

POWER RESOURCES AND ASSERTIVENESS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By Richard G. Long*

I. Introduction

This study is designed to explain why certain states, at certain times, have tried to expand their influence abroad. The answer presented here is based on what is termed the parvenu-arrogance theory. The assumption underlying this theory is that anything which makes a person feel more important tends to increase his or her efforts to influence others.

The general approach is within the realist tradition of viewing nation states as the primary actors. The independent variable (power resources, or basic national capabilities) is similar in some ways to national attribute variables used in many other studies (e.g., East, 1978: 134). But this paper does not purport to present a full theory of international relations. It does not deal with specific outcomes (Morgenthau, 1948), nor with systemic properties (Waltz, 1959, 1979), nor even with dominance in the international system (Gilpin, 1981; Modelski, 1987; Kugler & Organski, 1989). Finally, it does not presuppose rational actors making decisions, although the theory does assume a certain consistency in effects based on changes in power resources.

The focus is rather on one quality of the foreign policy behavior of individual countries. The dependent variable, assertiveness, represents an attempt to measure, in an abstract manner, the efforts of a state to influence its foreign environment. This contrasts with other studies which seek to explain specific outcomes, such as the frequency of war or dominance in the international system. This study can therefore best be compared to investigating the effects of heating a gas—the focus is on how pressure varies with changes in temperature, rather than whether the increased pressure drives an engine or launches a projectile.

In spite of the limitations inherent in the concept of assertiveness, it is argued that this theory can better explain the varying levels of assertiveness and even some outcomes than can relative-capabilities models (East, 1978; Gilpin, 1981; Modelski, 1987), status inconsistency theories (Wallace, 1973; Midlarsky, 1975), or the "lateral pressure" theory of Choucri & North (1975, 1989).

II. Hypothesis, Theory, and Definitions

The *hypothesis* to be tested is that *significantly higher rates of increase in the power resources of a nation, relative to those of other comparable nations, tend to produce greater increases in the assertiveness of that nation's foreign policy*. In essence, faster growing nations try to increase their influence in the international arena more than others. The reverse should also hold true. This hypothesis is based on what is termed the parvenu-arrogance theory, according to which a rising sense of importance and feelings of superiority produce increased assertiveness. The study will compare the changes every five years over the 120-year period from 1870 to 1990 in the power resources and assertiveness of a limited peer group of six major developed countries: France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Russia/USSR, and the United States. Where data permits, comparisons will be extended back to 1820.

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Power resources are defined as those *basic capabilities of a nation necessary for a state to be able to influence other states*. They are thus of fundamental importance to a nation's political status vis-a-vis other nations and constitute primary elements of national self-esteem. They are distinguished from, but can be converted into, more immediate instruments of influence (such as aid programs and military forces) by national political decisions. Increases in power resources include the following:

1. Territorial expansion (by any means)
2. Population increases
3. Growth of economic production (i.e., GNP)
4. Discovery/expansion of mineral resources (i.e., oil)
5. Increasing levels of skills and technology
6. Scientific and technological advances
7. Increased "political modernization," i.e., rationalization of authority, differentiation of functions, and public involvement in governmental affairs (Huntington, 1968: 34-5; East, 1978, and Organski & Kugler, 1980 & 1989, develop similar concepts).¹

For the major developed countries of the current study, the operational indicators selected were percentage changes in territory, population, and GNP. The other elements of power resources are considered to be reflected by those indicators, particularly by changes in GNP. If GNP is found not to be an adequate indicator of political modernization, an additional indicator may have to be added.²

Assertiveness is defined as the *magnitude and intensity of actions by a nation to influence its foreign environment*. "Magnitude" connotes the scope and amplitude of the means used by a nation to implement its foreign policy. "Intensity" concerns the frequency and/or vigor of foreign policy initiatives. "Action" includes both words and deeds. "Foreign environment" includes other nations, groups, and even the external physical environment.

Magnitude of assertiveness will be operationalized by the number of government employees (both civilian and military) stationed or operating overseas, as well as by total naval personnel. Intensity will be operationalized by the number of messages a government sends to those overseas employees. Changes in these indicators will be expressed as percentage increases or decreases over previous levels.

