisionism and war causal attributes, which were covered in three supporting research questions. The first goal was to illustrate the relationship between war onset and militarized disputes. Central tendencies and variance analysis are used to both describe and infer facets of that interaction. The second question's aim is to ascertain how Asiatic revisionism correlates to interstate military violence and warfare. Bivariate analysis will be instrumental in assessing the concept of major powers, national capability, and power domains as they correspond to war. Last, and the centerpiece of this research is exploring war onset as it corresponds to the steps to war theory. Stepwise, logistic regression is imperative in testing if Asia is congruent with the other COW research. The totality of these questions is illuminated in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

Quantitative research in which analyzes and evaluates pertinent factors concerning interstate war and violence are essential to the conflict resolution field. The empirical study of war onset, and its applicable attributes, on the Asian continent could provide newfound synthesis on how best to avoid regional conflict, particularly with the Peoples Republic of China. In addition to three supporting research questions, this dissertation chapter showcased the results from main questions: What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia?

Scope

Prior to continuing, a brief review of data management activities is in order. A researcher-defined dataset was constructed using applicable Correlations of War data depositories and the EUGeneve_v3.2 dataset generator. Within temporal confines from 1949 to 2001, a total of 460 dispute dyads were identified within the Asian subregion. Next, each case was modified to create a dyadic-dispute history that included militarized disputes, revision type, national material capability, as well as other vital COW-defined war correlates.

Using descriptive analysis, which primarily focused on central tendencies and frequencies, and various inferential statistical tests, three supporting research questions were used to address how the correlates of war are linked to Sino revisionism in Asia. The questions had an inductive quality that once answered formulated synthesis and provided insight on the next research inquiry. The culmination was an objective inference on whether China was susceptible to war given the current geopolitical climate.

To answer the main research question, Chapter 4's framework was both inductive and straightforward. The discussion layout was predicated on each respective supporting research question. What is the probability of war onset based on associated MIDs in Asia? Research Question 1(RQ 1) contained three hypotheses. They were instrumental in deriving non-directional impacts that militarized interstate disputes had on war onset. One should recall that MIDs are the cornerstone of any empirical COW peace research on war.

What revision type caused the greatest propensity of war in Asia? Research Question 2 (RQ 2) addressed two hypotheses and three propositions. In most realist thought, state revisionism often led to interstate war, a supposition that was necessary to explore within the context of Asia. Equally, the inferential statistical tests illuminated the direction and magnitude that revision-type had on armed conflict.

What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia? Research Question 3 (RQ 3) objectively linked MIDs and revisionism to the Steps-To-War theory. The purpose here was to arrive at a scholarly consensus on whether the empirical data afforded insight and context on how a country's needs and wants and associated escalatory techniques used to achieve them could possibly end on a path to war.

Before discussing the findings from RQ 1, it also required to address how each question is answered. There are four topic areas. The first portion involves the restatement of either hypothesis or proposition. As a benefit, the rationale and how the test parameters fit into the larger analytical picture is also reviewed. Second is the descriptive analysis results. Central tendencies and dispersion attributes are the focus, here.

The third subsection outlays inferential findings. For this to occur, a review of the variables and prescribed statistical tests are necessary. Last is synthesis, which is essentially an inference on the applicability of this research as it pertains to war onset, Sino revisionism, and the correlates of war.

Supporting Research Questions

Context is critical in any correlatory endeavor. As such, there are three supporting research questions that are framed in an inductive manner that when examined should offer better synthesis and understanding. The first question aimed to establish the relationship between militarized disputes and war onset. The second looked to examine the relevance of revisionism on the Asia continent. The last supporting research question involved the testing of the steps-to-war theory. Annotated below are those questions, associated hypothesis/propositions, and key findings.

RQ1: What is the probability of war onset based on associated MID in Asia?

Research Question 1's purpose was to determine the influence that militarized interstate disputes had on war onset in Asia. More relevant is the fact that MIDs provided context on how turbulent and conflict-prone a region could be. MIDs are considered ordinal, meaning threats are the lowest intensity, whereas hostility is the highest. Since war onset is essentially hostility, any meaningful testing of war onset versus interstate hostility would be erroneous because the correlation is one hundred percent. Therefore, the category is not included in the analysis. One last point to consider concerned directionality. The below-annotated hypotheses test only for the association and not whether variable relationships are positive or negative. By design, this inductive

approach established foundational correlations, which is necessary for addressing the other research questions.

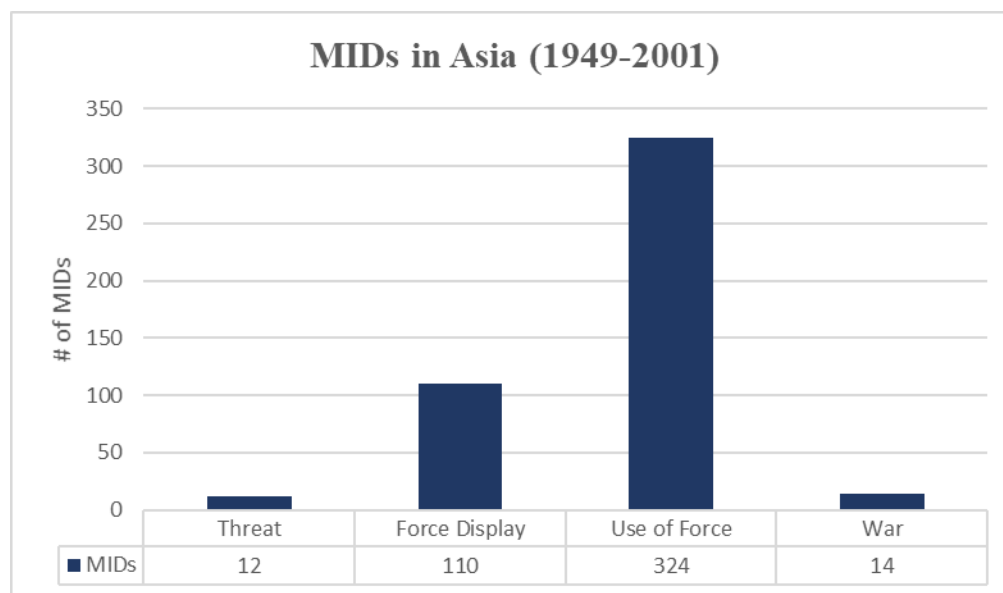


Figure 3. Asian MID Chart.

Upfront, there were several findings from IBM SPSS descriptive analysis that afforded solid essential knowledge. First, there was a total of 460 interstate disputes in the data sample. Equally relevant was that the Asian MID average ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .554$) was within one standard deviation of the global metric ($M=3.66$, $SD = .599$). For clarity, the rest of the descriptive results are addressed in the appropriate hypotheses, which are below listed.

H1: Threats MID impact the chances of war. Hypothesis 1 concerned the chances of war based on the frequency of threats issued by a state. This analysis was non-directional, meaning it was agnostic to whether impacts were positive or negative. To continue, there are two main descriptive analysis takeaways from this hypothesis. Threats ($N=12$) have the lowest frequency amongst all militarized interstate disputes within Asia. The second point is that between Asia and other regions threats are the

lowest percentagewise with the former (3%) slightly lower than the latter (4.8%). In short, since 1949, Asian threat MIDs occurrences are mostly congruent with that of the international order.

The inferential statistical test results were nuanced. To ascertain H1, a point-biserial correlation was performed. The dependent variable was war onset; the independent was threat based MIDs. As a reminder, this statistical test works best with a dichotomous dependent variable that correlates with either other nominal or scale variables. There was no significant correlation between war onset and threat MIDs ($r = -.029$, $N = 460$, $p = .535$). Of consequence, this finding was not expected. Based on Vasquez (1996, 2001, 2008) and Singer (1972, 1981), threats were determined to correlate with war commencement. The analysis here showed a tentative implication regarding the utility of threats. Because of the low frequency and no significant statistical correlation, it is conceivable that most Asian states do not bother to make threats since they are ignored. As such, Hypothesis 1 is rejected because threat MIDs were shown not to impact war onset in Asia.

H2: Force display impacts the chance of war. Hypothesis 2 sought to derive if Asian countries' displays of force impacted the chances of war. To start, there are several central limit descriptives that should be examined. First, results indicated Asian force displays (24%) are aligned with international cases (27%). This metric is a percentage of the total number. Second, states utilized force displays ($N = 112$) nearly ten times that of threats ($N = 12$). Again, the data supported threats are either ignored or simply not used.

The inferential results were unforeseen. A point-biserial correlation was executed. As depicted in Table 1, the dependent variable was war initiation, whereas force display

was the independent one. There was a statistically significant correlation between war onset and display of force ($r = -.099$, $N = 460$, $p = .033$). Previous COW research showed a positive correlation between the variables (Sample, 2016; Senese et al., 2005, 2008, Singer et al, 1990). However, further examination presented a slightly negative correlation, which meant wars decreased when force displays occurred. In sum, Hypothesis 2 is accepted because statistics displayed that force displays indicated a decrease in war chances on the Asian continent.

Table 1

War Onset & MIDs Correlations

		Correlations			
		WAR_ONSET	Threat_MID	Display_MID	Use_MID
WAR_ONSET	Pearson Correlation	1	-.029	-.099*	-.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.535	.033	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	13.574	-.365	-3.348	-9.861
	Covariance	.030	-.001	-.007	-.021
	N	460	460	460	460
Threat_MID	Pearson Correlation	-.029	1	-.092*	-.253**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.535		.049	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-.365	11.687	-2.870	-8.452
	Covariance	-.001	.025	-.006	-.018
	N	460	460	460	460
Display_MID	Pearson Correlation	-.099*	-.092*	1	-.865**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.049		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-3.348	-2.870	83.696	-77.478
	Covariance	-.007	-.006	.182	-.169
	N	460	460	460	460
Use_MID	Pearson Correlation	-.273**	-.253**	-.865**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-9.861	-8.452	-77.478	95.791
	Covariance	-.021	-.018	-.169	.209
	N	460	460	460	460
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

H3: Use of force impacts the probability of war. Hypothesis 3, which is last under RQ1, concerned interstate use of military force and war probability. That said,

there are three key descriptive test findings. Force use MIDs were the highest incidence ($N = 324$) out of all Asian interstate disputes, making it 3 times more frequent than displays of force and 27 that of threats. Another descriptive result was the alignment between Asian states and international tendencies during the same timeframe. Data showed that Asian MIDs (70%) paralleled global trends (67%).

Again, inferential discoveries were not expected. A third point-biserial correlation was conducted with force use as the MID type and dependent variable. There was a statistically significant correlation between war onset and use of force ($r = -.273$, $N = 460$, $p = .000$). This dyadic finding was converse to most COW research, which posited a positive relationship between force use and war onset. Here, the correlation is negative. That said, Hypothesis 3 is accepted because the research illustrated that force use impacted war onset.

With the abnormal findings, it was determined that more analysis is indeed required. Violent conflict between states is one step short of war. It worth remembering that the COW project classified war as a military conflict where there are more than 1,000 battle deaths (Singer et al., 1972). Any number short of that metric was rendered into the violent conflict category, which bared the question: Does the occurrence of MIDs relate to the inducement of violent conflict? If properly answered, then this application would either dispel or support the above findings.

Separate point-biserial correlations were performed on each militarized interstate dispute category. To accomplish, some modifications were necessary. The independent variable was changed from war onset to violent conflict. The dependent variables were taken from the three above-mentioned hypotheses. The first retest involved threat MIDs.

There was a statistically significant correlation between violent conflict and threats issued ($r = -.272$, $N = 460$, $p = .000$). Of significance, this finding was different because of the previous result ($r = -.029$, $N = 460$, $p = .535$) indicated no correlation between war onset and threats. Another interesting result was the correlation coefficient increased three-fold ($r = -.029$ to $r = -.272$).

Force display was the second MID, which also had illuminating findings. The point-biserial correlation test showed there was a statistically significant association between interstate violent clashes and displays of force ($r = -.933$, $N = 460$, $p = .000$). Table 2 depicted the net result, which was the strengthening of the negative correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The war onset magnitude ($r = -.099$) directionally increased when violent conflict ($r = -.272$) was substituted, further cementing the notion that MIDs do not positively impact martial conflict within Asia.

Table 2

Violent Conflict & MIDs Correlations

		Correlations			
		VIO_CON	Threat_MID	Display_MID	Use_MID
VIO_CON	Pearson Correlation	1	-.272**	-.933**	.927**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	89.643	-8.817	-80.826	85.930
	Covariance	.195	-.019	-.176	.187
	N	460	460	460	460
Threat_MID	Pearson Correlation	-.272**	1	-.092*	-.253**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.049	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-8.817	11.687	-2.870	-8.452
	Covariance	-.019	.025	-.006	-.018
	N	460	460	460	460
Display_MID	Pearson Correlation	-.933**	-.092*	1	-.865**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.049		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-80.826	-2.870	83.696	-77.478
	Covariance	-.176	-.006	.182	-.169
	N	460	460	460	460
Use_MID	Pearson Correlation	.927**	-.253**	-.865**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	85.930	-8.452	-77.478	95.791
	Covariance	.187	-.018	-.169	.209
	N	460	460	460	460
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

The last MID reanalyzed was use of force. After performing the inferential test, it was determined there was a statistically significant correlation between violent conflict and the use of force ($r = .926$, $N = 460$, $p = .01$). There are two illuminating implications: both deal with the correlation coefficient. First, there was a polarity switch. When war onset ($r = -.273$) was exchanged with violent conflict ($r = .926$) as the dichotomous dependent variable, the factor reversed from a negative to positive. Second, the coefficient size substantially increased. The order of magnitude increased by four, nearly

approaching a perfect correlation ($r = 1.0$) between violence conflict occurrence and militarized force use. This finding makes sense because violent conflict is predicated on the military use of force, just not to the magnitude of a full-blown war.

