Dear Seminar Participants:

Thank you for the opportunity to present some work-in-progress. This is an early draft of the theory chapter for my book manuscript, *Paths of Ruin: How Identity Determines Military Effectiveness in Modern War.* This chapter is currently undergoing substantial revision, and I'll use the presentation as an opportunity to introduce the new (and hopefully) improved version. Since theory chapters can be dull affairs (though not this one!), I'll also present data and initial findings. The book project makes use of a new dataset of conventional wars that is ultimately designed to challenge, if not replace, the Correlates of War, at least on questions of military effectiveness, so there will be much to discuss.

Identity and Military Effectiveness in Modern War

Jason Lyall[*]

February 27, 2012

> *Make your theories elaborate.*
>
> Sir Ronald Fisher

This chapter introduces a theory of military effectiveness that seeks to explain war outcomes and battlefield performance in conventional wars between states since 1800. At its core, this theory argues that variation in military effectiveness can be attributed to the type of collective identity that leaders employ to legitimate their rule. The theory unfolds over four stages, each briefly outlined here.

First, the theory begins from the simple but important premise that all political leaders want to maintain their position of power. A key aspect of this struggle is the construction of a collective identity that fosters a sense of affinity between ruler and population. This ideational aspect of a ruler's power, though often neglected in existing theories, helps determine the basis of the political community by establishing criteria for membership. Given their public nature, collective identities also create the set of obligations and expectations that publics will use to judge the performance of their leaders. As a result, the content of a collective identity creates the possibility of societal conflict.

Second, some leaders seek political legitimation through collective identities that violently exclude portions of their populations from the political community. In doing so, however, these leaders must rule in the threatening shadow of possible irregular exit.[1] This threat can arise from two sources. Aggrieved populations are likely to seek opportunities created by perceived regime

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[*]Department of Political Science, Yale University. Email: jason.lyall@yale.edu Please do not circulate this draft chapter without my prior permission.

[1]An "irregular" exit is defined as the unscheduled removal of a leader or destruction of a regime due to either internal revolt, coup, or deposition by another state.

weakness to overthrow it. Threat also resides in the favored population, however. Failure to meet the expectations raised by the regime's own rhetoric also encourages once-supporters to defect by replacing the current leader with a more resolute one.

Third, leaders that employ exclusionary collective identities find themselves entrapped by a self-generated commitment problem: leaders cannot credibly commitment to changing the nature of their collective identities. Regime opponents are unlikely to trust the leader's concessions unless they are coerced by a credible threat of revolt since the leader is unwilling to offer such changes in the absence of this threat. Yet at precisely the moment when the regime is most likely to acquiesce to societal demands, regime opponents are least likely to accept them since they are more apt to use this transitory opportunity to secure their demands once and for all — by toppling the regime itself.

Fourth, embattled leaders are forced to reorient their militaries away from external defense toward internal duties to address the twin threats of societal unrest and supporter defection. Suboptimal practices, including skewed recruitment, inappropriate tactics, and overly aggressive doctrines, will become the norm as leaders work to offset the possible rise of threats to their survival. This tradeoff is only sustainable, however, if a state does not deploy its forces against more efficient rival states. Given the suboptimal nature of their militaries, these exclusionary states are likely to suffer higher losses and quicker defeats on the battlefield than comparable states. As a consequence, they are also more prone to suffering military defeat and irregular exit.

Finally, the chapter highlights the distinctiveness of this explanation by comparing it with three clusters of existing explanations for military ineffectiveness. Traditionally, political scientists have pointed to a state's (or coalition's) relative military and economic power to explain war outcomes. Indeed, most existing explanations rest at least implicitly on a model that assumes victory is a function of material preponderance: the stronger the state, the more likely its victory. A second, more recent, explanation emphasizes the role of political institutions in determining war outcomes. In particular, scholars have noted a sharp divergence between democratic and autocratic countries in their ability to win wars. A third set of explanations, found most frequently among historians, revolves around the role played by ideational variables such as culture (including religion) and ideology (including nationalism) in determining how armies fight.

1 The Dynamics of Identity Politics: A Ruler-Based View

My argument begins from the premise that political leaders, rather than states, should be at the forefront of our explanations of military effectiveness. While most international relations literature remains wedded to the state as the unit of interest, several scholars have increasingly focused on leaders' incentives to remain in office.[2] Central to this view is the contention that leaders are principally concerned with avoiding losing office, whether by regular (i.e. elections) or irregular (i.e. violent) means. As a result, two expectations obtain. First, political leaders or regimes are in constant interaction with their societies as they strive to maintain office. And, second, the demands of regime survival may not be consistent with the dictates of state security. All leaders are thus forced to juggle competing incentives, a process with significant implications for a state's military effectiveness.

To date, existing leader-based theories have viewed leaders' incentives as a product of political institutions. Hein Goemans (2000) has argued, for example, that semi-authoritarian leaders are the most likely to initiate and escalate risky wars because their institutions are less able to protect them from violent overthrow than are stable democratic or autocratic institutions. Similarly, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, 2004) contend that the size of a leader's selectorate — the proportion of the population involved in decision-making and with access to private benefits granted by the leadership — determines a leader's proclivity to initiate war. Autocrats are thus less selective in initiating wars as well as less responsive to battlefield outcomes since they are less interested in victory than the acquisition of spoils for their supporters.

Despite their insights, these rationalist accounts deliberately strip ideational variables from their analysis.[3] In doing so, these explanations for state behavior ignore a central aspect of a ruler's bid to remain in power: the construction of a collective identity that legitimates his rule by building affinity with some segment of the population, if not all of it. Yet in many ways the decision of how the regime should secure its legitimacy is analytically prior to the question of what political institutions to build. Rationalist approaches also assume that formal institutions work as advertised, that societal conflict occurs along material rather than ideational lines, and that leaders "update" their beliefs about conflict in accord with new information. Focusing on a leader's choice of identity type challenges all three assumptions by setting the key axis of societal

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[2]Goemans 2000; Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow 2004; Chiozza and Goemans 2004.

[3]Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, 212-215,246,357; Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow 2003, 61.

conflict, and thus of regime survival, around the content of a collective identity and the obligations it imposes on rulers.

Collective identity in this context refers to a shared self-image of the political community that (1) establishes the terms of membership, often along claims of common history or heritage; (2) defines the purposes of the community and the means appropriate for their pursuit; and (3) that provides a sense of the appropriate role for the community to perform in world politics. The content of a collective identity not only shapes the political community and its boundaries but also provides a set of collective expectations that the leader's performance will be judged against. Collective identities are therefore public and relational, rather the private and psychological, in nature. Definitions of threat, either internal or external, as well as preferred strategies for addressing these challenges, also flow from the content of a collective identity.

This view of collective identity departs from existing constructivist research in its assumption that the choice of an identity type is suffused with questions of power. In this formulation, leaders instrumentally construct collective identities with an eye toward their effectiveness in fostering and sustaining a feeling of solidarity with the relevant population. Identities are not infinitely elastic, of course, nor do all identities hold equal appeal. As a result, the leader's choice of how to legitimate his rule has a strategic component to it, one that is often explicitly rejected in constructivist theorizing.[4] Rulers must therefore situate their identity projects in the broader framework of ideas, values, and symbols that resonate among the population whose support leaders are courting.