As noted above, assertiveness is a general quality of foreign policy behavior rather than a specific foreign policy output or outcome, much as pressure is to a heated gas. The specific targets and actions or programs of an assertive nation are determined by factors such as culture, personalities, regimes, the foreign environment, etc. Assertiveness is neutral or 'blind' as regards cooperation and conflict, and therefore should not be equated or confused with aggression or war. Any foreign policy activity aimed at influencing the foreign environment, whether a military invasion, an attempt to subvert another

¹ East uses the broader term "social organization" to cover both the ability of the leadership to allocate and redistribute resources and problems such as societal stress which hinder a government's ability to act. Organski and Kugler's concept of "political development" is closer to that of Huntington, since it covers the degree of penetration and control of the society by central governmental elites, and the capability of the government to extract resources from its society.

² A simple indicator would be the level or growth in urban population. A more refined indicator would be the Relative Political Capacity Index of Kugler and Domke. For problems of measuring power and lesser developed countries, see Stoll and Ward (1989: 7) and Taber (1989: 29ff.).

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government, a foreign aid program, an export promotion campaign, or exploration of the solar system, is "assertive" to a certain degree.

The *parvenu-arrogance theory* states that as a nation's sense of its importance in the world rises, it becomes more assertive in international affairs. It is assumed that when the rate of growth of a nation's capabilities becomes greater than that of other comparable nations, this enhances its sense of relative importance. This feeling of importance is sometimes described as self-esteem or pride. As a nation's sense of its relative importance grows, it comes to believe that it is better than other countries. In effect, growing faster than others means one is better than, or superior to, others. Because a nation is better, its interests are naturally more important than the interests of other nations and groups, and its interests should therefore prevail in any dispute. Being superior also means that a nation knows better how the world should be organized and how other nations should behave.

The word "parvenu" was chosen to highlight the importance of increased rates of growth of power resources.³ "Arrogance" was selected to reflect the feeling of superiority. Although applied here only to governmental foreign policy behavior, an equally logical expectation would be that relative increases in power resources would also produce increased private sector assertiveness abroad.⁴

Fundamental to the *parvenu-arrogance theory* are the concept of an integrated self and the importance of self-esteem. Both of these have been the focus of a number of works by psychologists (Cantril, 1941; Allport, 1955; Coopersmith, 1967; Maslow, 1987; Wylie, 1974; and Carl Rogers—see Hillner, 1984). Of more direct interest is Winter's concept of a "power motive," which varies with different people and, within the same person, varies in intensity depending upon the types and degree of various arousal factors (Winter, 1973: 47-95, 107, 190-6, 201-227). In a recent paper correlating strong power motives of government leaders with entry into war by Great Britain (Winter, 1989), the power motive as operationalized and conceived is closely related to the concept of assertiveness, and is similar to one of its possible operational indicators (see IV. Discussion of Variables, below).

The *parvenu-arrogance theory* is believed to operate at all times, but periods of protracted general war (involving two or more major nations) seem to exhibit certain special qualities. First, the process is greatly speeded up, so that significant increases in power resources in one year are often followed by increased assertiveness in the following year (perhaps even sooner). In effect, war accelerates the process of change—not an unusual result of wartime.

Another special aspect of general wars is that their termination often produces effects which run counter to the theory. Whereas toward the end of the war the loser(s) will probably suffer lower power resource increases, or even decreases, thus resulting in lesser assertiveness (as the theory would predict), there often seems to be a discontinuity for the winners. Although winning often leads to the incorporation of new territory, the winners

³ Organski uses the term "parvenu" in a similar but more restrictive sense to indicate those nations who had no share in the creation of the international order (Organski, 1968: 366). Whereas Organski excludes Japan from the *parvenu* category since it is allied with the U.S., the *parvenu-arrogance theory* would consider contemporary Japan as very assertive because of its rapid economic growth in recent decades.