What is the probability of war onset based on associated MID in Asia? At the question's surface, Asia was aligned with most COW research. Descriptive results mirrored those on the international scale. Central tendencies and dispersion were all within one standard deviation. Based on counts, there were 3.3 wars anticipated from force displays ($N = 110$). Equally relevant was that 9.9 interstate wars were expected as an outcome from force use ($N = 324$). These descriptives had further implications.

Inferentially, Asia was not aligned with COW research concerning the impact of MIDs on interstate war. This research exposed a primarily negative correlation. Mitchell et al. (2014) and Senese et al. (2008), both proved that MIDs had a positive correlation and influence on how wars started. More so, exchanging war onset for violent conflict only increased the correlation coefficient magnitude. The use of military force had an outwardly strong correlation to interstate low-intensity conflict on the Asian continent.

In total, Asia is perhaps war-weary, which explain the low frequency of interstate conflict. Most of the Asiatic wars were a byproduct of the post-WW II rollback of colonialism and subsequent Cold War. Wars are expensive and appear to be avoided by state actors (Bremer, 1992; Singer, 2001). If force use and display are employed within a militarized dispute, then the odds of war are unlikely. For instance, without MIDs present, there is a four percent chance of war, which is statistically higher than with MIDs. This elastic metric could mean that wars within Asia are either spontaneous or lacking in escalation. It is therefore conceivable that force displays and use, coupled with

adept diplomacy, have afforded Asian states the ability to obtain their strategic goals without full-scale interstate war. What is important to remember is that perhaps MIDs are not a good indicator of war, rather they are a better gauge for the likelihood of low-intensity conflict.

RQ2: What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia?

Building on the knowledge obtained from the MID analysis, the purpose here was to ascertain how revisions impact war onset. Revisions are a key step on the path to war. They often represent the vital issue in which states are willing to resolve with the contest of arms. Whereas RQ 1 analysis was non-directional, RQ2 sought to employ both direction and magnitude. The rationale is that some revisions are more salient than others (Senese et al, 2008; Vasquez, 2001).

Another factor to highlight was that this research question incorporated an escalatory aspect. The first proposition is used to determine if armed interstate violence occurred. This step is important because violence is often a precursor to full-scale war. The next proposition ascertained how territorial revision correlated to war. From here, the question of national material capability and major powers are entered into the discussion. Prior to revealing the results, it is necessary to provide some basic descriptive findings on Asian revisionism.

From 1949 to 2001, Asia ($N = 460$) had over 400 revisions that corresponded with interstate militarized disputes. Compared with global numbers ($N = 1683$), Asian disputes accounted for nearly one fourth (24%). The central tendencies were aligned with Asia ($M = 1.33$, $SD = 1.00$) within one standard deviation of the international mean ($M = 1.46$, $SD = .989$).

To refresh, there were five revision categories that recorded 460 militarized disputes. Figure 4, situated below, depicted a useful descriptive breakout. Territorial revisions (31%) totaled 144 dyads. Policy (36%) was 164 disputes. Regime revisions (6%) added up to 28 dyad-disputes. The lowest frequency was revisions categorized as other (3%) in which there were 14 disputes. Perhaps most interesting was that 110 revisions were considered not applicable, which was nearly one-fourth (24%) of the data sample. Meaning, COW researchers were unable to operationalize some revisions to specific disputes based on their predetermined criteria (Levy, 1981; Senese et al, 2008). Taking this limitation into account, this dissertation examined territory, policy, and regime revisions.

P1: Territorial revision has the highest probability of violent conflict

Proposition 1's purpose determined if territorial revisions were indeed the highest probability of ending in military violence between states. The COW scholars and STW theorists contended that territory was the most salient issue in war. This research intended to examine this notion in an escalatory manner. Meaning, there is first a test to see if territorial disputes (i.e., independent variable) end in violence (i.e., dependent variable), which occurs in this proposition.

Descriptive statistics proved insightful. There were 144 revisions (31%) that involved territory and 338 disputes (73%) classified as violent conflict. Both metrics were calculated from a total of 460 dispute cases in Asia. Regarding territorial revisionism, nearly a third (28%) ended with interstate violence, whereas another third (39%) did not. This means that more cases than not, violence was avoided. The highest revision frequency was policy. At 164 disputes, there were 20 more policy revisions than

territory. Equally informative were the policy revisions that ended in armed violent conflict. Concerning the latter, conflict was almost equal between violence (36%) and no violence (35%).

To determine P1's inferential attributes, three empirical test runs were deemed necessary. A crosstab was performed with violent conflict as the dependent variable and territorial revision as the independent. The relationship between violent conflict and territorial revision was statistically significant chi-square $(1,460) = 4.025, p = .045$. More so, the odds of violent conflict were .642 times larger when a revision over territory is present.

Policy revision was next. Exchanging policy for territory, another crosstab was completed. The association between violent conflict and policy revision was not significant chi-square $(1,460) = .109, p = .742$. Revision was the last dependent variable tested. The crosstab resulted in a relationship between violent conflict and regime revision is statistically significant chi-square $(1, 460) = 8.058, p = .005$. The odds of violent conflict were 11.02 higher when regime revisions are present.

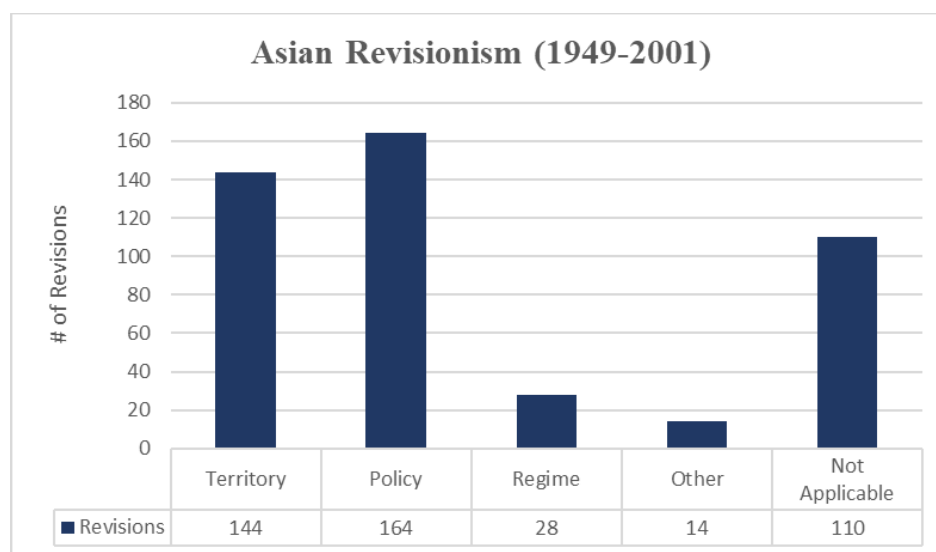


Figure 4. Asian Revisionism.

Proposition 1 revealed three salient items. First, territorial revisions indicated a decrease in violent conflict. The odds ratio (.645) is less than 1, which means a negative correlation. This finding was divergent from accepted COW thought on the power politics behavior of most states (Hensel et al., 2004; Senese et al., 2008, Vasquez, 1987). In fact, nearly all studies used in this dissertation posited that territorial revisions were both a strong predictor and positive correlation to interstate violence.

Second, policy-related revisions were not statistically significant. One must remember that at the international level policy revisions were indeed relevant to the onset of war, and thereby the enduement of violence. This contrast posited that Asia was not congruent with the other continental regions and previous peace research. (Singer, 1990; Vasquez, et al., 2010). With policy having a very high-frequency rate, it should have been more statistically significant.

Third, the discovery that regime revisions had the highest likelihood of military violence short of war was not expected. The fact that the p-value and odds ratio were uncharacteristically strong was unforeseen. As stated, the Steps-To-War theory and other various COW peace research clearly stated that territory was the leading harbinger to violence (Moaz et al., 2018; Senese et al, 2003, 2008). In this incident, the research implied that regime change was strongly related to Asiatic militarized violence.

P2: Territorial revision has the highest probability of war

Proposition 2's goal was to ascertain the direction and likelihood that territorial revisions had on war onset. Upfront, Asia, compared to other regions, fought the highest number of wars ($N = 14$) from 1949 to 2001 time. It is also worth mentioning that 14 is

considered a relatively low occurrence compared to the 187 total wars since the Napoleonic Era.

Like Proposition 1, crosstabs were the statistical test of choice. The independent variables remained revision type, while the onset of war replaced violent conflict. A crosstab was completed with unanticipated findings. The relationship between war onset and territorial revision were not significant chi-square $(1, 460) = .05, p = .823$. The second crosstab proved equally interesting. The relationship between war onset and policy revision were not significant chi-square $(1, 460) = 1.296, p = .255$. The last crosstab inferential finding was unequally foreseen. The relationship between war onset and regime revision were not statistically significant chi-square $(1, N = 460) = .028, p = .867$.

Regarding Proposition 2's palpable finding, there were no relationships whatsoever between revisions and war. All the crosstab results—territory, policy, regime—were statistically not significant with relatively high p-values, indicating the contradictory nature of the findings. More so, when combined with P1 results, the notion of territorial issues being the catalyst for war is further undermined. One should remember that crosstabs showed that Asia behaved differently from the previous COW suppositions when it came to MIDs and territory, a fact that needed further examination.

H4: National capability has no impact on war onset. Hypothesis 4's aim was the discernment of how socio-economic and military might influence state behavior in the context of war onset. To elucidate, the descriptives were informative. Below is Figure f, which affords a graphical comprehension of the data. The dark blue bar represented MIDs ($N=446$) partitioned by national capability that did not end in war. The orange bar

represented MIDs ($N = 12$) that led to war. The chart showed two points of note. One is that Asian states, which were relatively poor, as depicted in the first quartile, had a relatively high MID rate ($N = 132$) that led to war ($N = 7$). The other point is that high capability states, which were mainly major powers, were equally prone to war ($N = 7$). The third quartile accounted for nearly half ($N = 211$) of the total MIDs ($N = 460$).

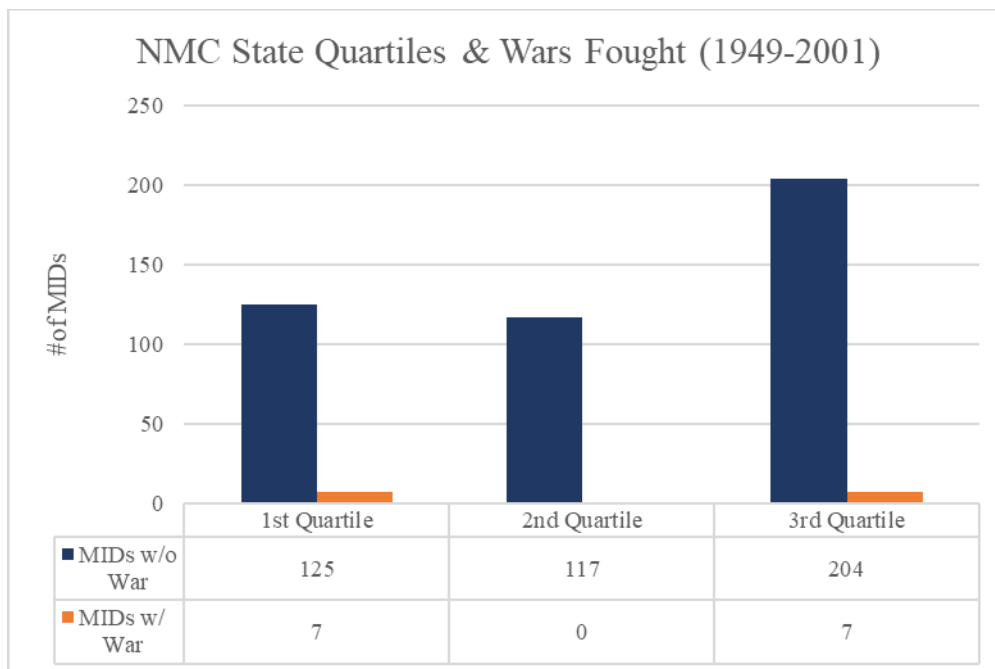


Figure 5. NMC Quartiles and Wars Fought.

The inferential test was equally illuminating. A crosstab was performed between national military capability and war onset. The former is a scale measurement and the independent variable. The latter was the dependent variable. The test revealed a relationship between war onset and national capability that was statistically significant chi-square ($2, 460$) = 6.010, $p = .050$.

Asia, again, proved unique in terms of militarized conflict. The data showed that an equal number of wars were fought between both minor and major powers, suggesting the need for further investigation. The Asian continent contained major-major, major-

minor, and minor-minor interstate disputes through the prescribed time. To reiterate, major powers are in the third quartile. China, Japan, Russia, and the United States fell into this category. Most rising and medium-capability countries were in the second quartile. Vietnam and Thailand are such examples. The poorest, in terms of national military capability, were categorized in the first quartile. The Philippines, circa the 1970s and 80s, resided in this percentage group. Singer (1972) and Black (2008) proclaimed because wars required economic resources they were usually fought by more capable states. This premise is perhaps true but needed further evidential support.