1.1 Divided They Rule, Precariously

The nature of a leader's choice of collective identity is central for two reasons. First, the content of the collective identity will determine the size of the excluded population from the national community as well as the depth of its exclusion. In effect, the type of identity project in place will establish the severity of the social conflict that the ruler will face as well as the nature of the threat of his removal from office (and type). The more severe the exclusion, and the wider the degree of exclusivity, the higher the danger of social unrest and the greater the danger of irregular regime exit, a point we explore below.

Second, a collective identity establishes the expectations facing the ruler among the favored

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[4]See, for example, Hopf 2002, 2.

population. Regimes must continually reaffirm their rule; the creation of an identity project is not a one-time event but rather a continual process of interaction between the ruler, favored, and excluded populations. The rhetoric and actions used to justify and cement the identity project in turn create expectations regarding the regime's behavior. In effect, the regime's own legitimating rhetoric becomes a signpost or focal point around which the favored population can judge the regime's efficacy. The ideational content of a collective identity therefore establishes the nature of the audiences that the regime must placate as well as the costs incurred for failing to meet these expectations.

On its surface, a leader's decision to adopt an exclusionary collective identity seems paradoxical. Why would a leader deliberately exclude some portion of the population, thereby creating domestic opposition by default? A smart ruler, it seems, could better ensure stability by embracing the most inclusionary identity possible, just as embattled autocratic elites sometimes extend democracy as a means of preserving their position.

Yet we should not overlook the substantial benefits that can accrue from exclusionary identities. Restricting the boundaries of the political community to a narrow subset of the population creates ready-made regime supporters in short order. To be sure, this may create problems in the future. In the near term, however, these issues may appear both hypothetical and manageable. Indeed, the creation of societal opponents can actually improve the leader's standing by forestalling defection by these supporters. The leader can use the fear generated by the prospect of societal unrest to discipline the ranks of regime supporters. By linking the prosperity and, indeed, safety, of supporters to the regime's own fate, leaders can bind their fates together while using the specter of upheaval to block the exits if regime fortunes sour. Societal opponents can, in other words, be politically useful.

To be sure, not all cleavages within society are identity-based, and not all social conflict can be attributed to the nature of the regime's identity project. That said, however, existing leader-based explanations of state behavior err on the side of reducing conflict to a function of institutional arrangements and "clean" struggles over the distribution of resources. Yet it is the choice of collective identity that establishes the nature of these societal conflicts and, crucially, that determines the likelihood of the regime sparking opposition that aims at the leader's own irregular exit.

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2 The Fear of Violent Overthrow

The prospect of irregular exit, together with its (presumably grisly) nature, acts as a mechanism which translates identity type variation into concrete choices by state leaders. More specifically, the peril of regime overthrow arises from two directions. First, the possibility exists that excluded populations, or some portion of them, could rise up in a bid to topple the leadership. Second, fear of coup attempts by disaffected supporters also shapes leader decisions about generating military power. As a result, the regime will not only privilege its survival but will prize the perception, however illusionary, of its permanence. Leaders will therefore cling tightly to their visions of collective identity and the expectations they generate since to deviate from these prescripts means opening the door to potential challengers.

2.1 Challenge from Without: The Excluded Populations

The threat of irregular exit is partly contingent on the size of the opposition within society. This, in turn, is a reflection of the content of the collective identity and, especially, a function of its contested nature. The greater the rate of exclusion, and the more violence this population is subjected to, the greater the likelihood that the regime will stoke the fires of societal conflict. As a result, the larger the size of this population, the greater the severity of the anticipated punishment if these actors are able to surmount collective action problems to challenge the regime. Collective identity type and the divisions that it introduces into the political community therefore play a central role in establishing the threat of irregular regime exit.

Two key points bear emphasizing. First, the regime's reliance on exclusionary rhetoric and tactics can actually facilitate the creation of new group identities where none existed before. Put differently, the emergence of opposition is partly endogenous to the establishment of an exclusionary identity and to the efforts required to maintain it. The regime's own rhetoric and actions act as a focal point around which excluded groups can articulate shared grievances and facilitate their redress through collective action. Indeed, material disadvantages or lower perceived status can offer the basis for an alternative solidarity. This is especially apt to be likely at higher rates of exclusion, where the possibility of assimilation or passing by the excluded group is foreclosed.

Second, the threat posed by the excluded population is at once ever-present and transitory. Revolution, or at least chronic unrest, will be a persistent feature of the political landscape in

exclusionary states since the motive for regime exit is continually nourished by state-orchestrated persecution.

On the other hand, the threat is itself transitory, for the opportunity to act upon these desires are typically few and far between for repressed populations. Threats from below can be difficult to mobilize since open opposition leads only to further repression, if not the destruction of the group itself. Collective action is costly for these groups, both in terms of the effort necessary to circumvent the regime's measures successfully and in terms of the threatened punishment that attends failure. Opponents therefore have a narrow window of opportunity to push for changes which, given the regime's own commitment, are likely to consist not of moderate demands but rather regime change itself. A "use it or lose it" principle is at work here, a fact that the regime is aware of and which reinforces the necessity of not exposing itself to challenge by reversing itself or making substantial concessions.

Yet the shadow of this opposition, and the potential for its sudden outbreak, will persist unless the targeted group is physically destroyed. Indeed, absent a credible means of signaling a desire to adopt a more inclusionary identity, the leader will be forced to take into consideration the potential for significant societal unrest even if he retains a monopoly on coercion. In turn, this chronic threat from below will induce changes in the regime's policies that would not have obtained in the absence of the aggrieved excluded populations.

2.2   Challenge from Within

Paradoxically, leaders may also face challenges from their own supporters. Favored populations do rely on the regime as both a bulwark against the excluded population (especially if large) and a source of benefits. Their dependency notwithstanding, however, these supporters can defect from the regime if it fails to satisfy the expectations and obligations that arise from the content of the regime's collective identity project. These identities not only establish the attributes for group membership by creating relational comparisons between included and excluded populations. Equally as important is their role in providing the social purposes around which the regime's aims should be concentrated and state resources directed. These publicly-stated goals act as a benchmark by which the efficacy of the regime's actions are judged by those who share these normative ambitions.

Threats of irregular exit can therefore emerge if the leader is perceived as failing in the pursuit

of this shared agenda. Incomplete satisfaction, if left unchecked, sparks coup fears in which the irresolute leader is (violently) removed and replaced by another leader from within the privileged group. To avoid this possibility, leaders must attempt to satisfy the expectations created by the content of a particular identity type.

This content may relate to the continued suppression of the excluded group or, more simply, to a continuation of prestige and spoils that ensure the privileged group's dominance. In this case, a leader's job security is tied to domestic performance, thus creating an incentive to avoid meaningful concessions to excluded groups or, more generally, any actions that puncture the regime's carefully crafted veil of infallibility.

If collective identities only established the basis for political membership, we might imagine that a clever leader, or at least one with sufficient resources, could institutionalize a reasonably stable — and favorable — balance between ruler, favored, and excluded. As constructivists are aware, however, collective identities also establish the nature of the relationship between the political community writ large and the wider world beyond state borders. Identities are inherently relational across, as well as within, groups, and thus their content is shaped through interaction with other states and international institutions and norms. Most importantly, collective identities express a set of roles that the leader should uphold in world politics, thereby creating expectations about the shared purposes of the community and the threats that it faces. In short, collective identities impose obligations concerning the leader's conduct on both the domestic *and* world stage.