⁴ Assertiveness in the private sector would include (for the U.S. at least) such fields as business, religion, and the media. Indicators could be the number of representatives of those groups overseas, the number of messages sent by the home offices to their overseas representatives, the amount of publicity and commentary by the home offices about their overseas activities, and the amount of expenditures for such activities.

sometimes pursue a policy of retrenchment and actually reduce their forces abroad. A number of factors probably enter into this development, but especially the exhaustion experienced even by the winners and the sudden removal of a major threat. A cursory examination of the historical record suggests that this discontinuity usually holds if the initially more assertive nation in the war is defeated, whereas if that nation wins, then it continues the cycle leading to more assertiveness. This apparent discontinuity to the theory requires further investigation.

The exuberance or arrogance predicted by this theory is somewhat analogous to the behavior of citizens of a city whose football team has just won the Super Bowl, especially after several losing seasons. Assuming the prowess of the team to be one measure of the city's power resources vis-a-vis other cities, such a victory could be expected to produce a general feeling toward outsiders (read "foreigners") of exuberant superiority, and this might be expressed in various forms—a charitable offer to buy a round of drinks, a lecture on how and why their team is better, or a fight if they sense any slight toward their town or their team. The "unbridled joy" and "vicious mayhem" exhibited in Detroit on June 14, 1990 following the Piston's NBA victory over Portland is a case in point (McGraw, 1990: A1, 14).

Another useful analogy is the breaking away of a young man from his family. As a boy grows, his knowledge and abilities (read power resources) increase rapidly. By the time he is 19 or 20 his capabilities are expanding at a much faster rate than those of his parents, whose capabilities may be expanding slowly, if at all. Although the young man may not at that age be as knowledgeable, wealthy, or even as skilled as his parents, his higher rate of progress compared to theirs often generates a feeling of superiority and leads him to assert his independence—to break away—and even to tell his parents how they should behave.

In their inaugural speeches, certain American presidents have reflected the spirit if not the substance of the theory. In 1901 President McKinley, after having cited "our diversified productions . . . increasing in such unprecedented volume . . ." spoke of the obligations the Spanish-American War "imposed on us," including the pacification and reconstruction of Cuba and the suppression of the insurrection and restoration of peace and security in the Philippines (Inaugural Addresses, 1961: 178-182). In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt, McKinley's successor, spoke of the "growth in wealth, in population, and in power" of the U.S. since its inception, and stated that "we have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as befits a people with responsibilities" (Inaugural Addresses, 1961: 183-4).

Although President Truman did not speak of America's economic prowess in 1949, he assumed it in stating that the peoples of the earth "look to the United States as never before for good will, strength, and wise leadership" and in outlining wide-ranging programs for world economic recovery, reduced trade barriers, collective defense arrangements and military aid to strengthen other nations, and technological assistance to improve foreign productivity (Inaugural Addresses, 1961: 252-5). And in 1957 President Eisenhower extolled the fact that "in our Nation work and wealth abound" while elsewhere in the world there was poverty and turmoil, and proclaimed that "we recognize and accept our own deep involvement in the destiny of men everywhere," and "we are called to act a responsible role in the world's great concerns or conflicts—whether they touch upon the affairs of a vast region, the fate of an island in the Pacific, or the use of a canal in the Middle East" (Inaugural Addresses, 1961: 263-5).

Senator Fulbright noted in 1965 that the discrepancy between America's "power and the power of others appears to be increasing." He also referred to "certain unfathomable

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drives of human nature," or what he called "the arrogance of power, the tendency of nations to equate power with virtue and major responsibilities with a universal mission" (Fulbright, 1966: 5, 9). The arrogance of American foreign policy after World War II is further illustrated by the consideration within the U.S. Government in 1953-4 of such programs as "Project Solarium" and "Project Control" (Biddle, 1988: 39 ff.).

III. Comparison of Theories: Some Past, Present, and Future Events

This section first seeks to identify the basic psychological processes underlying several major theories, then compares the relative merits of the theories in explaining and predicting selected foreign policy behaviors or outcomes, and finally discuss the antithesis of the parvenu-arrogance theory (i.e., that weakness leads to assertiveness).