From a monetary standpoint, it is conceivable that the Cold-War did have an impact on war onset. Both the Korean War (1950-53) and the Vietnam War (1956-1975) fell under the third and first quartile categories. Russia, China, and the United States, which are all high on the NMC index, poured war material and other resources into these policy armed conflicts. South Korea and Vietnam were minor powers who fought exhausting wars that were by-proxies for great power competition and ideology. The latter were economic powerhouses that could fund and support numerous wars, which arguably increased the correlatory factor of national capability.

Another point is that the data suggested wars of colonialism were at hand. During the 1950s, Vietnam fought a bitter war to dislodge a colonizer from its territory. The First Indochina war pitted Vietnam against France. One was a minor power that had just help defeat the Japanese empire in WWII. The other was a declining major power, which had been conquered by Germany in WWII. This was another example of a first quartile situation.

The last point concerned the fallout from major power wars. Vasquez et al. (2010) claimed that after major power conflict there is a period of numerous smaller wars, which he equated to state-building wars. These types were considered minor-minor conflicts. The research data showed that the preponderance of the 1st quartile MIDs was subject to this premise. Laos and Cambodia are clear examples.

In short, Hypothesis 4 is rejected. Both descriptive and inferential tests showed a strong correlation between Asian countries' economic wealth and their propensity for war. More so, the above-mentioned synthesis provided examples of how national material capacity did matter in the number and type of wars fought.

H5: Dyad classification has impacts on war onset. Hypothesis 5's purpose was the examination if dyad classification influenced war. Figure 6 portrayed descriptives. As a reminder, most IR theorists divide state power domains into two broad categories: major and minor (Lake, 2003; Lebow, 2010). Major powers are established, resource-rich, and often activist in the international order. Minor powers are less capable, resource-constrained, and often restricted to their respective regions. This research organized Asian states that participated in militarized disputes into three groups. Major-major dyads ($N = 30$) were the lowest. Major-minor ($N = 204$) and minor-minor ($N = 246$), combined, were considerably more (94%). What was profound was the sheer number of dyads that included minor powers, which is later addressed.

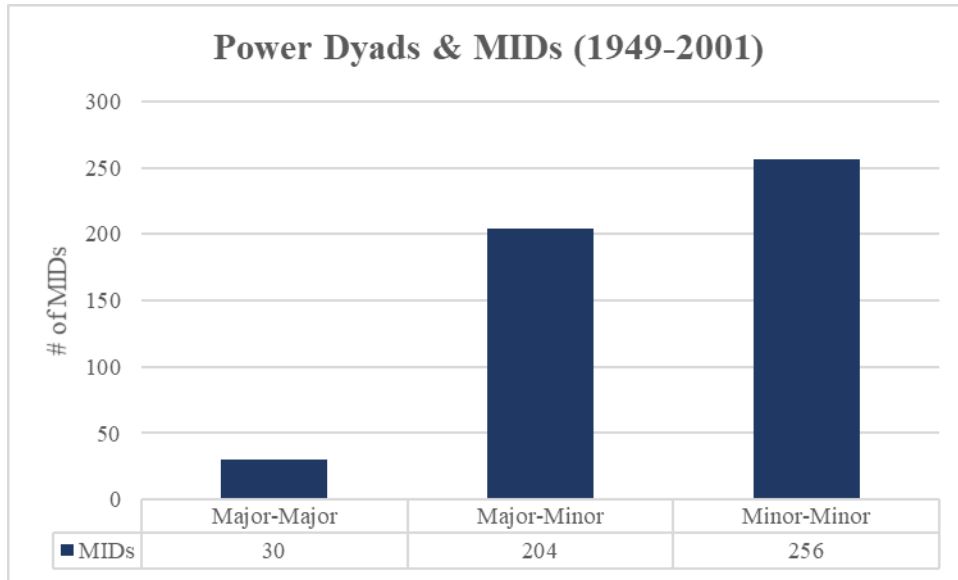


Figure 6. Power Dyads & MIDs (1949-2001).

The inferential test results were not anticipated. A binary logistic regression model was used to determine the relationship between power dyads and war onset. The dyads were the predictor variables, and war onset was the outcome variable. The research method entailed three independent model runs with the predictor variable exchanged on each one. Here are the results.

The first regression model was not statistically significant chi-square (1, 460) = 1.919, $p = .166$, with a -2LL of 123.432. War onset equation was equal to $-3.392 + -17.88$ (maj-maj MID), dyad was coded as 1 = Yes, 0 = No. War onset chances decreased by 17.811 for each MID. As such, a dyad comprised of major powers was not a significant predictor of war onset. The second regression model was not statistically significant chi-square (1, 460) = .950, $p = .330$, with a -2LL of 124.4. War onset equation was equal to $-3.199 + -.531$ (maj-min MID), dyad was coded as 1 = Yes, 0 = No. War onset decreased by .531 for each MID. In short, dyads comprised of one major power, and one minor power were not significant predictors of war initiation.

Table 3

War Onset & Maj-Min Dyad Regression Results

Variables in the Equation								
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B) Lower Upper
Step 1 ^a	MAJ-MIN(1)	-.531	.548	.938	1	.333	.588	.201 1.723
	Constant	-3.199	.361	78.642	1	.000	.041	

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: MAJ-MIN.

The last regression model was also not statistically significant, chi-square (1, 460) = .950, $p = .330$), with a -2LL of 124.4. War onset equation was equal to $-3.199 + -.531(\text{min-min MID})$, dyad was coded as 1 = Yes, 0 = No. War onset decreased by .531 for each MID. In totality, Asian power dyads—i.e., major-major, major-minor, minor-minor—were not significant predictors of war onset. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was summarily rejected.

As with previous abnormal findings, the lack of correlation between power dyads and war onset required further analysis. Using the same regression model, a new series of binary logistics tests were implemented. Since war onset was inconclusive, the research leaned toward violent conflict as an outcome variable.

The first regression model was not statistically significant, chi-square (1,460) = 1.591, $p = .207$, with a -2LL of 530.577. Violent equation was equal to $.547 + .509(\text{maj-maj MID})$, dyad was coded as 1 = Yeas, 0 = No. Violent conflict increased by .509 for each MID. That said, based on $p = .207$, there remained no relation between major-major power dyads and militarized interstate violence. The second regression run was statistically significant, chi-square (1,460) = 5.432, $p = .021$, with a -2LL of 526.827. Violent conflict equation was equal to $1.250 + -.490(\text{maj-min MID})$, dyad was coded as 1

= Yes, 0 = No. Violent conflict decreased by .490 for each MID, which was supported by a -.707 in IBM SPSS correlation matrix.

Table 4

Violent Conflict & Min-Min Dyad Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	MIN-MIN	.490	.212	5.322	1	.021	1.633	1.076	2.476
	Constant	.760	.150	25.587	1	.000	2.138		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: MIN-MIN.

Regarding violent interstate conflict, the last regression model was statistically significant, chi-square (1,460) = 5.432, $p = .021$ with -2LL of 526.827. Violent conflict equation was equal to $.760 + .490(\text{min-min MID})$, dyad was coded as 1 = Yeas, 0 = No. Violent conflict increased by .490 for each additional MID.

Hypothesis 5 has three takeaways. COW literature and research purported power domains were an integral part of whether a state waged war or not (Rummel, 1977, Sample, 2016). However, this scholarly work provided several alternatives. The notion of minor powers not waging war because of their low material capability is inconclusive. Descriptive analysis showed that Asian minor powers were indeed very active with respect to militarized disputes. From 1949 to 2001, the minor powers were involved in almost all disputes (94%) in Asia. Yet, there was no clear correlation if their status was related to war.

Equally relevant was that war onset in Asia was agnostic to power domains. Based on the high number of major-minor MIDs, there perhaps should have been a correlation. As mentioned, this finding aligned with neither COW nor STW research (Bremer, 1992; Senese et al., 2008 Singer, 2001; Vasquez, 1997). More so, all three

power dyads resulted in relatively high p-values (i.e., $p = .166$, $p = .330$, $p = .330$), which further supported that a state's domain classification would not necessarily correlate and thus lead to war.

Table 5

Violent Conflict & Maj-Min Dyad Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	MAJ-MIN	-.490	.212	5.322	1	.021	.613	.404	.929
	Constant	1.250	.150	69.260	1	.000	3.491		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: MAJ-MIN.

Lastly, as with earlier MID-related hypotheses, violent conflict and power domains were correlatory in Asia. Major-minor and minor-minor dyads were statistically significant. Historical context afforded some tentative answers. Asian major-minor dyads should have had a positive correlation because of the descriptives results and the numerous policy wars fought. However, neither the correlation matrix nor regression results (See Table 5) did not support this finding instead there was a negative correlation. This could perhaps be connected that the relationship between the major and minor power in the dyad is one of de-escalation because the minor power acquiesced to the more powerful state. As for the increase in violent conflict associated with minor-minor dyads, a tentative answer is that low NMC countries tended to avoid conflict with larger neighbors, but more than willing to fight a near-peer in capability. Again, martial contests and war are costly endeavors, and states usually do not partake unless they are certain of the outcome.

P3: Major powers with territorial issues are more prone to war

Proposition 3's purpose was to determine if a conflict dyad that contained a major power would be susceptible to war when a territorial revision was added. Since this test necessitates directional and step-increase aspects, a stepwise binary logistical regression model was created. The latter encapsulated two steps. Step 1 is the first case. The predictor is a major power, and the outcome variable is war onset. As a reminder, both variables are dichotomous. In Step 2, major power is swapped for territorial revision, which is also binary. It is important to remember that this model had an additive property, whereby the first step results influenced the second.

Table 6

Stage 1 War Onset Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	majpow1(1)	.910	.545	2.791	1	.095	2.484	.854	7.225
	Constant	-3.816	.382	99.745	1	.000	.022		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: majpow1.

That said, the two-stage model results were illuminating. The base model of war onset and major power was not significant, chi-square (1,460) = 2.710, $p = .100$, with a -2LL of 122.641. War onset equation was equal to $-3.863 + .910 (\text{majpower})$, dyad was coded as Yes = 1 and No = 0. War onset increased by .910 with each additional MID. Although this positive correlation between war and major power was deemed not statistically significant, it is reasonable to ascertain since $p = .096$ is comparatively close to $p = .05$ that there is some correlatory effect.

Keeping within the concept of violent conflict exploration in comparison to war onset, the above stepwise regression model was again used. The base model of violent conflict and major powers was statistically significant, chi-square (1,460) = 4.430, $p = .035$. Violent conflict equation was equal to $1.170 + -.476(\text{majpower})$, with a -2LL of 527.739. More importantly, there was a negative correlation between violent conflict and major powers. Meaning, major powers had a de-escalatory influence on the propensity of violence.

Stage 2 was equally profound. The second stage of the violent conflict based on major powers and territory-based issues model was statistically significant chi-square (2, 460) = 9.010, $p = .011$, with a -2LL of 523.158. Violent conflict equation is equal to $.861 + -.515(\text{majpower}) + .598(\text{territory_rev})$. One important item to note is that territory is additive. For clarity, as violent conflict decreased with the addition of major powers, territorial revisions caused it to increase.

Table 9

Stage 2 Violent Conflict Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	majpow1(1)	-.515	.227	5.160	1	.023	.598	.383	.932
	Territory_Rev(1)	.482	.224	4.644	1	.031	1.620	1.045	2.511
	Constant	.861	.190	20.620	1	.000	2.366		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Territory_Rev.									

Proposition 3 contained three salient points. Upfront, outcomes based on power domains combined with territory could not be statistically correlated to war. This finding is within the same thread as Research Questions 1 and 2, which also outlaid the divergence. Equally important was once again violent conflict was strongly related to

major powers and territorial revision. From the former's perspective, high capability states within a dyad decreased the possibility of violent disputes.

In Asia, unlike pre-WW II Europe, most major-minor dyads do not lead to violence. Instead, it would appear when major powers are involved with lessor countries, there is a propensity for settlement and thereby de-escalation. Lastly, the research reflected territorial revisions were escalatory in nature. There was a strong positive correlation that major power presence and territorial revisionism do increase the likelihood of violent armed conflict short of war. Although Proposition 3 could not unanimously be accepted because of the lack of significance concerning war onset, there should remain a strong acknowledgment that MID and revisionism do play an integral part in the violence on the Asia continent (Kim, 2002; Singer et al, 1987; Kaplan, 2013).

What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia? Upfront, the answer to the research question was overwhelmingly nuanced. War in Asia could not be correlated with any revisions. Not only were they not statistically relevant, there were so on a large scale: territory ($p = .823$), policy ($p = .255$), and regime ($p = .826$). This finding dictated that research should explore other related areas.

Violent conflict is common in Asia and empirically pertinent. Territory and regime were the two revisions that were statistically significant. Crosstabs were used to determine these findings. Regime was the highest. In fact, it was 11.82 more likely to lead to military violence between Asian states. This revelation could have possible implications as to whether Asian conflict followed the steps-to-war path.

Another point is that a country's national military capability was a greater indicator of war onset. In fact, national capability ($p = .05$) was statistically significant

compared to all revisions. More so, there was an equal tendency for war between major and minor powers. This discovery implied that minor powers, not only fought in major power wars but also against one another.