Trouble can therefore arise if the exclusionary content of an identity creates interests that clash with those of external actors. This is especially likely to be the case when a ruler draws support from the favored segment of the population by constructing a collective identity that envisages a prestigious or expansive role for it in world politics. By yoking elite support, and thus regime survival, to these claims of preeminence, leaders manage to externalize the consequences of a ruling strategy that rests on domestic divisions. Self-images that express a definition of the population not coterminous with state borders, or that view the international system as hostile to the community, will accordingly create pressures to adopt revisionist strategies that eliminate these discrepancies.

There is no question that the composition of a regime's collective identity has an instrumental aspect. Revisionist aspirations abroad not only create opportunities for the favored population to acquire material wealth or social standing — even if the cost of war far exceeds these individual

gains — but also reaffirms the naturalness of the existing domestic order. But the benefits of such actions cannot be reduced to questions of material gain alone. If present, these self-images and their revisionist implications will impose obligations on rulers since such claims inform the basis for the regime's own position within society. Challenges to core aspects of a regime's identity project amount to much more than a threatened reallocation of the distribution of goods to favored members within society. Instead, the external roles and understandings of world politics inherent within a collective identity impose obligations on a regime that must be met if it is to ward off threats from dissatisfied regime supporters.

3   Why Not Change Identities? The Commitment Problem

Yet why would a leader cling blindly to a collective identity if the result is only increased opposition? We might imagine that astute leaders would simply "update" their ruling strategies and either increase repression or modify, if not scrap entirely, the content of their legitimating identities. Regimes are not, in other words, helpless victims in the face of a rising tide of opposition.

Take, for example, the question of repression. It is possible, indeed likely, that embattled regimes will intensify their repression of political opponents. This is, however, a risky, and often short-term, solution, one that threatens to open Pandora's box. The exact size of political opposition can be difficult to gauge, and regimes that clumsily wield violence to dampen collective action may only enflame such efforts even further. There is also no guarantee of success: opposition can be a hardy perennial, one that can survive, even flourish, under repressive conditions.[5] Moreover, repression itself is a costly venture, often dictating the allocation of substantial state resources that are diverted away from other purposes, including state security against external threats.

A more adept leader might choose a different route, one that involves extending concessions to the aggrieved population. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson have argued that threatened autocratic rulers may construct democratic institutions as a means of dampening unrest while still securing their access to decision-making in the future.[6]

Unfortunately, leaders relying on exclusionary identities face a severe credible commitment

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[5]Lyall 2006.

[6]Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, 23-30.

problem.[7] Put simply, these leaders cannot credibly commit to reducing the rate of exclusion in the absence of a societal threat that makes the changes necessary in the first place. At the same time, however, political opponents within the ranks of the excluded would not accept such a deal since they (rightly) would interpret the concession as a sign of weakness. Indeed, these opponents are more likely to increase their demands to seize advantage of the moment, recognizing the transitory nature of the threat they pose and that such an opportunity may not recur again. Nor can these opponents trust the regime. Having observed the regime's behavior over time, opponents will have strong prior beliefs about the regime's nature, especially its clear preference to renege on any putative deal once danger passes.

Opponents are thus much more likely to use this opportunity to push for the regime's overthrow as a guarantee of their gains rather than accept the present regime's concessions on faith. As a result, societal opponents are least likely to accept proffered concessions at precisely the moment when the regime is most likely to grant them. Unsurprisingly, the commitment problem looms ever-larger the more exclusionary the collective identity becomes. Leaders are therefore unable to buy off excluded populations with promises of greater inclusion or redistributed benefits since these concessions lack credibility. The fact that such concessions would only come at the expense of the favored population also makes it unlikely that a regime would trade their certain support for the uncertain allegiance of excluded populations.[8]

Note that this credible commitment problem is created by the nature of a collective identity and the resultant fear of irregular exit that arises from its content. The argument does not rest on the assumption that elites actually believe their rhetoric or that they have deluded themselves in a kind of "blowback."[9] Leaders are well aware of the dangers of both irregular exit and the consequences of failing to strike some form of accommodation but are nonetheless unable to commit to a more inclusionary bargain. As a result, leaders reliant on exclusionary identities are often prohibited from updating their strategies in response to changing circumstances or new information. This suggests that theories which rest on the assumption that leaders, as good Bayesians, update their strategies continually ignore how the "sticky" nature of collective identities can constrain choices. While change on the margins is possible, collective identities are

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[7]On credible commitment problems, see Fearon 1995.

[8]Nor can a regime simply randomize its collective identity. To do so would only exacerbate the commitment problem while also destroying incentives facing the favored selectorate to side with the regime, i.e. due to chronic defections.

[9]Snyder 1991, 49.

stable and resistant to change, a fact that conspires to entrap leaders with exclusionary visions onto paths of ruin.

[Figure 1 about here.]

4   Caveats

The "Nazi" exception: May be that exclusivity actually generates greater fighting power via increased cohesion under certain circumstances. The above argument posits a linear relationship between exclusion and probability of defeat: more exclusive, more likely to suffer defeat. But it may be that in certain situations, the violent exclusion of a minority creates a greater sense of solidarity against an internal threat that translates into greater support for the war and a greater willingness to fight harder. We might imagine that this occurs in a subset of cases where the size of the excluded minority is quite small (i.e. the population is largely homogenous) and the power disparity large (or the opponent is more exclusivist).

May lead to overconfidence in the ability to defeat opponents, i.e. belief in internal strength and a discounting of material imbalances. Examples. Nazis, the Mahdi state (Holt 1970)

This "bump" will likely disappear, however, as the size of the excluded group increases, since the "drag" produced by enforcing this exclusion increase. Moreover, even regimes with a small subset of excluded groups will run into problems as they attempt to extend their control over neighboring territories since they cannot credibly commit to including newly conquered people. In addition, the more polyglot the army, the more fissures that can be exploited by outside powers (Armenians in Ottoman Army); more resistance to recruitment, perhaps leading to forced impressment or other coercion, thus bleeding off resources; and lower morale in the army in an aggregate sense. As a result, modest increase if exclusion remains small, but hard to maintain, especially if wartime dynamics plus early wartime success territorially speaking lead to efforts to consolidate this vision on new populations. Who fits here? Perhaps Nazi Germany; Israel?

It is also important to be clear about what is being claimed. As with all theories, not every exclusive state will lose, and it is unlikely that identity will have sufficient "drag" enough to tip the odds in favor of a much weaker power. That is, sharp material imbalances may trump the causal effect of identity at the extreme end of the distribution (Nazi Germany will defeat Belgium even if exclusionary). But note that this collapses the explanatory weight of material power explanations

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to a narrow subset (corner) of historical cases (once we use a proper accounting of actual military power rather than COW).

5   Paths of Ruin: Why Identity Matters for Military Effectiveness

Leaders reliant on exclusionary identities therefore live in a persistent shadow cast by the prospect of irregular exit. This potent combination of internal opposition of unknown strength (and direction) and the leader's inability to issue credible commitments to reform conspire to introduce suboptimalities into the state's military force. Driven by the understandable desire to avoid irregular exit, leaders will be forced to devote some portion of the state's military power to the task of regime survival. These changes, which would not have obtained in the absence of opposition, represent an inefficient allocation of state power because they typically undercut the ability of the state to ensure its security against rivals not similarly encumbered. Privileging regime survival thus comes at the price of circumscribing, if not gutting, the state's relative military power well before combat is even joined.