It is believed that every theory which attempts to explain the foreign policy behavior of nation states is based on an often simple assumption about what motivates or activates man. Although these underlying assumptions obviously lack many of the complexities and nuances of the full theories, their simple expression assists in evaluating their strengths and weaknesses when applied to explain historical events.

Relative Capabilities. Many analysts attempt to predict war or other outcomes by comparing the relative capabilities of nations. The explicit or implicit theoretical assumptions are that all nations have a continuing drive for dominance, and that they are constrained only by their capabilities. When a nation's capabilities rise above those of other nations, that nation is likely to become more aggressive. Changes in the relative capabilities of nations are therefore predictive of war or at least of serious conflict.

The relative-capabilities theory is explicitly stated in East's assumption that "nations with high capacity to act will tend to use their capacity in foreign policy" and his proposition that "a nation's capacity to act is positively related to the amount of foreign policy activity generated by that nation" (East, 1978: 138). These assumptions also appear to underlie Cline's "politeconomics" (Cline, 1975), Gilpin's rational actor model (Gilpin, 1981), and Modelski's "long cycles" theory (Modelski, 1987).

Although Gilpin introduces "indifference curves" to represent changing objectives of ruling coalitions and political elites, he believes that nations constantly struggle "for power, prestige and wealth" and especially for hegemony over the international system. According to Gilpin, "the most important factor for the process of international political change" is "the differential or uneven growth of power among states," with power defined as "the national military, economic, and technological capabilities of states" (Gilpin, 1981: 13, 15, 18 ff., 93, 230).

Modelski views competition for world leadership ("politicking of the highest order") as the continuing goal of large nations, and believes that a "world power" (the dominant nation) must be strong in four factors: insular position, cohesive society, productive and innovative economy, and a strategic military force (he sees total population as the simplest index of capacity). Although the responsiveness of a nation's leadership to global problems is one key factor in becoming a world power, Modelski also sees relative resource capacity as important and notes that each successive world power has been stronger and wealthier than its predecessor (Modelski, 1987: 10, 220-5, 231-2).

Power Transition. Related to the relative-capabilities theories is Organski and Kugler's power transition theory, which deals with the special case of a growing challenger overtaking the dominant nation in the international system. Growth is measured in terms of national capabilities (initially GNP, and later GNP times Relative Political Capacity). As parity between the two nations is reached, the situation becomes very unstable. In their

1989 iteration, the challenger is likely to attack the dominant nation shortly after the challenger has passed the latter in capabilities. Although in this later version the authors see nations as trying to maximize their net gains, the incidence of war is still basically tied to relative capabilities. See Organski & Kugler, 1980: 5-8, 13, 19-28; Kugler & Organski, 1989: 172-5, 186, 188, 190-1. The benefits derived by the third or lower ranking nations overtaking their next most powerful rival would not appear to justify military action, since the international system would remain the same, but at least one study uses transitions among all major nations, not just the top two.⁵

Status Inconsistency. Another less widely-held theoretical assumption is that nations seek to maximize, or at least to maintain, their status in the international community. When a nation's ascribed status (that accorded it by other nations) is no longer commensurate with the status it has achieved in certain material respects (e.g., GNP, military forces, extent of empire, etc.), the nation becomes frustrated and sometimes attempts to raise its status by aggressive behavior (Galtung, 1964: 96; Wallace, 1973: 21, 100-1; Midlarsky, 1975: 97, 110, 141). Usually referred to as "status inconsistency," this theory uses some of the same indicators for power resources as the relative-capabilities theory, but these are related to an indicator of ascribed status (usually measured by the level of diplomatic recognition) to produce the independent variable. In addition, this theory usually employs a time lag between the status discrepancy and subsequent aggressive behavior. Because of methodological problems, these studies focus more on determining the extent to which status inconsistencies correlate with war in the system as a whole than on measuring their effect on the foreign policies of individual nations.

Lateral Pressure. A more dynamic type of motivation is embedded in the concept of "lateral pressure" advanced by Choucri and North (1975: 16). They postulate that increases in population, technology, and economic production generate an expanding need for national capabilities, such as markets and resources. Since national resources and markets are limited, a growing nation seeks to satisfy these needs in foreign areas. When two or more nations extend their interests outward, the usual outcome is conflict (Choucri & North, 1975: 15-19). The underlying assumption of the lateral pressure theory appears to be that man has a continual desire to produce and acquire wealth (or at least goods and services).