Of greater significance, the data and statistical tests did not support power domains and war onset. With Asia, despite the strong relationship between military capability and war onset, this research only supported violent interstate conflict. Asiatic dyads that contained major power were not more violence-prone, instead, their presence decreased the chances. Conversely, minor-minor dyads were positively related to violence onset.

Lastly, Asian militarized disputes that contained territorial revisions and major power do not increase the chances of war. There was statistical evidence to prove that they did. On the other hand, when violence was the dependent variable, there was empirical support. Despite major power presence dampening effect on violence, the addition of a territorial dispute did increase the chances of interstate violence.

In sum, there is not a statistical relationship between COW-defined revisions and the propensity of war in Asia. But there is a relatively strong positive correlation between the outbreak of interstate violence and regime-based revisions and high national capability. Since territory was not deemed significant, there perhaps were some repercussions that would be made apparent in the next section.

RQ3: What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia

Research Question 3, this dissertation's pinnacle inquest examined if the Steps-To-War theory held true for Asia. Vasquez's theory was based on a very robust sample. As with most COW studies, the temporal domain is from 1815 to 2001 and dispute cases

pertain to the international order. In short, previous research accounted for disputes in Europe, Middle East, Africa, and other regions within a two-century timeframe.

Conversely, this dissertation was scoped to a specific region, Asia, and epoch—China's founding in 1949 and thereafter. With these parameters, the below content illuminated the relationship between war initiation and the applicable attributes in which the Steps-To-War theorist contended was necessary.

P4: War onset on the Asian continent is congruent with COW power politics behavior

Proposition 4 analyzed whether war onset on the Asian continent was congruent with COW power politics behavior. More importantly, this research methodology and test are a direct replica of Senese and Vasquez's (2008) steps-to-war theoretical treatise that codified how the correlates of war (i.e., power politics) increased war likelihood between states. To elucidate, in the research design, war onset was the outcome variable. Senese et al. (2008) empirical aim were to determine the direction and magnitude of war probabilities based on the addition of predictor variables. The first phase involved the occurrence of a militarized interstate dispute grounded on a territorial revision. The second stage involved an enduring rivalry between disputants. The third rung was alliance creation, which was the rivals' effort to counter one another. Finally, there was the arms buildup between belligerents. The final effect, according to Vasquez, was an increase in the probability of war commencement. What is important is that the correlates are synonymous with the predictor variables, which leads to the statistical model.

To test P4, a four-stage model, using binary logistic regression, was created. The base model, or Stage 1, pertained to Asian territorial revisions. Next, rivalry was added

into the regression. This stepwise approach continued until all power politics predictors were adequately accounted for. The variables are dichotomous, with Yes = 1 and No = 0. Simply put, if a specific power politic behavior were present in the dyad, it was empirically analyzed in the inferential test.

The stepwise regression model on war onset and COW power politics was not statistically significant. For emphasis, here is the stage-by-stage empirical synopsis. The base model was not significant, chi-square (1, 460) = .045, $p = .831$. War onset was equal to $-3.339 + .127 (\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .539$ with a -2LL of 124.894. Stage 2 model, comprised of territory and rivalry, was not significant, chi-square (2, 460) = .644, $p = .725$. War onset was equal to $-3.445 + .160(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .790 + -.490(\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .458$, with a -2LL of 124.625.

Table 10

Stage 4 War Onset & Steps-To-War Regression Results

		Variables in the Equation					
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Territory_Rev(1)	.158	.607	.068	1	.794	1.172
	END_RIV(1)	-.294	.713	.170	1	.680	.745
	HR_ALLY(1)	.115	.557	.043	1	.836	1.122
	ARMS_RACE(1)	.518	.604	.735	1	.391	1.679
	Constant	-3.838	.720	28.446	1	.000	.022
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: ARMS_RACE.							

Stage 3 model, which included territory, enduring rivalry, and high-risk alliance, was not significant, chi-square (3,460) = .692, $p = .875$. War onset equation was $-3.500 + .172(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .776 + -.507 (\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .603 + .122 (\text{HR_ALLY})$, $p = .825$, with a -2LL of 124.596. Stage 4 model, which incorporated all COW power politic

variables, was not significant, chi-square (4,460) = 1.455, $p = .635$. War onset equation was $-3.838 + .158(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .794 + -.294(\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .680 + .115(\text{HR_ALLY})$, $p = .836 + .518(\text{ARMS_RACE})$, $p = .391$, with a -2LL of 123.833.

By now, the above-listed findings were anticipated. Previous hypotheses and propositions testing illuminated there were neither meaningful statistical nor correlatory relationships between war onset and Asiatic interstate power politics. Table 10 outlaid the stepwise regression model and is a testament to these affirmations. In short, Proposition 4 should be considered invalid as COW power politics pertain to the Asian continent.

Furthermore, Asia is not aligned with the Steps-To-War theory. This summation is based on the consistently high p-values and relatively low -2LL numbers on each model stage. That said, it was undeniably necessary to examine what would be the outcome if war onset was exchanged for interstate violent conflict.

Using the same stepwise model, regression was again conducted with violent conflict as the outcome variable. The predictors—territory, enduring rivalry, high-risk alliance, and arms race—also remained the same. Overall, the regression model on violent conflict and Asian states' power politics was statistically significant. Here is a more detailed report. The base model was significant, chi-square (1,460) = 3.529, $p = .060$. Violent conflict equation was $.746 + .421(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .058$, with a -2LL of 525.978.

Stage 2 was statistically significant, chi-square (2, 460) = 6.115, $p = .047$. Equation was equal to $.843 + .452(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .044 + -.368 (\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .105$, with a -2LL of 523.393. Stage 3 model, which included territory, enduring rivalry,

and high-risk alliance, was significant, chi-square (3,460) = 29.067, $p = .000$. Violent conflict equated to $-3.500 + .551(\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .018 + -.511 (\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .030 + 1.109(\text{HR_ALLY})$, $p = .000$, with a -2LL of 500.441.

Table 11

Stage 4 Violent Conflict & Steps-To-War Regression Results

		Variables in the Equation					
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Territory_Rev(1)	.558	.232	5.775	1	.016	1.748
	END_RIV(1)	-.574	.259	4.892	1	.027	.563
	HR_ALLY(1)	1.117	.244	21.017	1	.000	3.055
	ARMS_RACE(1)	-.141	.241	.346	1	.557	.868
	Constant	.510	.255	4.014	1	.045	1.665
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: ARMS_RACE.							

Stage 4 model, which included all COW power politics variables, was significant, chi-square (4,460) = 29.413, $p = .000$. Violent conflict equation was $.510 + .558$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .016 + -.574$ (END_RIV), $p = .027 + 1.117$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .000 + -.141$ (ARMS_RACE), $p = .557$, with a -2LL of 500.094.

By large, violent conflict is a better indicator of how COW power politics interact on the Asian continent. Below is a detailed explanation. Territory was a significant predictor in violent interstate conflict. It had a positive relationship with violent conflict. This meant that as territorial revisions increased, so did the propensity for violent interstate conflict. Equally important was at each stage the p-value decreased, signaling the relationship between violence and territory revision got stronger. This was also the case with the regression coefficient, which went from .421 to .558.

Enduring rivalry also had a substantial influence. There was an unanticipated negative relationship between the outcome and the predictor variable. From Stage 2 to 4, the magnitude of the correlation increased, the regression coefficient went from $-.368$ to $-.574$. In parallel, the significance level increased by sixty percent from $p = .105$ to $p = .027$. What these comparatives revealed was as the additive properties of the steps-to-war correlates were manifested the presence of an enduring rivalry within a dyad became statistically significant. As one recalled, COW research showed that rivalries, particularly long-lasting ones, did increase the propensity for war, and thereby violence (Mitchell et al., 2014; Senese et al., 2008). Regarding Asia, this supposition was not wholly congruent because rivalries became relevant at Stage 3 in the regression model with the addition of a major power ally.

Having a high-risk ally was empirically significant. In fact, it was the strongest predictor out of the four. There was an overwhelmingly positive relationship between violent conflict and dyads having a strong ally. The latter is characterized by major power status and possessing a high NMC index score. The regression coefficient was also the largest compared to the other power politic variables.

Arms races were not significant. Although perhaps more relevant than war onset, the relationship between violent conflict and military buildups remained statistically not significant ($p = .557$). In Asia, this research showed that military competition of capabilities did not necessarily increase the likelihood of violence.

Stage 3 model, which included territory, enduring rivalry, and high-risk alliance, was significant, chi-square (3, 215) = 15.685, $p = .001$. Violence equation was $.953 + .465$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .151 + .292$ (END_RIV), $p = .422 + 1.918$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .002$, with a -2LL of 238.906.

Stage 4 model, which incorporated all COW power politic variables, was significant, chi-square (4, 215) = 17.253, $p = .002$. War onset equation was $.798 + .487$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .135 + .534$ (END_RIV), $p = .200 + 1.932$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .002 + .448$ (ARMS_RACE), $p = .215$, with a -2LL of 237.338. For further clarification, Table 13, located above, illustrated the Stage 4 research findings. In all, what is important to remember is East Asian dyads that possessed high-risk alliances were prone to violent conflict.

Proposition 5's other subregion was Southeast Asia. Overall, the regression model on war onset and Southeast Asian states' power politics was not statistically significant. Here is a more detail. The base model was not significant, chi-square (1, 131) = 2.844, $p = .092$. War onset equation was $-2.793 + -18.410$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .998$, with a -2LL of 45.879.

Stage 2 was not statistically significant, chi-square (2, 131) = 2.872, $p = .238$. War onset equaled $-2.741 + -18.414$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .998 + .150$ (END_RIV), $p = .867$, with a -2LL of 45.850. Stage 3 model, which included territory, enduring rivalry, and high-risk alliance, was not significant, chi-square (3, 131) = 2.909, $p = .406$. War equated to $-2.782 + -18.434$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .998 + .198$ (END_RIV), $p = .831 + .181$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .846$, with a -2LL of 45.813.

Table 14

Stage 4 War Onset & Steps-To-War Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Territory_Rev(1)	-18.417	7687.244	.000	1	.998	.000	.000	.
	END_RIV(1)	-.001	.987	.000	1	.999	.999	.144	6.908
	HR_ALLY(1)	.184	.940	.038	1	.845	1.201	.190	7.586
	ARMS_RACE(1)	-.587	.940	.389	1	.533	.556	.088	3.512
	Constant	-2.617	.601	18.939	1	.000	.073		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: ARMS_RACE.									

Stage 4 model, which the results are outlaid in Table 14, was not significant, chi-square (4,131) = 3.315, $p = .506$. War onset equation was $-2.617 + -18.417$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .998 + -.001$ (END_RIV), $p = .999 + .184$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .845 + -.587$ (ARMS_RACE), $p = .533$, with a -2LL of 45.407. In sum, there is not statistical correlation with war onset and the power politics associated with SE Asia.

When violent conflict replaced war onset, there were several key changes within Southeast Asia. Overall, the stepwise regression model on violent conflict and COW power politics was statistically significant. For emphasis, here is the by-stage empirical outline. The base model was significant, chi-square (1, 131) = 5.809, $p = .016$. Violent conflict was equal to $.999 + -1.073$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .016$ with a -2LL of 158.551. Stage 2 model, which added enduring rivalry, was significant, chi-square (2, 131) = 7.178, $p = .028$. Violent conflict equated to $.836 + -1.070$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .017 + .472$ (END_RIV), $p = .248$, with a -2LL of 157.182.

Table 15

Stage 4 Violent Conflict & Steps-To-War Regression Results

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Territory_Rev(1)	-1.163	.464	6.288	1	.012	.313	.126	.776
	END_RIV(1)	.515	.459	1.261	1	.261	1.674	.681	4.114
	HR_ALLY(1)	.664	.455	2.125	1	.145	1.942	.796	4.738
	ARMS_RACE(1)	-.526	.418	1.583	1	.208	.591	.260	1.341
	Constant	.896	.315	8.088	1	.004	2.451		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: ARMS_RACE.									

Stage 3 model, which included territory, enduring rivalry, and high-risk alliance, was significant, chi-square (3, 131) = 9.619, $p = .022$. Violent conflict was $.705 + -1.169$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .011 + .319$ (END_RIV), $p = .457 + .694$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .127$, with a -2LL of 154.741. Stage 4 model, above depicted in Table 15, was significant, chi-square (4,131) = 11.218, $p = .024$. Violent conflict equation was $.896 + -1.163$ (Territory_Rev), $p = .012 + .515$ (END_RIV), $p = .261 + .664$ (HR_ALLY), $p = .145 + -.526$ (ARMS_RACE), $p = .208$, with a -2LL of 153.143.

In sum, the above-listed findings were anticipated and indeed nuanced. Proposition 5 should be considered invalid as correlates of war pertaining to war onset in the East and Southeast Asian subregions. Moreover, these subregions are not aligned with the Steps-To-War theory. This summation is based on the consistently high p-values and relatively low -2LL numbers on each model stage. On the other hand, the research did show that both subregions were marginally aligned when interstate violence was substituted for war.

Although not as numerous as greater Asia, there were two covariates that did stand out. In East Asia, dyads that contained a high-risk ally ($p = .002$) were 6.9 times more susceptible to violence than those with territorial revisions, rivalry MIDs, and arms races. This finding could be interpreted as major powers are balancing and counterbalancing one another in the East China Sea region. Descriptive analyses, which are below discussed, reflect Japan, China, Russia, and the United States were undeniably active during the 1949-2001 timeframe.