More specifically, the negative impact of an exclusionary identity on a state's military effectiveness will be manifest across multiple levels, ranging from the broad domain of strategy to operational and tactical decisions made at the battlefield level.[10]

5.1   Outcomes

On the strategic level, leaders facing the prospect of irregular exit are apt to adopt strategies that are mismatched with the actual military capabilities of the state. The fear that opponents will seize the opportunity afforded by a war, with its concomitant absence of soldiers and a distracted capital, will lead to the privileging of highly offensive military doctrines. These doctrines are highly risk acceptant, trading on the promise of a quick victory that silence opponents by forcefully shutting the window for unrest in exchange for the possibility that such offensives are ill-advised given either the enemy's force disposition or terrain. Political necessity therefore trumps military logic, resulting in a mismatch of strategic ambitions and military reality that heightens the prospect of suffering excessive battlefield losses and overall defeat. Indeed, forcing decisive battle without adequate preparation for ensuring its success only leaves committed forces open to greater losses if the adversary successfully sidesteps the opening blow.

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[10]See Chapter 1. See also Millett, Murray and Watman 1988, 1-27.

Embattled regimes may also adopt "coup-proofing" strategies that are designed to offset the threat of irregular exit by fickle supporters.[11] James Quinlivan has argued, for example, that Middle Eastern regimes have often created parallel military structures among favored supporters — often drawn along tribal or familial lines — as a check against coup-plotting by the regular military establishment.[12] More broadly, exclusionary leaders can resort to deliberate institutional paralysis by fostering the creation of multiple security agencies with overlapping jurisdictions and agendas. In each case, promotion is likely to center around perceived political loyalty rather than demonstrated merit, further undercutting military effectiveness if skill and loyalty do not coincide in the senior officer ranks.

A desire to foreclose coup opportunities may run to the absurd in these circumstances. In a fit of (perhaps justified) paranoia, Saddam Hussein ordered that concrete barriers be erected directly in front of hardened aircraft shelters on Iraq's airfield. These plans clearly run counter to military best practices, which dictate that aircraft be sortied with all possible speed. However debilitating, these efforts curbed the Iraqi Air Force's ability to launch or support a coup against Hussein's regime, though ultimately to the detriment of Iraq's security.[13]

5.2   On the Battlefield

Moreover, a legacy of prewar exclusion not only reduces the size of military-ready reserves but also suggests that units composed of excluded populations will be fighting at least partly under duress. Lower morale, and higher rates of desertion, will be the result, further reducing the state's military power. The Turkish Army during World War One offers a particularly graphic example: desertion from non-Turkish units amounted to nearly 500,000 men, while the Army's entire combat losses amounted to only 175,220.[14] Indeed, contemporaries reported that Arab conscripts were placed in chains and escorted under arms to the front-line to prevent their desertion. This fear of ethnic defection within the ranks — as well as Russian exploitation of it — led Turkish commanders to undertake a massive forced population movement of Armenian populations away from sensitive rear areas in May 1915 that quickly descended into genocide.[15]

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[11]Belkin and Schofer 2003; Quinlivan 1999; Farcau 1994; Horowitz 1985.

[12]Quinlivan 1999, 141-50.

[13]Biddle and Zirkle 1996, 207,fn70.

[14]Turkey lost nearly 18% of its entire mobilized manpower to desertion; Germany, by contrast, lost less than 1%. See Erickson 2001, 208-15,240.

[15]Erickson 2001, 98-105.

Finally, we are likely to observe pathologies at the level of the battlefield itself in the choice of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) adopted as the military's standard practices. The prospect of irregular exit will lead to a reorientation of the military's purposes toward deterring or defeating internal opposition. As a result, the equipment adopted and ideas about deployment will be shaped at least in part by the dictates of maintaining societal control rather than defeating an adversary's military forces.

This is central because military power is not necessarily fungible. Rather, a military's force structure can act as a constraint on its ability to undertake certain missions, especially since the dictates for successfully waging high-tempo kinetic conventional warfare are not the same as those demanded by counterinsurgency or crowd control.[16]

5.3   Prewar Construction of Military Power

In addition, the adoption of an exclusionary identity will shrink the available recruitment pool for military service. By defining a subset of the population as politically subversive — and thus too dangerous to arm — exclusionary identities work to reduce the overall military capabilities of a state as it mobilizes its forces. Regimes may therefore accept artificial caps on the size of the standing forces or reserves by drawing only on populations whose loyalties are deemed above suspicion. Take the example of the Tsarist Army. Under the Tsars, Russia's Army was just that — Russian — by design, strenuously avoiding recruitment among the "ineffectual" Central Asian peoples of the Tsarist empire until driven to the wall by sharp defeats on the Eastern Front. Unsurprisingly, conscription drives were met with riots and, in 1916, with open rebellion, further diverting Russian military power.[17]

Military effectiveness is ultimately measured relatively, however, and so it is on the battlefield itself that these deficiencies are exposed by more efficient enemies. Yet these inefficiencies are themselves a product of prewar choices about identity type. Thus, while rival states can and do exploit these deficiencies once war has been joined, they are not the product of enemy strategy but rather are the outgrowth of an identity process that may have been unfolding years before the war. Regimes with exclusionary identities are therefore entering combat with significant,

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[16]Of course, regime fears may place constraints on training for any of these missions. Hussein prohibited live-fire exercises and urban training out of concern that these activities might encourage coup proclivities or better enable the military to undertake such an action.

[17]Sanborn 2003.

and self-imposed, barriers that inhibit the full realization of the state's existing military power. Traditional measures of state power, including industrial capacity and the size of the standing army, leave us blind to the actual amount of military power that can be generated.

This discussion suggests that a leader's intervention in matters of military doctrine and strategy may not yield the most efficient choices from the standpoint of national objectives for at least some states.[18] Similarly, the provision of new information from battlefield outcomes will not necessarily lead to an "updating" of strategies, as predicted by the war-as-bargaining approach.[19] Instead, these leaders will be constrained in their choices, forcing them to forgo new opportunities and to endure exposed vulnerabilities since their prior decisions about force structures and employment cannot be overcome easily. Put differently, a leader's choice of military strategy may not hinge on her opponent's strategy — indeed, it may be unresponsive to it — since the demands of regime survival are placed above those of maximum effectiveness on the battlefield itself.

In fact, a perverse form of selection effect is at work that may ensure the suboptimal performance of exclusionary states over time. Given that both the penalty and the probability of defeat is so high, leaders in exclusionary states will experience a worsening situation in world politics over time. As the least effective states are winnowed from the international system non-randomly, the sample of remaining states shrinks but their overall military proficiency increases. This sample attrition means that the potential foes an exclusionary regime faces will be on average more capable given their prior war-fighting experience, making it even more difficult to win. As a result, we may actually *underestimate* the debilitating impact of an exclusionary identity type since they are typically removed from the population of states. This "truncation by death" in essence means that subsequent observations of the exclusionary state's war-fighting capabilities are removed from the sample, thereby dropping additional observations of poor military performance that would have resulted if these leaders had remained.

To be sure, some of these inefficiencies may also appear in states with more inclusionary identities. In addition, some exclusionary regimes may be able to delay, if not escape, the inefficiencies raised by these identity types. Nazi Germany, armed with its archetypal exclusionary identity, is nonetheless often cited as possessing one of the most tactically proficient militaries of the twentieth century.[20] Instead, the claim here is two-fold. First, these inefficiencies will

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[18]This contradicts the neorealist contention that states (and especially their civilian leaders) maximize their resources when confronted with external threats. See, for example, Posen 1984, 34-35.

[19]See, for example, Reiter 2003; Slantchev 2003.

[20]von Creveld 1982; Dupuy 1977.

have a higher probability of emerging in regimes marked with exclusionary identities. Second, these shortcomings will cluster together in predictable patterns. Below I derive specific, testable hypotheses from these claims.