Although the lateral pressure theory is initially explained in terms of simple economic needs or desires, the authors expand the outcomes to cover the "foreign expansion of any activity," including "despatch of troops into foreign territory, establishment of naval or military bases, acquisition of colonial territory, even missionary activities" (Choucri & North, 1975: 16-7). In order to explain these expanded activities (which can also include the "desire for national security, status, prestige, or military advantage" and even "a feeling of responsibility for regional or even world 'law and order'"), the authors add to their basic motivation the additional factors of envy, competition, and, in a later study, the realist relative-capabilities assumptions about nations seeking power and variations in foreign activity being proportional to capabilities (Choucri & North, 1975: 18-23, 28;

⁵ Kim and Morrow (1990) have extended the power transition theory to all transitions between major nations, but they do not spell out the compelling advantages which would accrue to a nation by moving up, for example, from fifth to fourth rank in terms of capabilities, and why merely moving up one rung would necessarily be an occasion for war.

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North & Choucri, 1971: 232; 1989: 290-4, 297). While their studies have many promising aspects, the plethora of possible motivational theories as presently set forth precludes their use in the following comparisons.⁶

Even though the relative-capabilities and status inconsistency studies cited above have somewhat different inputs and outcomes as compared to the present study, an attempt is made in the following historical examples to compare those theories with the parvenu-arrogance theory in understanding past, present, and future events:

1. A fast growing nation challenges a larger, more slowly developing nation: Japan attacks Russia in 1904. Neither Japan's power resources nor its total military strength (at least in numbers) equaled those of Russia, so a rational actor according to the relative-capabilities theory would not have attacked. The status inconsistency theory would view Japan's achieved status as fast increasing, so that by 1904 Japan would probably be suffering from a certain degree of status inconsistency (it would not, however, have had an inconsistency vis-a-vis Russia). The present hypothesis would argue that Japan's faster rate of economic growth toward the end of the century, with the added stimulus from the acquisition of the Ryukyu Islands in 1879 and Formosa in 1895 and from a rapidly increasing population, would cause a surge of assertiveness. Considering that Japan had pursued a policy of territorial expansion in the previous thirty years, that its activity in Korea and Manchuria clearly indicated the direction of its future expansion, and that Russia was the principal obstacle to its expansionist policy in that area, a Japanese move against Russia was only natural. The parvenu-arrogance theory would not necessarily predict a military attack, however—expanding Japanese efforts to exert its influence could just as well (according to the theory) have taken the form of commercial or cultural expansion.

2. The snowball effect of rapid expansion: Germany, whose economy recovered much more rapidly than that of Britain or France during 1932-37 pursued an increasingly expansionist policy in Europe. According to the relative-capabilities theory, since Germany's economic production by 1937 was far less than that of Britain although about equal to that of France, and with only a fledgling military establishment, Germany should not have attempted at that point to expand its influence or start a war. Even the power transition model of Organski and Kugler would not seem to suggest such an assertive policy by Germany so early. The status inconsistency theory would also be hard put to justify German expansion before German capabilities had risen further (although admittedly the ascribed status of Germany is not known for the 1930's). The parvenu-arrogance theory would focus not only on the more rapidly expanding German economy but also on the effects of the reabsorption of the Saar and Rhine to predict a higher rate of assertiveness. In addition, the hypothesis refutes the hopeful logic of Chamberlain's appeasement policy since the Anschluss and Munich agreement only fed the fires of German expansion. One would, of course, have to look to the record and to the stated goals in *Mein Kampf* to understand the direction of German policy.

3. A hegemon with lowered increases in its power resources reduces its overseas

⁶ It should be noted, however, that the study of Japan for the period 1878-1941 is only briefly reported in their 1989 article. The full study was not available at the time this paper was written.

presence: the U.S., although by far the strongest nation in most attributes, with significantly lower rates of increase in power resources after 1965 compared to certain European countries and especially Japan, retrenches its official presence overseas from a 1970 post-war high. Neither the relative-capabilities nor the status inconsistency theory would predict any special policy change based on the above-stated situation, whereas the parvenu-arrogance theory predicts a lowered overseas presence.