Regarding Southeast Asia, the research outlined that territory was omnipotent. However, the correlation was divergent, meaning territorial revision had a negative impact on interstate violence onset. For disclosure's sake, this metric was deemed erroneous. There was no supporting evidence that explained how and why territorial related disputes decreased interstate conflict (Mitchell et al., 2014; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez, 1993). Finally, the key takeaway here is empirical research illuminated that East and Southeast Asian subregions were marginally aligned with the Steps-To-War theory.

What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia? In totality, Research Question 3 was empirically the most thought-provoking of three supporting questions. First, there is a utility in proceeding with the Steps-To-War theory as an analytical framework. Despite not being able to assess war onset, the theory did allow application and evaluation of violent conflict within Asian dyads. Equally pertinent, most COW peace research is on a global scale and negated regionality. In fact, this knowledge gap is a key criticism from other IR theorists and scholars, a shortfall this dissertation addressed.

Second, Asia was not war-prone but has a high incidence of interstate violence. The data and research have outlaid this summation. As a result, it was determined that addressing the main research question should reflect violent conflict as it pertained to China. It materialized as more applicable. To clarify, the research shifted to Sino interstate violence versus war onset.

Third, the Steps-To-War model required modification. As one could recall, military arms buildup was determined to be not significant; therefore, it was removed from the model. The revised violent conflict equation is now $.510 + .558 (\text{Territory_Rev}) + -.574 (\text{END_RIV}) + 1.117 (\text{HR_ALLY})$. What this modification did was render the four-stage regression model to a three-stage process.

Fourth, the research reflected that Asian subregions were less influential with regards to interstate war and violence. The examination of 346 dispute dyads only afforded two inferences (i.e., high-risk alliances and territorial revisions) concerning East and Southeast Asia—and one was deemed erroneous. Despite lack of quantitative evidence, there remained strong qualitative support that Sino aggression does play a factor in the subregions' volatility.

Last, China and its power politics behavior would be examined through a more relevant empirical prism. Culturally, economically, militarily, and politically China is more attuned with Asia than arguably the international order. Whereas interstate war was more common worldwide, especially in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) regions, this is not the case in Asia. Low-intensity conflict, where battle casualties remain below 1,000, best characterized the power politics behavior in the Middle Kingdom. Therefore, the research should reflect these idiosyncrasies.

Main Research Question

What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia? To answer this question, it perhaps best to do so in two parts.

Retrodiction is empirical analysis primarily based on historical data. So far, this construct has been the preponderance herein, where the inductive investigation of war and its correlates has been paramount. Prediction is another analysis technique. It is forecasting future events based on either quantitative or qualitative methods. Although this dissertation is overwhelming quantitative, there is a subjective element involved when current Sino strategic implications are addressed. Furthermore, within each analysis category, there are two topic areas. The first delineated the Chinese grand strategy, whereas the second focused on the empirical relationship with correlates of war. The latter is centered on China, but also greater Asia and its associated state actors and critical subregions.

Retrodiction

Prior to disclosing research findings, it necessary to provide historical context on the Chinese grand strategy. Like most major powers, China has a national security plan that is published for both domestic and foreign consumption. The first "Five-Year" plan was presented in 1953 and thereafter has been a bellwether. Although there were numerous Sino national goals during the 50-year period this dissertation analyzed, research outlaid four that were both enduring and correlatory to the main research question.

The first goal was to promote internal stability. Centuries of perceived humiliation by Western major powers, a costly world war, and a protracted revolution led

the Chinese elite to determined that domestic harmony was first and foremost. For this, the CCP strengthened communist ideals and eradicated internal socio-political entities not aligned. Simply put, the Sino government sought to have a monopoly on power and violence within the Middle Kingdom (Friedberg, 2011; Goddard, 2018).

The second national aim was first the development of agriculture and then economic capacity. With the highest population on the planet, the Government of China had to acquire the means to feed their people and make them productive. Economic development focused on infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, and building a defense industry. The latter was imperative to the last two security aspirations.

The third objective entailed the near-abroad. Pacifying borders and removal of neighboring regimes deemed as a threat were the CCP's two main methods. The means were a robust economy and a credible military.

The last, and perhaps most important, historical goal was to increase China's domain status and position in the international order. Again, economic and martial might were the necessary conditions (Renshon, 2016). So, from 1949 to 2001, the above-mentioned national security goals outlined the overall Sino grand strategy. The below-annotated research findings provide empirical context on how China's numerous five-year plans overlapped with the correlates of war and interstate power politics.

Regarding historical analysis, there are some implied considerations that required further commentary. Using IBM SPSS's descriptive and inferential results as a guideline, research findings and associated implications are therein addressed in sequence. Asiatic militarized disputes and revisions provided an informative framework for the descriptive analysis discussion, whereby the Steps-To-War theory afforded an inferential aspect.

China, from 1949 to 2001, had a total of 61 dispute dyads. The militarized interstate disputes ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .646$) were negatively skewed towards the left, which meant that threats ($N=3$), force display ($N = 10$), and use of force ($N=43$) were more common than interstate war ($N = 5$). Also, the data reflected a leptokurtic distribution (Kurtosis = 1.841), which indicated a small number of outliers. Force-related MIDs, which were relatively high, could be interpreted as the PRC favored force displays (16%) and use of arms (70%) in most of their interstate disputes. It is also conceivable that China has been quite successful with these strong-arm tactics, which is why they are repeatedly used.

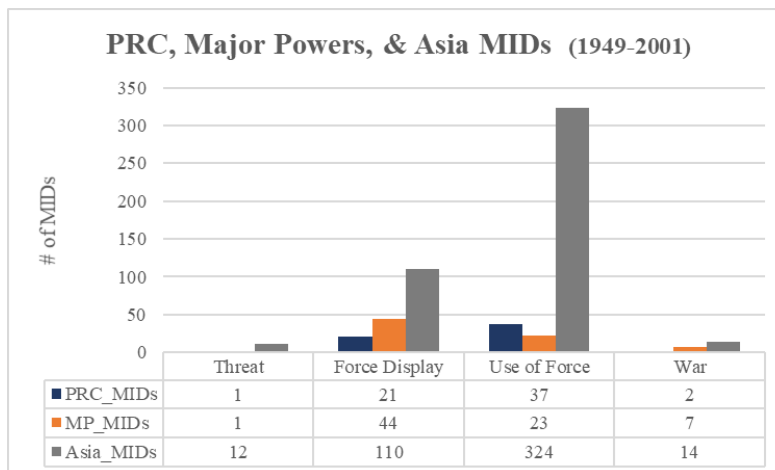
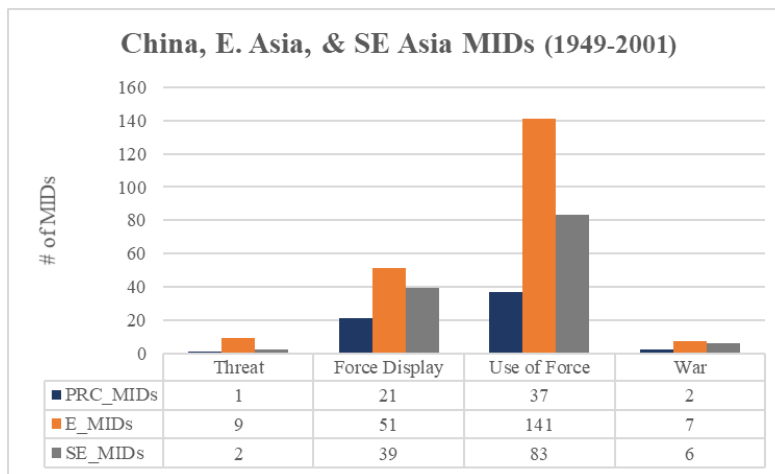


Figure 7. MID comparison (1949-2001).

Multi-faceted comparisons were useful in deriving further findings. Upfront, Sino conflict activities were aligned with Asia. Figure 7 (left side) provides an informative synthesis. However, when compared to other regional major powers, China's use of military force was notably higher. A possible explanation was that the other major powers, Japan, South Korea, United States, etc. were beyond prudent in military force usages because of their democratic government and their populace. Since the CCP is totalitarian, there were arguably fewer constraints to dampen the Sino proclivity for aggressive power politics behavior. Figure 7 (right side) depicts this synopsis.

Equally profound are the differences within other key Asian subregions. As mentioned, East and Southeast Asia are the subregions where the most interstate dispute has occurred. China, on average, accounted for one-fifth (17%) of the force-associated MIDs. If one considered East Asia's volatility, with 141 use of force MIDs, this result's weightiness was even more relevant. In short, it should be comprehended that China does not resort to war often. Instead, the descriptives revealed the Chinese Government used the PLA in an aggressive manner in many of its interstate disputes, regardless of whether the opponent was a major or minor power.

Sino revisions ($M = 1.16$, $SD = .934$) were another aspect that brought greater synthesis. Descriptive testing revealed a positive, right-skewed dataset. Non-quantifiable ($N = 13$) and territorial ($N = 32$) revisions were more prevalent than policy ($N = 11$) and regime ($N = 3$). Akin with MIDs, the dataset echoed a leptokurtic distribution (Kurtosis = 1.506), which signaled limited outliers. Analysis, with respect to the Peoples Republic of China, revealed that territory (52%) was the highest COW-defined revision type. This metric could be interpreted that China is indeed concerned with its near abroad. During

the 1949 to 2001 epoch, Sino conflicts with Vietnam, India, Japan, and Taiwan were exuberantly frequent and should also be considered as proof. That said, a regional comparison is nonetheless warranted.

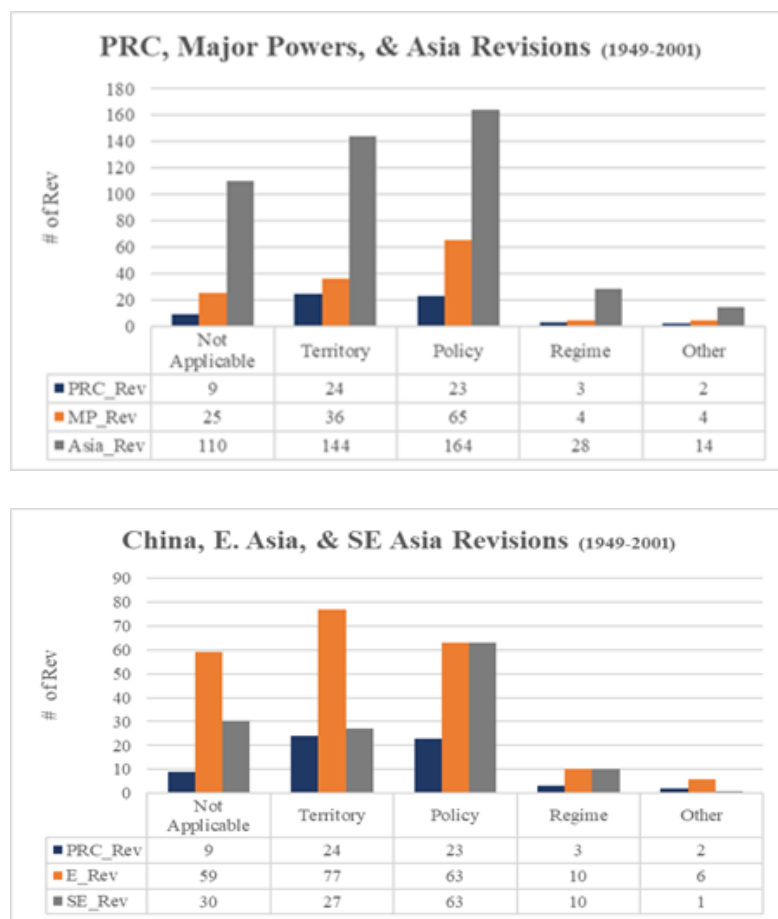


Figure 8. Revision Comparison.

When compared to other regional major powers, China accounted for nearly two-thirds (67%) of the territorial revisions ($N = 36$). Equally informative was Sino policy revisions made up a third (35%) of major power totals. Taken in the aggregate, this analysis supported the hypothesis that territory is more salient compared to other revisions. It appeared that other Asiatic major powers, including the U.S., were more anxious over policy issues. Nevertheless, there is a key caveat to remember going forward. Although territory is indeed important, research revealed that regime, not

territorial disputes led to violence. This paradox should be comprehended that China for all its military action over territory, only entered armed conflicts with other states when the Communist Party felt it was threatened.

In East Asia, characterized by the high presence of major powers and associated bi-lateral alliance networks, revision comparison was nuanced. These states were most active over territorial issues, with Sino involvement in 24 of the 77 dyadic disputes, nearly a third (31%). Policy-wise, the PRC accounted for also a third (37%) of East Asia's cases ($N = 63$). What is important to remember is that China was equally concerned with territorial and policy issues (See Figure 7).