6   Testable Implications

The persuasiveness of this argument hinges on its ability to generate falsifiable propositions about how identity type shapes variation in military effectiveness at the level of war outcomes and the battlefield itself. These hypotheses are summarized in Table 1.

6.1   War Outcomes

All else equal, we can anticipate that leaders who adopt exclusionary identities will suffer a higher rate of defeat than their more inclusionary counterparts. In addition, the more exclusionary an identity becomes, the higher the probability that a regime will suffer defeat. Given the nature of the inefficiencies introduced by exclusionary identity types, we can also anticipate that an exclusionary regime's propensity to suffer defeat does not hinge on whether the leader initiates the conflict or is a victim of another state's belligerence. Initiating exclusionary regimes should suffer a higher rate of defeat than their initiating counterparts, while exclusionary targets will also experience a higher defeat rate than inclusionary targets.

The distinction between initiator and target helps to distinguish between selection effect arguments, in which exclusionary regimes "select" themselves into worse situations than other states, and a war-fighting hypothesis, in which exclusionary states are worse at generating military power than their peers.[21] Past studies have demonstrated that initiating states are much more likely to win their wars than targets since they can select themselves into a favorable outcome. This result is especially pronounced when democracies are the initiators, though dissipates as the war drags on.[22] Disaggregating initiators and targets by identity type therefore allows us to examine whether identity type derives its explanatory weight from selection effects — that is, initiating exclusive states are less likely to win than other initiators, but there is no difference among targets — or from deficiencies in war-fighting, in which case both exclusionary initiators and targets should have higher defeat rates than their reference group.

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[21]Reiter and Stam 1998, 2002.
[22]Wang and Ray 1994; Reiter and Stam 2002; Slantchev 2004.

A heightened probability of experiencing defeat also translates into an increased risk of regime overthrow. Two pathways to overthrow are especially likely. First, defeat in war may spillover into the leader's own deposition, violent or otherwise, as the external enemy takes advantage of this opportunity to topple the existing regime. Second, this opportunity may be seized by internal opponents who, disgruntled with the regime's performance, seize this moment to strike. We should therefore expect to observe not only a higher relative rate of defeat among this subset of leaders but also a higher probability of irregular leader (or regime) exit.

Struggling beneath the dead weight of prewar inefficiencies, regimes saddled with exclusionary identities will prove less able to prolong their wars as the limits of their military power are quickly exposed. Efforts to strike quickly in a "knock-out" blow may only accelerate this collapse if it heightens the state's vulnerabilities. Similarly, attempts to recoup initial losses by redoubling efforts — known as "gambling for resurrection"[23] — will only accelerate the time-to-defeat of exclusionary states since these strategies create new opportunities for adversaries to exploit the state's weaknesses. We should therefore expect that wars with at least one exclusionary state are likely to prove shorter in duration than wars without such combatants.

Finally, exclusionary identities also help explain *how* wars end. While current theorizing typically assumes that wars end through bargained settlements, in practice many wars have ended in conquest — that is, one side's forces are shattered on the battlefield and are no longer capable of offering organized resistance. It is likely that combatants with exclusionary identities are more likely to end their wars under conditions of conquest than negotiated settlement since their armies are less effective militarily while also more likely to desert or splinter from within.

6.2 Battlefield Performance

The argument proposed here also offers specific predictions about patterns in battlefield outcomes. A concern with the process of war-fighting, not simply outcomes, is necessary if we are to understand the mechanisms through which identity type exerts its influence on state behavior.

We can anticipate that the militaries of exclusionary states will suffer higher relative battlefield casualties. This relationship can be formalized as a loss-exchange ratio (LER) that compares the number of soldiers killed by one state for each soldier lost by the other state.[24] For example, a

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[23]Downs and Rocke 1994.

[24]When viewed from State A's perspective, LER is defined as the number of State B's soldiers killed divided by State A's battle deaths. See Biddle 2004, 22.

LER of 1 would indicate parity, while a LER of less than 1 suggests that a state is less proficient than its enemy in inflicting losses since it losing relatively more soldiers in each exchange. By contrast, a LER of greater than 1 indicates that a military is relatively more capable of inflicting battle losses than opposing forces.

Given the hypothesized inefficiency of exclusionary state militaries, we can anticipate that two relationships in particular should hold. First, we are more likely to observe exclusionary states with LER values lower than 1 on a consistent basis. Second, exclusionary states should also lose a greater fraction of their fielded forces due to battlefield deaths than their more inclusionary counterparts. That is, exclusionary states will not only suffer greater casualties but will also experience a greater magnitude of battlefield loss.[25]

The ability to inflict proportionally higher casualties is only one measure of military effectiveness, however. Equally as important is a military's ability to survive as an effective fighting force even in the face of local defeats. Whether a state's forces switch sides, or desert en masse and head for home, provides an important if neglected measure of the degree of cohesion within a state's military. We can hypothesize that militaries in highly exclusionary states will possess exactly these fissures and, as such, will be more likely to fragment, and will do so at earlier in the war, than more inclusionary counterparts as soldiers from repressed populations use the cover of war to defect or shift allegiances.

In addition, states with exclusionary identities will be forced to devote a greater proportion of their coercive capabilities to the task of deterring would-be traitors or defectors — and sanctioning them, if necessary. While all armies have malcontents, exclusionary state militaries will have much more elaborate mechanisms for ensuring that their soldiers arrive at the battlefield and fight, if necessarily under duress. For example, Shaka, Emperor of the Zulu, issued standing orders that required the spearing of the last man in every column on the way to battle to deter defection. In more recent times, the Soviet Army enforced discipline in World War Two through the use of blocking battalions (*zagradotriady*), formations that were charged with shooting soldiers if they retreated while advancing on German positions. Similarly, the Soviet Union made extensive use

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[25]A fractional loss exchange ratio, or FLER, is defined as the fraction of State A's forces lost in battle divided by the fraction of State B's forces. From State A's perspective, its relative FLER is defined as:

$$\frac{A_a/A_b}{B_a/B_b}$$

where a represents battle deaths and b represents the number of soldiers fielded by States A and B, respectively.

of penal battalions as a means of eliminating politically unreliable, or simply unlucky, soldiers by forcing these units to engage in suicidal missions such as clearing minefields by marching across them. As these examples illustrate, exclusionary states are often forced to devote substantial resources to the basic task of maintaining order within the ranks, thereby leaving them at a relative disadvantage compared with other less-encumbered combatants.

7   Why Fight? The Initiation Question

This discussion raises a second puzzle, however. Assuming that leaders are broadly aware of these inefficiencies in their military power, why would they ever contemplate war? Indeed, it appears at first glance that exclusionary regimes should chart courses that avoid external conflicts while specializing in domestic repression as a means to ensure their survival. Paradoxically, however, the same commitment problem that inhibits reform also creates incentives for these regimes to *initiate* war.

A closer look suggests two reasons why leaders, despite their own misgivings, are unlikely to sidestep war. First, war may an optimal choice under many circumstances since it creates opportunities to reduce the risk of irregular exit. War, in other words, may not be *ex post* inefficient for this subset of leaders.[26] Second, the domestic commitment problem facing leaders has an external dimension. Entrapped leaders cannot commit credibly to recasting collective identities which, in turn, gives rise to fears that rival states will exploit this vulnerability. Revealing the true condition of a state's military is not only difficult but also heightens the risk that potential rivals will raise their own bargaining demands for a peaceful settlement. In both cases, exclusionary identities create incentives to redress domestic problems through violence since a credible settlement with other states is not a realistic option.

7.1   Why War Pays

First, initiating war may be an attractive choice for leaders who rely on exclusionary identities. While war is costly, it also allows an embattled regime to shift the burden of that cost directly to would-be threats to its continued rule. Evidence suggests that Mao Tse-Tung's decision to cast Chinese "volunteer" forces into the teeth of American forces during the Korean War was driven by the desire to use American military power as a scythe to cut down potential rivals and fifth

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[26]Chiozza and Goemans 2004.

columnists.[27] Similarly, the Soviet Red Army allowed politically suspect individuals, including former Tsarist military commanders and GULAG prisoners, to "wash away their past crimes with their own blood" by joining ragtag units thrown into battle against the Nazi *Wehrmacht*.[28]

The claim that a subset of leaders possesses a positive utility for fighting war does not rest on a diversionary war logic, however. In the extensive diversionary war literature, embattled leaders attempt to distract their populations through war in the hopes of creating a rallying effect that offsets, if only temporarily, domestic dissatisfaction.[29] The logic here is different, in part because leaders wielding exclusionary identities are seeking to use an external rival's coercive capabilities to safeguard their rule by culling rivals or subversive populations. Moreover, the regime's support among favored populations is contingent on the satisfaction of its publicly stated aims. War therefore creates the possibility of positively rewarding its supporters through either material or prestige gains while simultaneously disciplining its excluded population.

Appeals to the rallying effect of a crisis or war are also dubious in situations where some portion of the population's support is coerced. In these situations, war raises the prospect of further surveillance over, if not repression of, excluded populations. These measures in turn heighten the risk and costs of engaging in collective action against the regime. With war partially foreclosing opportunities to revolt, regime opponents within society may decide that participation within the state military is actually a preferred course of action. Active involvement offers the chance to escape certain repression at the hands of the regime, especially if participation is restricted to non-essential units on account of the regime's own exclusionary principles. Perversely, the legacy of exclusion may partly shield these populations from direct combat or, at the least, allow these individuals to trade the certain odds of repression for the uncertainties of combat.[30]

7.2 Committed to War

While all states face difficulties in striking a credible *ex ante* settlement that avoids war, leaders with exclusionary identities find themselves in a particularly dangerous bind. The regime's

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[27]Chang and Halliday 2005, 275-84.

[28]Glantz 2005, 466-76.

[29]The diversionary war literature is vast and has produced little consensus on the existence and explanatory weight of its central mechanism, the "rally-around-the-flag" effect. See, for example, Simmel 1898; Coser 1956; Levy 1989; Smith 1997; Chiozza and Goemans 2003.

[30]These excluded populations may sometimes fight for the regime out of the belief that their (voluntary) sacrifices will be recognized in the form of a renegotiated societal pact, however.

collective identity has not only warped its military machine but has also created a public commitment to pursue particular objectives. If these objectives clash with those of another state, however, a regime will have less maneuvering room to compromise on this issue, a fact that its potential opponent fully recognizes. As such, the past claims and current expectations generated by identity type can torpedo negotiated *ex ante* settlements that avoid war even if the leader recognizes that such a bargain would be optimal.

Indeed, imagine the dilemma faced by a ruler hemmed in by past decisions to rule through exclusion. To strike a deal, a leader would have to renounce the stated purposes and policies that are bringing the state into conflict with another state (or coalition), thereby jeopardizing the regime's support. A bargain might be possible if the embattled leader could credibly provide information to the other state that his military is weaker than it appears. This would remove misperceptions about the true state of the relative power balance. Doing so, however, would only encourage exploitation by the external opponent as it now can demand a premium for not initiating war. Acknowledging the state's actual weakness would serve only to increase an opponent's incentives for a first-strike to seize the opportunity presented by this sudden power shift.[31]

Openly revealing the regime's weaker-than-supposed military strength would also provide further encouragement to domestic opponents seeking regime overthrow. Exclusionary regimes are thus in a double bind: hiding the true state of capabilities dampens internal unrest but risks war, while public exposure hints at a settlement but invites further challenges. As a result, these leaders are likely to adopt strategies of deception and bluffing that obscure the severity of their problems in the hopes of removing, or sufficiently minimizing, both the incentives for a first-strike and for domestic unrest. That these strategies may only intensify the alarm of an external foe, and thereby bring war closer to hand, is another symptom of the circumscribed diplomacy made necessary by exclusionary identities.

Note that this argument does not rest on the oft-cited premise that false optimism about war outcomes encourages leaders to initiate war.[32] Instead, it is the constraints and inefficiencies introduced by exclusionary identity types that entrap leaders in contexts where the decision to initiate war is both risky and instrumental. Put differently, the commitment problem identified

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[31] Formal models have recently argued that rapid, sudden power shifts can be a principal cause for war between states. See Powell 2006; Leventoglu and Slantchev 2007; Powell 2004.

[32] See Fearon 1995; Fey and Ramsay 2007.

here departs from standard rationalist theorizing by highlighting domestic ideational processes rather than information asymmetries between states. It also suggests that fighting offers a way to solve the commitment problem by destroying or co-opting domestic opposition while avoiding the twin threats of exploitation and irregular exit that revealing capabilities would create. An explicit focus on a regime's ideational bases also helps overcome the basic indeterminacy of rationalist theories of war by identifying which states are most likely to initiate war.[33]

This is not to deny the difficulties inherent in assessing capabilities prior to the outbreak of hostilities. And leaders undoubtedly face obstacles in obtaining accurate information about their own military power from subordinates who fear the consequences of failure. That said, however, it is likely that leaders nonetheless retain a sufficiently nuanced estimate of their own capabilities — and their shortcomings — to enter war with reasonably accurate expectations.

8   Alternative Explanations for Military Effectiveness

The identity-based theory developed in this book is, of course, not the only possible explanation for battlefield performance and war outcomes. Instead, scholars have proposed three different types of alternative explanations, though rarely do these accounts seek to account for both battlefield *and* war outcomes. Broadly-speaking, these three clusters suggest that outcomes are determined by relative material preponderance, regime type, or other ideational variables such as culture or nationalism. These alternative hypotheses are summarized in Table 2.

8.1   Material Preponderance

Perhaps the most intuitive explanation for victory is the simple claim that the state (or coalition) which possesses a relative advantage in military and economic capabilities is most likely to defeat its opponent(s). For example, Napoleon's oft-cited belief that "God favors the big battalion" has been echoed in numerous studies of World Wars One and Two, in which tactically superior opponents (namely, Germany) were ground under by less proficient, but more numerous, Allied forces.[34] Similarly, it has become commonplace in quantitative and formal studies of war to equate "power" with numerical indicators of army size, population, iron production, and energy

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[33]Gartzke 1999, 576-77.

[34]See for example Greenhalgh 2005; Mearsheimer 2001; Ellis 1990; Parker 1989.

consumption.[35] Interestingly, there is often little attention paid to the question of strategy in these studies.[36] Instead, they rest on the implicit assumption that since combat is attritional in nature, the side with the greatest manpower reserves or production capacity will eventually swamp its opponent. Indeed, material preponderance is thought to soften the blow stemming from poor strategy or inferior forces by providing a cushion that enables one's forces to absorb a seemingly-decisive stroke and regroup.