Regarding Southeast Asia, with its high quantity of minor powers, Sino disagreements were mainly over territory. China ($N = 24$) accounted for practically all territorial revisions (88%) in Southeast Asia ($N = 27$). What this data revealed was Chinese geopolitical objectives were disparate between East and Southeast Asia. This implied that the CCP was willing to risk violent conflict over land-based disputes because SE Asian states lacked the national material capability to withstand the onslaught. Further north, Sino ambitions appeared more pliant. South Korea and Japan, with the U.S. as their respective allies, increased the cost of war, and thereby potentially restrained Sino political aims and aggression. In totality, the analysis depicted that a territorial revision coupled with a force related MIDs showed a decrease in violent conflict. Meaning, China's ardent power politics use either intimidated or compelled target states to concede, thereby decreasing military conflict.

Inferentially, retrodiction also provided several key findings concerning Chinese strategy and the correlates of war. Earlier analysis revealed the STW theory was not

applicable to war onset on the Asian continent, which by default included China. As a result, Vasquez's propositions were summarily rejected. The revised STW framework, which was researcher-defined, substituted violent conflict as the outcome variable.

Because dyads with arms buildups were not statistically significant ($p = .557$), they were also removed from the regression equation. The revised equation was violent conflict equated to $.510 + .558 (\text{Territory_Rev})$, $p = .016 + -.574 (\text{END_RIV})$, $p = .027 + 1.117 (\text{HR_ALLY})$, $p = .000$. That said, it is necessary to provide an overview of Sino war correlates (i.e., power politics).

Out of 61 militarized dispute cases, China had 32 characterized as territorial revisions, 52 possessed an enduring rivalry, and 26 included a high-risk ally. More so, nearly three-quarters ($N = 48$) of Sino disputes ended in violent conflict. There are four takeaways here. First, territorial revisions had an additive effect on the probability of violence between China and other Asiatic states. In other words, territory was indeed a gateway to interstate conflict. Second, if the dyad history contained an enduring rivalry between countries, then the chances of conflict were lowered. It could be considered that China's multiple disputes ($N = 48$) with its neighbors had become ritualized. Meaning, both belligerents would engage in combative, escalatory behavior up to a predetermined war threshold and then deescalate.

Third, the presence of high-risk ally, defined by a robust material capability score and major power status, significantly increased the possibility of violence. This finding could be supported by the fact that maintain credible armed forces and executing military operations are expensive, thereby only states with those attributes are able to either risk or wage war. One could argue that states do not go through the trouble of acquiring

military might and creating defense pacts unless they felt threatened. So, dispute dyads with outside defense pact alliances were more susceptible to violence.

There is one final statistic that appropriately summarized whether China's use of power politics would end in violence. The stepwise binary regression output afforded predicted probabilities. With respect to China and violent conflict inducement, the average predicted probability ($M = .7868$, $SD = .160$) was relatively high compared to Asia ($M = .6819$, $SD = .249$). Based on the revised pathway to violence sequence, research showed there was a 78% chance that China would engage in some form of militarized interstate violence over a territorial revision with a long-standing rival who had a powerful ally.

Equally germane was a comparison with Vasquez's findings, which outlaid that the probability of war onset did increase. As previously mentioned, militarized disputes of territory had a predicted probability of .15 of leading to war. After multiple MIDs, dyadic interstate warfare chances increased to .45. With the addition of alliance, characterized by outside partners and major powers, war likelihood increase to .65. The final predicted probability rose to .90 when arms buildups were included (Colaresi et al., 2002; Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al. 2008; Vasquez, 1987, 2004). Taking the STW theory into account, it is therefore conceivable that the aggregated predicted probability of interstate violence associated with China's revisionism (78%) was reasonably aligned with the COW project and Vasquez's global findings (65%), when arms build-up was removed as a covariate.

In total, research showed a historical, empirical connection between the correlates of war and China's grand strategy over a 50-year period. Despite having fought two

interstate wars, China's aggressive actions should be characterized by interstate violence that culminated short of war. China's revisions were based on its strategic goal outlined in its numerous five-year plans. Sino revisions, which were primarily over territory and policy issues, were influenced by their near abroad security dilemma and perceived low domain status within the international order. China routinely entered militarized disputes with its neighbors, which ultimately led to rivalry. As a result, numerous Asiatic major powers situated on the East and South China Seas entered bi-lateral defense pacts with the U.S. Despite the lack of empirical evidence on either war or violence onset, data indicated that China has steadily increased military capacity in terms of personnel and war materiel for almost 50 years.

Prediction

For China, all roads lead to revisionism. Meaning, the Chinese Communist Party intends to upend the current status quo within the international order. This is essentially China's strategic aim—the Return to Glory. It is also critical to note the below-listed inferences diverge from the overall dissertation methodology. Thus far, the research focus has been characterized by an objective, quantitative analyses. Since the research aim here is a well-informed prediction, this section calls for a more subjective approach because of the lack of an updated COW dataset.

The strategic overview from 2001 onward could be separated into two distinct stages. In the first period (2001 to 2013), China's strategic goals were to improve internal stability, continue economic growth, assimilate Taiwan, and increase status within the international order. For example, slogans such as “Peaceful Rise” and “Win without fighting”, dominated Sino diplomatic lexicon and were openly linked to former

Chinese president Hu Jintao's five-year plans (Bosbotinis, 2010; DIA, 2017; Heginbotham et al., 2015; Haglund, 2004; Renshon, 2016). In the second stage (2013 to the present), Sino goals have become more aggressive on the national security front: 1) domestic stability, 2) the Taiwan dilemma, 3) dominance in the South China Sea, and 4) Countering Japan (Bosbotinis, 2010; Jones, 2020; Liff & Ikenberry, 2014; OSD, 2019, Work, 2019). Aligning nationalistic fervor and revisionism from perceived insults was current President Xi Jinping's strategic shift from internal concerns to those of a global nature. Blackwill and Tellis further clarified:

Given this painful history, it is not surprising that China's primary strategic goal in contemporary times has been the accumulation of 'comprehensive national power'. This pursuit of power in all its dimensions—economic, military, technology, and diplomatic—is driven by the conviction that China, a great civilization undone by the hostility of other, could never attain its destiny unless it amassed the power necessary to ward off the hostility of those opposed to this quest. (Blackwill & Tellis, 2015, p. 7)

What this quotation implied, according to the authors, was that superior power alone created order. And more, China's chances of achieving regional hegemony and matching the United States as a great power was predicated on the CCP, or political elite, possessing greater capabilities than any other entity, both internal and external to the Middle Kingdom (Blackwill et al., 2015).

The correlates of war, or rather power politics behavior, provide key signposts on the chances of Sino interstate conflict. Revisionism is the first correlate in which two issues are most germane. First, territory claims dominate the current foreign policy

landscape. Over the past decade, China has embarked on numerous territorial revisions. In the East China Sea, both the Peoples Republic of China and the Government of Japan fight over the Senkaku Islands. Although the international community recognizes the islands as Nipponese, China maintains the landmasses are part of their cultural heritage (DIA, 2017; Krepinevich, 2015, 2017, 2020).

To the southeast, China has engaged both the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) and the Republic of the Philippines (ROP) over territory. The CCP has laid claim to both Spratly and Paracel Islands from Vietnam. These two states have engaged in tit-for-tat tactics to military and diplomatically force the situation (Kim, 2015; Work, 2018). Equally important is Sino territorial conflict with the Filipinos. With its predicted windfall in oil reserves, the Scarborough Reef is a salient issue to both the PRC and ROP. To reinforce their claims in Vietnam and the Philippines, China has built man-made islands, which can support military action, throughout the South China Sea. This construction has threatened freedom of navigation, a major point of contention with the United States and Japan (Allan, Vucetic, & Hopf, 2018; DIA, 2017; OSD, 2019).

On the other hand, the Taiwan-situation remains a major revision for China. The Republic of China (ROC and commonly known as Taiwan) is the most salient foreign policy agenda for the Chinese Communist Party. Many IR scholars contend since Taiwan is about territory, policy, and regime that it is the most volatile flashpoint within the region. (Freidman, 2013). China believes the island of Formosa is an extension of the Chinese mainland and therefore should belong to them. This revision is the territorial aspect. Politically, since Taiwan is a democratic government, the CCP perceives it as an existential threat to their legitimacy in both the domestic and international arenas.

Therefore, the Chinese have diplomatically and militarily isolated the ROC. With Sino pressure, the United Nations has not recognized the Taiwanese state since 1971 (Friedberg, 2011, 2012; Friedman, 2013).

Perhaps most important is the fact that Taiwan is primarily regarded as a regime issue for the Chinese elite. The CCP leadership fundamentally believe that the Taiwanese government, with their democratic ideals and ties to China's adversaries, prevents the Middle Kingdom from achieving their power status goal as a global and regional hegemon. It is important to remember that both large-scale interstate wars that the Chinese fought involved regime revisionisms. For these reasons, one should consider that territorial ambitions and Taiwan's affront are indeed the first steps on a path to future conflict (Heginbotham et al, 2015; Jalil, 2019).

Rivalry is the second correlate. Currently, China has multiple enduring rivalries. As a reminder, an enduring rivalry is defined as six or more militarized interstate disputes between two states. The last decade Chinese rivals have remained constant. They are Japan, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea, and the United States (Holmes, 2014; Mohan, 2012; Schweller & Pu, 2011). For brevity, this dissertation does not explore these relationships. They are arguably too complex and beyond the scope of this research. However, what is important to remember is that China is actively engaged in MIDs in three of the five Asian subregions. Border disputes with India monopolize the southern region. Force displays, in terms of warships and tactical bombers, dominates both the east and southeastern subregions (Leverett & Bingbing, 2016; Mohan, 2012; Zhang, 2016).

Alliances are the third power politics behavior that leads to conflict. Outside of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Asia contains the highest concentration of major powers and alliances. The former mainly reside in the south and east. India is the key power in the south. Russia, South Korea Japan, and the United States are active in the east. Unlike Europe, Asian alliances lean toward bi-lateral defense pacts. There is no overarching construct, but states form ties based on one-on-one relationships (Jones, 2020). For example, Japan has a formal defense treaty with the United States, but not one with South Korea. Seoul has an alliance with Washington but refuses to form one with Tokyo. Even so, this patchwork has thus far prevented any large-scale interstate conflict for the last 20 years (Holmes, 2014). However, it also reinforces rivalry and distrust, ultimately leading to a regional security dilemma in which most states respond by increasing their military capability.

Lastly, there are interstate arms races. Although not statistically significant within a historical Asian context, arms buildup is indeed a key predictor of violence (Mitchell, 2014). China, since 1996, has steadily increased its defense spending to nearly \$264B USD, which currently places them globally second in terms of expenditures (Heginbotham et al., 2015; OSD, 2019). They have either built or procured a surface fleet of over 300 ships, including three aircraft, carriers, rivaling the U.S., which currently has the largest fleet. The PLA has made the same strides in terms of tactical aircraft, ballistic missiles, and other high-end equipment (DIA, 2017; Krepinevich, 2015, 2017; OSD, 2019; Rider, 2011).

Equally important is the people factor. The PLA has transformed its military units from domestic orientation to expeditionary operations (O'Rourke, 2019). This

restructuring, coupled with amphibious ships and aerial refueling tankers, afford the PRC operational reach to effect Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, thereby increasing the insecurity and volatility within East Asia. Meaning, these countries have followed the Sino lead and increased their own capability. Aside from building their own weapons, GOJ, ROK, and ROC have procured weapons for their biggest ally—the United States of America (DIA, 2017, Krepinevich, 2015, 2017; Rider, 2011; OSD, 2019).

What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia? Fifty years of data outlaid that China relied on force, both displays and use, to achieve their geopolitical strategic aims. Current Sino activity, which is power politics at its highest pinnacle, suggests continuity. Chinese President Xi Jinping's present five-year strategic plan specifically calls for China to return as a global power. As a result, the Chinese Communist Party and its instrument of purpose, the People Liberation Army, have and arguably continue to use aggressive power politics to achieve this goal. Research has shown that violent interstate conflict, not war, is the Sino way. China will continue to use the same playbook until there is a fundamental geopolitical shift that forces abandonment. After all, the Chinese elite does not want to upend international order but alter it so they can return to their rightful position as a great power. It is not about prestige; it is only about prestige (Schweller et al., 2011).

Conclusion

In examining Asia's 461 dispute dyads that covered a fifty-year period, an inductive method was used to determine the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionism. This approach had two overarching themes. The first was the determination of the geopolitical landscape in Asia with respect to disputes, revisionism,

and war pathways. The supporting research questions provided the necessary examination framework.

Research Question 1 explored the association between war probability and militarized disputes. The results were not expected. The literature suggested a positive correlation between the two variables. With respect to Asia, crosstabs revealed an opposite effect, however. Force associated disputes (i.e., displays and usage) were correlated with an inverse relationship—as MIDs increased, then wars decreased. What this finding suggested was that Asian states, despite the exuberant amount of dispute cases, primarily avoided war.

Research Question 2 examined what revisions increased the propensity for war. This finding was most profound. The Correlates of War project and Vasquez's Steps-To-War theory proclaimed certain revisions led to war. Inferential tests proved these propositions would not statistically correspond to Asia and therein, China. When the outcome variable was switched from war to violence, the revisions became statistically significant. Another key research discovery was that major powers had a dampening effect on Asiatic interstate violence. This result was counter to most COW thought.

Research Question 3 determined whether the Steps-To-War theory held true for Asia. Simply put, there was no statistical evidence that territorial revisions, followed by rivalry, alliance-making, and arms races increased war onset chances. This finding was further supported when East and Southeast Asia was examined. However, when war was substituted for low-intensity violence as an outcome variable, binary regression afforded considerable results. Territorial revisions and a high-capability ally were proportionally

increased the chances of interstate violence, whereas enduring rivalry participation was the opposite.