Although commonsensical, the material preponderance explanation suffers from a number of shortcomings. As Stephen Biddle has convincingly demonstrated, existing measures of preponderance are largely indeterminate, correctly predicting barely half of all war outcomes since 1815.[37] Even canonical cases of material preponderance's contribution to victory have come under challenge. For example, Richard Overy's reappraisal of the sources of Allied victory emphasizes Nazi strategic blunders, not Allied preponderance, that tipped the scales against Hitler's regime.[38]

More generally, reliance on the now-standard Correlates of War definition of power — namely, a state's population, number of military personnel, military expenditures, iron production, and energy usage — can be misleading since they do not capture the size or composition of the forces actually deployed. Throughout the nineteenth century, for example, it was common practice for colonial powers, especially Britain and France, to deploy only a fraction of their standing forces to the battlefield. Instead, these states preferred to raise armies from within or near the adversary's population. As a result, these armies were typically severely outnumbered on the battlefield yet consistently won, their relative material weakness notwithstanding. Yet the Correlates of War would code France or Britain as both victorious (correct) and materially stronger (incorrect), thus yielding the "right" answer for the "wrong" reason.

Moreover, material preponderance arguments are silent about the nature of the strategies adopted or how forces are employed. As a result, they are left unable to account for battlefield-level outcomes since material preponderance explanations are consistent with both relatively lower and higher loss-exchange ratios. Austria, for example, suffered proportionately higher battle deaths at the hands of a weaker Prussia and was defeated in 1866. By contrast, the tremendous

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[35]For a particularly graphic example, see Dupuy 1979, 33, in which 73 variables are used to estimate combat outcomes. Of these 73, only 10 are non-material, and six of these are coded "intangible...probably individually incalculable."

[36]But see Reiter and Meek 1999; Mearsheimer 1983, 28-60.

[37]Biddle 2004, 20-25.

[38]Overy 1995.

industrial and fiscal preponderance of the victorious Entente Powers did not translate into greater efficiency on the battlefields of the Western Front. Indeed, the Central Powers not only inflicted greater losses than they suffered but also did so more efficiently: it cost the Central Powers $11,345 to kill an Entente serviceman, compared with the $36,486 spent by the Entente Powers.[39]

These criticisms notwithstanding, these material-based explanations do generate clear predictions about war outcomes that diverge from those of the book's identity-based theory. We would expect, for example, that the probability of defeat increases as a state's share of the combined capabilities of the combatants decreases. Similarly, we would anticipate that the probability of a regime's irregular exit diminishes as its preponderance over another state increases. And though material-based explanations are not fine-grained enough to explain loss-exchange ratios, we can expect that materially stronger Powers fight powers of longer duration and thus are defeated more slowly, if at all, by their foes.

8.2   Institutional Accounts

A second set of alternative explanations emphasize how a country's political institutions can shape military effectiveness. Unlike material preponderance approaches, institutionalist accounts seek to provide a unified theory of war initiation, conduct, and outcomes. Here, democracies are viewed as superior at war, for two reasons. First, democratic leaders are inherently cautious about initiating war since they will be held accountable for defeat at the ballot box. Democracies therefore select themselves into only those situations where they have a high probability of winning (the selection effects hypothesis). Second, democracies encourage individual initiative and support it by investing in human development. As a result, soldiers drawn from the ranks of democracies will exhibit greater skill and initiative than their autocratic counterparts, resulting in higher battlefield performance (the war-fighting hypothesis).

Dan Reiter and Allan Stam have demonstrated, for example, that democracies achieve victory at consistently higher rates than either comparable dictatorships or semi-authoritarian regimes. Their data reveal a clear empirical trend: democracies have won a staggering 93% of the wars they have initiated between 1816-1990. This compares favorably with the 60% win rate for initiating dictatorships and the 58% win rate for semi-authoritarian regimes.[40] Democratic leaders, guided

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[39]Ferguson 2000, 336.

[40]Reiter and Stam 2002, 29. Note that this finding pertains only to those wars contained within the Correlates of War (COW) dataset. As the next chapter demonstrates, a number of wars were omitted from COW, leading to

by the fear of electoral loss, appear to be much more selective than other political leaders when deciding on war. The existence of representative institutions, opposition parties, and a free press also facilitate improved threat assessment by correcting for mistaken ideas that may persist unchecked in repressive dictatorships.[41]

Semi-authoritarian leaders may also face a special set of incentives that inhibit their ability to choose their wars wisely. Hein Goemans has argued that semi-authoritarian political institutions force their leaders to be more risk-acceptant than prudence might dictate since the threat of a violent irregular exit is higher here than for either stable democracies or autocracies. Leaders may therefore conclude, as German leaders did prior to World War One, that declaring war reduces the probability of meeting an untimely demise. In the interests of playing for time, then, leaders may be less selective in their wars while more willing to escalate their demands in a bid to recoup past losses by "gambling for resurrection" in war.[42]

Regime type has also been cited as a determinant of a state's war-fighting ability. Here, too, democracies enjoy advantages over more repressive states since their soldiers tend to possess higher levels of individual skill, initiative, and leadership. Their data appear to support this point: democracies that are the victims of aggression nonetheless still win 63% of their wars (1816-1990), whereas only 34% of dictatorships and 40% of semi-authoritarian regimes manage to recover victoriously.[43] As a result, we might expect that democracies' armies will possess favorable loss-exchange ratios on the battlefield itself since democracy is highly correlated with investment in the types of human capital essential for successfully generating military power.[44] There are, to be sure, exceptions: democratic Italy's performance in World War One was shockingly poor, while fascist Germany's *Wehrmacht* was exceptionally proficient. Nonetheless, we should expect that on average democracies are much more proficient war machines than their more despotic rivals.

The belief that democracies make for superior combatants is not without its critics, however. It can be difficult to sort out whether wartime performance is due to democracy itself or to the material preponderance that democracies typically enjoy over their battlefield opponents.[45] These

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an incomplete dataset of conventional wars over this time period.

[41]Lake 1992; Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow 2003; Reiter and Stam 2003, 2002, 1998.

[42]Goemans 2000; Chiozza and Goemans 2004; Downs and Rocke 1994.

[43]Reiter and Stam 2002, 29.

[44]Biddle 2007; Biddle and Long 2004, 526,fn.1.

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arguments often ignore important domestic coalition shifts *within* democracies,[46] and careful investigation of pivotal cases like Vietnam often turn up surprisingly little evidence in favor of the selection argument.[47]

The selectorate theory of war mostly reaches the same conclusions. Political systems with large winning coalitions, for example, are more likely to win their wars than their small-coalition (i.e. autocratic) counterparts. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, 225-26) do argue, however, that large-coalition regimes are more likely to try harder in war — as measured by proportionate increases in their military expenditures — because their leaders have a relatively *higher* probability of exit. In this formulation, autocrats do not depend on victory to placate their supporters with private goods, and so are less likely to increase their commitment as a war drags on.[48] Specific propositions about war duration or the battlefield conduct of large- and small-coalition regimes are not advanced, however.

Finally, we might consider civil-military relations within a country as a form of institutional explanation. Acrimonious civil-military relations may undercut military effectiveness by sabotaging the ability of civilian and military leaders to craft a coherent grand strategy. More generally, the politicization of a military's officer corps will give rise to coup threats and internal factionalization that pits actors against one another, further decreasing the amount of combat power that can be generated. Promotions based on loyalty, rather than merit, are also a sign of dysfunctional relations that erodes military effectiveness.[49] It is important to recognize that the state of civil-military relations may be highly correlated with regime type: democracies are apt to exhibit more cooperative, or at least less dysfunctional, relations than are authoritarian states.