The other inductive aspect explicitly and implicitly linked China's current and past national security strategies to the COW-defined correlates of war. The main research question resulted in two key implications. Collating previous Sino grand strategies and using the same research-defined dataset, China was empirically crosswalked with the research findings ascertained from Asia. This retrodiction contended China was essentially war-adverse, but violence-prone. The latter was by their own choosing. The second inference entailed the current strategy of Chinese President Xi Jinping's "China Dream". Although not empirical, this prediction was informed by the retrodiction analysis. Arguably, the final takeaway here is that China will not seek war but accept the associated risks of interstate violence to increase their power domain status and thereby obtain long-sought prestige. The question now moves from one of analysis to one of mitigation.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Why war? David Singer's eloquent question is perhaps the best way to conclude this dissertation. War onset is arguably the most important variable in war and peace research. The rationale is that if one could reasonably determine the factors that lead to war, then it may be possibly avoided. Therefore, Chinese President Xi Jinping's five-year plan calling for the Chinese people to avenge their 100-year humiliation at the hands of Western major powers and take their rightful place on the global stage as a superpower is salient. According to Sino national security strategists, not only is the overarching aim dependent on a strong economy, but it is also evenly predicated on a robust, capable military and an aggressive, yet balanced foreign policy stance. This proclamation characterizes the Peoples Republic of China as a revisionist state, a connotation that if not properly addressed could have devastating consequences. Some could argue this challenge of the status quo means war. However, this doctoral dissertation posited that China would continue to use military force; however, this force will be short of open warfare to achieve their nationalistic dreams. To provide scope and clarity, this chapter is portioned into two sections. The first provides a summary of this research study, whereas the second illuminated salient implications.

Summary

Overall, this doctoral study was a comprehensive endeavor. This first section included four subject areas that when examined in totality should afford requisite comprehension with regards to the relationship between state-based power politics and Sino revisionism. Up first, there is the Correlates of War project. This subsection spelled out the foundations for the empirical study of war and peace, which guided the research.

Next, there is a theoretical discussion of the steps-to-war theory. The goal here is to illuminate both the theory's history and core premises. Another area summarized is the data overview. Therein, data collection methods and the operationalization of variables are delineated. Equally germane was the discussion concerning study modifications that were made in dataset generation and inferential statistical tests. The last subarea presented the research findings. This dissertation examined ten suppositions, five hypotheses and five propositions, using an inductive approach. The results were nuanced because some were divergent from the steps-to-war core premises. With this scope in mind, it is now appropriate to proceed.

Correlates of War Project

One of the essential and foundational aspects of this dissertation is the Correlates of War (COW) project. Founded by political scientist John David Singer and historian Melvin Small in 1963, it is an intellectual movement of peace-based researchers dedicated to the empirical study war and its onset attributes, i.e., correlates. Initially charged with data collection on interstate armed conflict, Singer and Small (1972, 1982) published two seminal books that galvanized the war-studies, peace-research, and international relations fields. Since its formation, the COW project has substantially grown. It now consists of 13 datasets that provide empirical information on war correlates that illuminate why warfare occurs to include interstate, intrastate, and extrastate conflicts. There have been over 274 empirical scientific studies conducted base on the concepts and theories of the COW project (Izmirliloglu, 2017). What is important to remember is that COW research is solely quantitative, which contrasts with the conflict

resolution and international relations study fields mostly qualitative-based inquiries. A key point with further implications.

Continuing, this dissertation had two overarching purposes. The first was the empirical study of interstate conflict at the international, systematic level. The second was to examine the extent to which the Correlates of War covariates associated with the People's Republic of China's revisionist strategies. Combining these objectives led to the formulation of the main research question: What is the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionist strategy in Asia? To that end, there were three supporting research questions, when inductively researched, provided essential context on the geopolitical situation in Asia. They are:

RQ1: What is the probability of war onset based on associated MID in Asia?

RQ2: What revision type causes the greatest propensity of war in Asia?

RQ3: What does the war onset covariates imply for chances of war in Asia.

In short, when these queries were aggregated, a clear analytical picture was formulated the provided greater comprehension and synthesis. An integral part of this scientific goal was dependent on an applicable theory.

Theoretical Discussion

Using a theoretical framework is foundational in most scientific research studies, here it was no different. As discussed, The Steps-To-War theory was arguably the most insightful byproducts of the COW project. Renowned peace researcher John Vasquez, credited with its creation, claimed that it is grounded on the behavioral and relational impacts of when two states, who are initially involved in a territorial dispute, experience repeated conflict, form alliances and increase military capability, all of which intensifies

the likelihood of war onset (Senese & Vasquez, 2005, 2008). Moreover, there are three distinct characters that distinguish the STW model from other international relations (IR) and conflict theories. First, it is empirically based. This construct allows for statistical evaluation of why interstate interactions are either war-prone or peaceful, Second, it is dyadic. A characteristic that fosters descriptive and inferential assessment. Last, it is not exclusively sequential. Meaning, step order is not imperative instead it is their mutual reinforcement (Mitchell & Vasquez, 2014; Senese et al., 2005).

The key takeaway here is that the STW theory is a novel way to study peace, especially from an anti-realist point of view. To put it plainly, one should remember the theory contended war resulted from issues and disputes that are managed by the realist school of thought; specifically, power politics. Territorial issues, by far the most common, festers into greater hostility. According to Owsiak (2017), this circumstance caused recurring MIDs, which led to enduring rivalries. When alliance-making and arms races are added, a security environment riddled with volatility, uncertainty, and chaos is produced or war-prone. More importantly, each part of the sequence; specifically, territorial dispute to rivalry to alliances to the procurement of weapons, empirically increased the probability of interstate warfare (Owsiak, 2017; Senese et al., 2008; Vasquez 1987, 1996).

Data overview

Data collection and management was an extensive process. A researcher-defined dataset was constructed using applicable Correlations of War data depositories and the EUGeneve_v3.2 dataset generator. Within temporal confines from 1949 to 2001, a total of 1683 interstate dyads were identified at the systematic level. From there, a query was

performed, and 461 dispute dyads were linked to Asia. Next, each case was modified to create a dyadic-dispute history that included militarized disputes, revision type, national material capability, as well as other vital COW-defined war correlates. Of significance, dyadic analysis of each disputed case afforded comprehension on the behavior and interaction between Asiatic states to include China. These attributes were critical to understanding as to why and how states act on the national and international geopolitical stage.

The research design was intricate, yet simple. Five hypotheses and five propositions, evenly spread between the three supporting questions, formed the analytical framework. Using descriptive analysis, which primarily focused on central tendencies and frequencies, and various inferential statistical tests, the supporting research questions were used to address how the correlates of war are linked to Sino revisionism in Asia. The questions had an inductive quality that once answered formulated synthesis and provided insight for the next research inquiry. The culmination was an objective inference on whether China was susceptible to war given the current geopolitical climate. That said, it is appropriate to review this dissertation's key findings.

Research Findings

To begin with, research results were comprehensive and informative. In examining Asia's 461 dispute dyads that covered a fifty-year period, an inductive method was used to determine the relationship between the correlates of war and China's revisionism. This approach possessed two overarching aims. The first was a retrodiction. By defining Asia's geopolitical landscape with regards to disputes,

revisionism, and war pathways. The three supporting research questions provided the necessary examination framework.

Research Question 1 explored the association between war probability and militarized disputes. The results were not expected. The literature suggested a positive correlation between the two variables (Senese et. al, 2003, 2005, 2008; Vasquez, 1995). With respect to Asia, the descriptive analysis revealed an opposite effect, however. Force associated disputes (i.e., displays and usage) were correlated with an inverse relationship as MIDs increased, then wars decreased. What this finding suggested was that Asian states, despite the exuberant amount of dispute cases, primarily avoided war.

Research Question 2 examined what revisions increased the propensity for war. This finding was most profound. The STW theory proclaimed certain revisions led to war. Inferential tests proved these propositions would not statistically correspond to Asia and therein, China. When the outcome variable was switched from war to violence, the revisions became statistically significant. Another key research discovery was that major powers had a dampening effect on Asiatic interstate violence. This result was counter to most COW thought (Leeds, 2003; Senese et al., 2005, 2008; Vasquez, 1993).

Research Question 3 determined whether the Steps-To-War theoretical framework held true for Asia. Simply put, there was no statistical evidence that territorial revisions, followed by rivalry, alliance-making, and arms races increased war onset chances (Sample, 1998, 2016; Senese et al., 2005). However, when war was substituted for low-intensity, interstate violence as an outcome variable there were plausible empirical results. Territorial revisions and an outside alliance with a major power proportionally

increased the chances of interstate violence, whereas enduring rivalry participation was the opposite (Leeds, 2003; Levy, 1981; Senese et al., 2008).

The other inductive aspect was predictive in nature. It explicitly and implicitly linked China's current national security strategy, which is revisionism to the COW-defined correlates of war. The main research question resulted in two key implications. Collating previous Sino grand strategies and using the same research-defined dataset, China was empirically crosswalked with the study results ascertained from Asia. This retrodiction contended China was essentially war-adverse, but violence-prone. The latter was by their own choosing. The second inference entailed the current strategy of Chinese President Xi Jinping's "China Dream". Although not empirical, this prediction was informed by the retrodiction analysis. Arguably, the final takeaway here is that China will not seek war but accept the associated risks of interstate violence to increase its power domain status and thereby obtain long-sought prestige. With these findings, there is trade space for knowledge expansion and policy recommendations.

Implications

One of the most important outgrowths from a doctoral dissertation is the implications. Specifically, the latter is significant because it links ascertained research findings to future applications. That said, this section outlaid four areas of connotations. First are the conflict analysis and resolution field, which posited the cross-pollination between conflict analysis/resolution and other study disciplines is indeed warranted. The second subarea entailed both Correlates of War project and the steps-to-war theory. Here the goal was to expand the knowledge base and theory. Third is policy recommendations. The aim here was to offer U.S. national security decision-makers

options that could provide an off-ramp from the path to war with China. And last, there are future research applications. In short, this dissertation offered several courses of action to expand the knowledge on the scientific study of war and peace. That said, below listed is a more thorough examination.

Conflict Analysis and Resolution Study Field

At its crux, this dissertation and associated research is an empirical treatise into conflict analysis and resolution (CAR). Through the course of this research journey, there were five distinct implications that became apparent. The first entailed the empirical study of conflict. The conflict analysis field is considered by most scholars as a subset of the social sciences (Rioux & Redekop, 2013). Furthermore, Singer (2001) proclaimed the field lacked a more rigorous empirical research methodology rooted in the scientific method. Despite the time-tested qualitative methods, which are used in historical case studies etc., there was a need to “observe the unobservable” (Lear, 2012). And perhaps, the only way to achieve this stated ideal was to develop propositions and hypotheses, operationalize behavioral-related variables and then rigorously assess them with statistical tests. The net result would deliver better comprehension, allowing peace scholars the ability to move beyond mere extrapolation to correlational knowledge. Whereby, policy recommendations could be devised to prevent the spread of violence (Lear, 2012; Rioux et al., 2013). This dissertation arguably accomplished these stated research ideals and further expanded the empirical study of conflict.

The second connotation, for the conflict resolution area of study, concerned analysis at the systematic level. There is perhaps a perception that modern conflict analysis revolves around the individual, group, and societal levels (Bremer, 1995; Rioux

et al., 2013, Vasquez, 1995b; Wayman, 1995). And perhaps, there is a need for greater inquiry at the state and systematic level. One of the most tragic outgrowths of conflict, at all levels, is human suffering. War is perhaps the greatest contributor to that calamity. As a potential solution, this research outlaid interstate conflict at the regional and to a lesser extent the global level. More so, the findings could possibly afford why war occurs, which is one of the COW project's major charter.

The third implication centered on the cross-pollination of study fields. Many war/peace scholars contend international relations, both liberalism, and realism, strongly correlated to the conflict analysis and resolution field of study. Research, here, supported this notion. More specifically, it purported that Asian states and their leadership who practiced realist-based practices of power politics—i.e., revisionism, militarized disputes, alliance making, and arms buildups—did not secure peace, rather increased the possibility of war. Arguably, this viewpoint should be considered as anti-realism (Singer, 2001) and is aligned with most CAR principles. That is, the distributive nature of obtaining one's goals often leads to intractable conflict. By examining this premise through the prism of IR, the benefits cross-pollination is arguably laid to bare for the greater conflict resolution community.

The fourth proposition is the addition of a new theoretical framework. As mentioned, CAR analysis mainly revolved around social conflict theories, such as critical race theory, grounded theory, feminist theory, and human needs theory. This dissertation introduced the steps-to-war theory as a suitable construct to examine interstate conflict. Perhaps most controversial is that the STW theory could be considered as a better alignment with mainstream CAR scholarly thought versus other IR theories.

Lastly, this dissertation promulgated the imperativeness of negotiation, a central tenet within the CAR field. A war between the People's Republic of China and the United States and its allies would be disastrous for both belligerents and the international order. Allison stated, "There is no 'solution' for the dramatic resurgence of a 5,000-year-old civilization with 1.4 billion people." (Allison, 2017, 215). His statement should be comprehended as the military defeat of China would be nearly impossible and foolhardy. Therefore, this potential conflict should be resolved by negotiation—or diplomacy. In fact, with the U.S.'s return to great power competition and the escalatory nature of the current geostrategic environment in the Indo-Pacific, there should be considerable efforts to expand the knowledge and practice of strategic negotiation at the state-level and above within the CAR study field. This doctoral research has identified a capability shortfall in which the CAR community could fulfill.

Correlates of War Project and Steps-To-War theory

Arguably, the Correlates of War project, and to a slightly lesser extent, the Steps-To-War theorist benefited from this doctoral research. There are four suppositions as to why; first, the benefit entailed interstate war analysis at the regional level. As stated, the preponderance of COW studies encapsulated the global, systematic level. These efforts were due to the severity of interstate war and the influence of U.S.-Soviet bipolar aggressive actions after WWII. For nearly 50 years, global interstate conflict has been the status quo. The data, research, and scientific analysis focused on determining the probability of war based on a prolonged temporal aspect and international economies of scale. To be clear, what this research did was empirical analyze a region based on the

COW-defined principles and datasets, which should not be confused with the step-to-war theory.

Taking the above into consideration, equally germane was the use of the STW theory to explore a region. Since the founding of the COW project, this theoretical framework has only been done once. During the mid-1990s, Latin America was the region, and the study examined relationships between war onset and militarized disputes, using Bremer's statistical methods (Bremer, 1993; Hensel, 1994; Singer, 2001). This research was relevant because policy-based wars of communist ideology were rampant. Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras all participated in some form of revolution to overthrow of a government and this led to offensive civil wars. The latter entailed the secession of a geopolitical entity from the legitimate government, whereby forming a separate, sovereign state (Lebow, 2010; Vasquez, 1986). Arguably, this dissertation results similarly applicable. Ascertaining that Asia was mildly divergent from the STW major tenets could have major implications for CAR and IR researchers and scholars in future research.

Another implication was that militarized disputes are a far more common event, whereas wars are uncommon. This research indicated that MID occurrence ($N = 461$) was significantly higher than wars ($N = 14$) in Asia, almost 97% higher. Although common knowledge and the research data reflected this assessment, it is often lost in both academic and policy circles. Wars are high profile events, which possibly caused the oversight (Bremer, 1995; Lear, 2012; Rioux et al., 2013; Singer, 2001). That said, COW research has proved that interstate conflict disputes lead to wars, as such, they should be studied in greater detail. This dissertation only reinforced this suggestion.

Last are the implications concerning COW and STW research methodologies. This doctoral study should prove the scientific study of war and its principles are indeed sound. For example, Singer stressed data operationalization and sound propositions were essential in the scientific study of war (Lear, 2012; Star, 1995). Both activities were meticulously followed, resulting in statistically significant results from both descriptive and inferential tests. Even more, Vasquez's suggested road to war was duplicated in this research within the confines of Asia (Senese et al, 2008). Albeit there were some nuances, his stepwise conflict model held true. Taken as a whole, this congruence promotes the steps-to-war as a viable theory for interstate war.

Policy Recommendations

One should not mistake that Sino revisionism is about power and prestige. Resources are indeed important, and prior to the current Chinese five-year plan, this was perhaps the case. Nevertheless, President Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party have opted for a strategy to recapture prestige. The chosen mechanism is power in the form of military capability (Gompert, Cevallos, & Garafola, 2016; Rioux & Redekop, 2013). One should ask, what happens when China cannot achieve its strategic aims? Despite the PLA's ongoing arms buildup, the U.S. military is better equipped, trained, and by far, more seasoned as a warfighting organization (Ratner et al., 2019; Roy, 2020). Despite the rhetoric, this gap will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future, placing the PRC at a disadvantage. And as earlier stated, the U.S. cannot conquer mainland China, which leads to a point of common interest.

From a U.S. conflict resolution and national security professional, there are three prioritized, policy recommendations that annotate plausible solutions to the increased

hostility within Sino-U.S. relations. First, the United States should look to find ways to collaborate with the Peoples Republic of China. More pointedly, there must be an integration of needs and interests between the great powers. Katz and McNulty (1994) contended collaboration worked best when: 1) Concerns are vital for compromise; 2) Either party is at lost on how to achieve their objectives, and 3) Resolutions prevent the feelings of resentment. The current and trending relations between both states perhaps meet these criteria.

Arguably, Washington should communicate to Beijing that war should be avoided at all costs, and both countries could develop two peace reinforcing goals. Improving the global commons is such an area. One way or another, most nations depend on the oceans and airways to sustain their economies and well-being. The global commons are oft subject to risk because terrorism, piracy, overfishing, civil war, etc. all of which benefit neither America nor the Middle Kingdom. The other buttressing idea is for the U.S. to suggest and support that China becomes the lead on climate control. Of late, the CCP has begun to understand the devastating repercussions of environmental mismanagement (OSD, 2019). With China in the lead, it would afford them the status and prestige they strongly desire from the U.S. The latter gains a strategic partner in promoting international stability, which ultimately maintains the international order.

Second, if collaboration is untenable, the USG should aim to develop some form of accommodation with the PRC. The conflict style is predicated on three benchmarks: 1) One party has a better solution; 2) Associated issues and interests are more important to one state; and 3) Continued competition could further damage the relationship, thereby escalating the conflict (Katz & McNulty, 1994). Here is a case-by-case justification on

how the accommodating conflict style overlays over current Sino-U.S. interstate behavior. Arguably, the U.S. wants a peaceful and satisfied PRC coexisting within the international order. This should be considered a better solution over China challenging a status quo that already provides considerable benefits. Another justification is that China's quest for regional hegemony and global recognition is more important to them than it is to the U.S. The fact that Jinping's five-year plan centers on this strategy goal should be considered as proof. Lastly, the Sino-U.S. relationship is already strained. Case in point, the Sino-U.S. conflict escalation in the South and East China Seas and hardliner foreign policy activism by both states correspond to the environment (Erickson, 2016). These signposts illuminate decision-space in which the U.S. should look to exploit.

From the U.S. vantage point, the political elite and national security hawks must accept that neither regime change, nor elimination of the Chinese state will occur in the near-term. Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea combined could effectively deter Sino aggression, both in terms of military and economic instruments. Aside from the United States, China's top-tiered trading partners are these three countries. More importantly, the U.S. must acknowledge China is already a great power. This is not necessarily accommodation, but merely the facts. As stated, the PRC already possesses the national material capability, military capacity, and power projection instruments that meet the acceptance criteria as a great power. Therefore, the U.S. officially acknowledging China's "greatness", whether they believe it or not, will perhaps placate Sino aggressiveness and afford the time to negotiate and discover tradeoffs. Of note, this recommendation is possibly the hardest to convince the U.S. electorate.

Last, U.S. policymakers could choose to expand the U.S-Sino competition space beyond the obligatory defense realm into other areas. This recommendation entails a three-way approach. Economically, the U.S. worker is far more productive than its Chinese counterpart. The latter's competitive advantage is capacity and not capability (Nacht, 2019; OECD, 2019; Roy, 2020). The USG should implement domestic and international incentives in which enhances American productive throughput on a massive scale, essentially grow the "pie" and further bind China to the U.S. Of note, the current Sino-U.S. policy is distributive. It is defined by the U.S. wants of low-price finished goods and the Chinese desire to manipulate their currency and steal other states' technology to maintain a competitive edge. This situation is arguably win-lose for both parties.

Another contest area is renewable energy. This recommendation's saliency and benefits are beyond the scope herein. Nevertheless, wind, solar, and high-end battery technology improvements could reduce resource consumption, protect the environment, and afford resource reallocation to more pressing state needs. That said, it is worth noting the state that master future energy technology would indeed have a competitive advantage. Although time-tested, the final competition space is military capability. Here, the U.S. DOD could transparently and rapidly develop and increase defensive weapons systems. By that, this dissertation ascertains these armaments are purely defensive, oriented towards the maritime versus land domains, and not expeditionary in nature. Ballistic Missile Defense, submarines, and fighter aircraft are examples. Choosing this competition space forces the Chinese into a dilemma. They must continue to consume resources to build weapons to counter the U.S who has no intention

whatsoever of invading Chinese sovereign territory or seek outside alliances to balance. From a CCP vantage, neither of these choices is optimal. The former requires exponential economic growth, whereby domestic opportunity costs are incurred because of the need to develop and procure weapons for an opponent that does not seek regime change. The latter compels the CCP to compromise or accommodate with other powers, and most of the major powers in Asia are allied with the U.S. When combined, these dilemmas should induce some form of either collaboration or accommodation with the U.S. In sum, one must remember these proposals are layered with collaboration deemed the desired outcome and each subsequent policy goal as a fallback.

Future Research

A key tenet of the doctoral dissertation process is to recommend future research. Although there were numerous topics and propositions considered during this academic journey, there are four that warrant further discussion. First is investigating other regions and subregions with COW research methods and principles. This primary research goal would both expand and correlate knowledge of war onset using empirical analysis. For instance, the recent uptick in intra- and inter-state violence in the Middle East- North Africa region render it apt for empirical analysis. Arguably, there is no shortage of qualitative assessments on the MENA subregion. What is lacking are the hard-empirical data analyses that could provide invaluable insight as to why the subregion is excessively volatile and chaotic.

Within the same thread, a secondary goal would concern advancing the steps-to-war theory. After reviewing the literature, the dissertation determined there was only one credible study on the theory within the last five years (2016). Perhaps, the reason is the

higher frequency of intra- and extra-state war, thereby making them more relevant. And, since the steps of war theory are predicated on system states, it is of marginal use to scholars who study civil and revolutionary war. That said, further developing scholarship on how the intra-state conflict and wars commence based on the steps-to-war theory could prove most useful in the conflict analysis and resolution field.

Second is researching how group-based interactions between the government, the political elites, and the populace writ large impact the decisions on whether to wage an interstate war would be most useful. The main study goal would be to empirically ascertain the behavior between the three groups and then correlate it to an outside polity. Graham Allison accomplished this in his seminal work, *Essence of a Decision*, which showcased the relationship between the White House, the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Soviet Union (Allison, 2017). His work was a qualitative case study on the Cuban Missile Crisis, whereby this proposal would be empirical analysis on modern interstate conflict. Both the Russo-Ukraine and U.S.-Iraq wars are potential research examples.

Third is ascertaining why states choose to escalate regional conflicts. Using a two-axis research approach could establish how conflict vertically escalates to war and horizontally expands to surrounding states. The potential findings could help provide key policy recommendations on the prevention of multi-state wars, which are the most destructive in terms of human life and infrastructure. With the ongoing arms races and territorial disputes in the Western Pacific, there is indeed utility in this research.

Last is expanding the knowledge on war outcomes. Here, the analytic goal would involve the empirical collection and analysis of all forms of interstate violence and how

they end, based on the causal factors, means of warfare, and associated risks. Of significance Lear (2012) inferred that most wars end in stalemate. In fact, his analysis showed that approximately 64% of intra- and inter-state wars conclude without a clear victor. Taking this into account, a question could be asked, “Why would a state risk war onset based on a precarious expected outcome?” Of note, there has been COW work in this subject area but most of it was retrodiction. This proposal would employ prediction based on inferential analysis and simulation. In sum, these potential research topics could expand the knowledge and research techniques for the CAR study field and better integrate it with other peace research communities, such as war studies and conflict prevention.

Conclusion

All in all, the notion that China will pursue an interstate war to achieve the “China Dream” of great power rejuvenation is summarily rejected in the dissertation. History and empirical evidence do not support a great power war in Asia. More so, China arguably wants to redefine and not destroy the international order. That said, the issue soon becomes if the U.S. will muster the resources, willingness, and opportunity to block those ambitions. Although beyond the scope of this treatise, answering this question is indeed worth the effort.

The results of this doctoral study suggested that there are five findings that ascertain how the correlates of war related to Sino revisionist strategy were: 1) Despite the exuberant amount of militarized dispute cases, Asian states primarily avoided war; 2) Major power involvement dampened the likelihood of Asiatic interstate violence; 3) There was no statistical evidence that the STW theory, territorial revisions, followed by

rivalry, alliance-making, and arms races increased war onset chances; 4) When war onset was substituted for low-intensity interstate violence as an outcome variable, there was strong, empirical evidence that the correlates of war were statistically significant; and 5) China was essentially war-adverse, but violence-prone.

Perhaps most importantly is the idea that great power war in modern times could be won in a short, violent timeframe. Wars usually last longer than anticipated. Again, history and data have proved that when states have the economic means, national will, and wherewithal, they deliver considerable damage to one another. One should remember that both World Wars were supposed to be short. Despite IR scholars and DOD strategist proclamations that a U.S.-Sino war would be constrained with manageable losses, history and data have determined that is not the case. Instead, there would be substantial suffering for both belligerents and the possible collapse of the international order.

So, it is in the interest of U.S. policymakers and national security professionals to absorb a major tenet of the conflict resolution field. That is, it is better to collaborate than to compete to achieve one's needs and interests. This holds true for the individual, the group, the state, and the liberal world order. More so, realist and liberal policies will not work with the People's Republic of China because both will lead to war. Realism does so by escalation; liberalism through miscalculation due to perceived weakness. In short, the prudent way is for the U.S. to take a hard, objective look at the future, determine what truly are vital interests, build consensus amongst like-minded states, and convince the Chinese it is in their interest to cooperate because both countries "can" coexist.

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