These institutional accounts yield several predictions about military effectiveness. There is broad agreement that the greater a state's democracy score, the higher its probability of victory and the lower its probability that its leaders will experience irregular exit. Semi-authoritarian states should have the worst of both worlds, experiencing both reduced odds of victory as well as lower battlefield performance due to adverse selection effects and less-skilled soldiers. Democracies, by contrast, should possess militaries with higher skill levels, resulting in more favorable

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[46]Stanley and Sawyer 2009.

[47]Downes 2009.

[48]Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow 2003, 237.

[49]Brooks 2006; Feaver 2003; Biddle and Zirkle 1996; Huntington 1957. Andreski 1980 argues that military-dominated governments will actually be less prone to war because they recognize their politicized and dysfunctional nature.

loss-exchange ratios whether the country was the initiator or the victim.

8.3   Ideational Explanations

A final set of explanations look toward non-material variables such as culture to explain military effectiveness. Historians have long been comfortable with the notion that warfare is a product of the prevailing cultural beliefs of a particular country or historical era. The belief that countries possess durable "strategic cultures" that consistently shape policymakers' beliefs about the utility of military power, including how and when it should be employed, has also gained purchase among political scientists. Iain Johnston's masterful tracing of Ming Dynasty's strategic preferences from ancient classical texts to their implementation in battle against the Mongols (1368-1644) demonstrates the importance of non-material determinants of military power.[50] More controversially, scholars have argued that certain (Western) states appear better able to create military power than other (notably, Arab) states because their cultures place a higher value on individual initiative.[51]

Other scholars have turned to organizational culture to explain why states and their leaders do not uniformly respond to changes in their strategic environment. From this perspective, state decisions about strategy and force employment, as well as the decision for war itself, cannot be divorced from the culture of their military institutions. The content of a military's bureaucratic culture, including its sense of purpose and threat perceptions, serves to guide military practices, sometimes resulting in "deviant" behavior when viewed with a strictly rationalist lens.

Elizabeth Kier has argued, for example, that France's surprisingly defensive military doctrine in the Interwar Period was the outgrowth of domestic cultural battles over conscription policies rather than strict balance-of-power calculations.[52] Similarly, Isabel Hull contends that Germany's military was governed by a cultural preference for extreme warfare (*Kriegführung*) over the 1863-1918 era that took shape as brutal, and ultimately counterproductive, policies of annihilation on the battlefield.[53]

Nationalism has also been invoked to explain military effectiveness, though its effect remains contested. Nationalist sentiment may encourage leaders to be risk-acceptant, for example, while

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[50]Johnston 1995.

[51]Keegan 1993; Hanson 2002; Pollack 2002. See Lynn 2003 for a culturally-based refutation of their arguments.

[52]Kier 1997, 68-80.

[53]Hull 2005, 1-3,103-07.

also heightening soldiers' morale. Yet nationalism may also undercut military effectiveness by leading enemy soldiers to conclude that they cannot surrender safely, forcing both sides to fight well beyond the point at which a ceasefire should have been reached.[54] It is not clear, however, whether soldiers are actually motivated by nationalist ambitions while in combat. Studies of unit cohesion have largely concluded, for example, that soldiers typically fight for one another, rather than for abstract ideals, in a bid to hold the unit together.[55]

Finally, international normative pressures may also induce states to emulate perceived best military practices, particularly after the demonstrated success of a particular form of organization. European powers, followed by their Latin American counterparts, adopted the Prussian model of military organization once its superiority had been demonstrated against France in 1870-71.[56] Indeed, despite their differing economic profiles, strategic needs, and even terrain, these states came to resemble one another closely in their organization (a process known as "isomorphism"). In some instances this tendency produced suboptimal outcomes. A resource-starved Irish Army rejected guerrilla warfare for a conventional force structure that jeopardized the fledgling Irish state's existence when it met the British Army in the field.[57] Similarly, Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman have noted that desires to appear "modern" have led landlocked states to build navies or to maintain air forces despite possessing no aircraft.[58]

Drawing specific predictions about military effectiveness from ideational variables can be frustrating, not least because some of these explanations explicitly reject the possibility of deriving generalizations about state behavior. That said, however, we can nonetheless identify several patterns that might emerge if these arguments are correct. We should expect that military effectiveness clusters within particular cultures (defined perhaps by religious affiliation), within certain types of bureaucratic cultures, and within certain time periods as particular models of military organization diffuse throughout the system at an uneven rate. The same patterns of clustering should also hold at the battlefield level.

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[54]Reiter 2007.

[55]Shils and Janowitz 1948.

[56]Resende-Santos 2007.

[57]Farrell 2007.

[58]Eyre and Suchman 1996.

9   Conclusion

This chapter has provided an identity-based theory of military effectiveness that begins from the premise that collective identities can shape a state's military effectiveness. The goal here is an ambitious one, but the payoff is potentially large, for privileging the role of identity type helps shed light on the process of war-fighting as well as its outcomes. The argument draws on elements of both constructivist and rationalist theorizing to examine how identities determine the incentives facing leaders and, as a consequence, their decisions about how and when to employ military power. Leaders relying on exclusionary identities are often caught in a trap of their own making. Unable to commit credibly to changing their collective identities, leaders face an unenviable choice: divert military resource away from external security and risk inviting external threats; or fail to shift resources and chance a grisly toppling orchestrated by aggrieved populations.

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Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Level of Analysis
	War Outcomes
H1	The more exclusionary an identity type, the greater the probability of defeat, independent of status as conflict initiator or target (*Win/Loss*).
H2	The greater the level of exclusion, the greater the probability of violent regime exit, conditional on war participation (*Exit*).
H3	Wars with one or more exclusionary states will be shorter in duration than wars without exclusionary combatants given faster relative rates of battlefield collapse (*Duration*).
H4	The greater the level of exclusion, the greater the probability that a combatant will be conquered rather than obtain a negotiated settlement (*Conquest*).
	Battlefield Performance
H5	The greater the rate of exclusion, the worse (i.e. lower) the state's loss-exchange ratio (*LER*).
H6	The greater the rate of exclusion, the higher the fraction of one's forces that will be killed (*FLER*).
H7	The greater the rate of exclusion, the greater the likelihood of observing substantial defection or desertion within the exclusionary state's military (*Defection/Desertion*).
H8	The greater the rate of exclusion, the greater the likelihood of observing use of sanctioning mechanisms such as "blocking" and penal units within the exclusionary state's military (*Sanctions*).

Table 2: Alternative Explanations

Hypothesis	Level of Analysis
	War Outcomes
Material	The greater a state's share of combatants' cumulative military and economic capabilities, the greater its probability of victory and the lower its probability of suffering regime exit.
Institutional	Democracies (large-coalition states) will have a higher probability of victory and lower exit rates than autocratic or semiauthoritarian regimes.
Ideational	Probabilities of victory and regime exit cluster predictably vary across cultures.
	Battlefield Performance
Material	The more closely balanced the opposing sides, the greater the war's duration.
Institutional	The greater a state's democracy score, the higher the skill of its soldiers, and the lower (i.e. better) its loss-exchange ratio in battle.
Institutional	Wars with democracies as participants will be shorter than wars without.
Ideational	Nationalist armies will last longer in combat at worse loss-exchange ratios than non-nationalist armies.

Figure 1: Summary of Argument

Identity Type$_t$ $\Rightarrow$ Military Practices$_{t+1}$ $\Rightarrow$ Battlefield Performance $\Rightarrow$ War Outcomes$_{t+(1,\ldots n)}$