4. A country with a rapidly growing economy but various strategic and moral restraints nevertheless manifests growing assertiveness: Japan's rapid economic development since 1950 has been expressed in an expanded governmental presence throughout the world but without aggressive militaristic policies. As Japan's achieved status increased, with a probable lag in ascribed status, the status inconsistency theory would predict a tendency to conflict. The relative-capabilities theory would also predict a more aggressive or conflictive policy as Japan's levels of capabilities rose past those of many other nations. The parvenu-arrogance theory would foresee an expanded overseas presence, which would probably be in the cultural or economic fields since any militaristic tendencies at this time would presumably be curbed by the stigma of its role in World War II, its leader's recognition of their strategic vulnerability in this nuclear age, and its close relationship to the United States.

5. A previously active challenger to the hegemon begins to curtail its presence abroad: following a slow-down in its economy in the late 1970's and 1980's, the USSR begins to reduce its military presence abroad (Afghanistan, Eastern Europe) and attempts to redress its faltering economy. The relative-capabilities theory would not predict any significant change in active influence abroad unless or until Soviet capabilities were actually reduced, not just increasing at a slower rate. As number two, with no particular change in achieved or ascribed ranking, the status inconsistency theory would not point to any significant change. But according to the present hypothesis, the lowered rates of increase compared to other major nations would predict a reduced governmental presence abroad.

6. A nation experiences sudden expansion of territory, population, and GNP: the merger of East and West Germany into a unified German state will significantly and suddenly increase all three indicators of power resources. As Ambassador Max Kampelman said regarding the reunification of Germany, "many in Europe are frightened . . . because of memory. They remember." The present hypothesis provides, in addition to "memory," a theoretical foundation for Europeans' fears. The status inconsistency theory would not predict any particular frustration or war propensity due to reunification, since Germany will remain fourth in terms of GNP and (in relation to the six highest GNP countries) fourth in population and fifth in area. The same would be true of the relative-capacities theory, since the enlarged German state will be better endowed but still nowhere near the next ranking nation. But the parvenu-arrogance theory would add to the historical memory of German aggression a theoretical reason to view the sudden and major rise in power resources as a signal of subsequent assertive policies. In view of Germany's position in NATO and in Europe and the constraints growing out of the Nazi record, one would expect the initial assertive surge to be primarily in the economic and diplomatic areas: more trade and aid missions, more embassies and overseas staff. The obvious target, which is already apparent, would be Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union itself.

Scapegoat Theories. Some studies argue that domestic weakness and turmoil leads to foreign conflict and aggression. In reviewing the literature on these so-called scapegoat or diversionary theories, Levy concludes that the theoretical and historical literature generally supports the thesis but that the quantitative empirical literature has found no consistent relationship (Levy, 1989: 282). Levy attributes the apparent contradiction to faulty research designs and unclear hypotheses (Levy, 1989: 266, 271, 282-3). While leaving open the question of the validity of these theories (especially for lesser developed countries), there is at least a certain ambiguity, if not contradiction, in the arguments of some who espouse the diversionary theories.⁷

IV. Discussion of Variables

Countries Included. The six nations selected for this study are the same six major nations identified by Organski and Kugler (1980: 42-5) as being contenders in the central system, are included among the major competitors over the past 500 years by Gilpin (1981: 134-6, 196-7), and are among the nine "global powers" of the same period cited by Modelski (1987: 9-10).⁸ Although the definitions of major nations vary according to the authors, the common thread is that they all were potential competitors for dominance in the international system. As competitors, they would obviously be concerned about and compare themselves to each other—which is the essential element for inclusion in this study. It should be noted that the nations selected were the top six in terms of GNP in 1988 (CIA, 1989: 30).

Power Resources. Power resources, the independent variable, has many roots in the vast literature on foreign policy and international relations.⁹ The three elements used to measure power resources fall within the broad category of national attributes, especially what East terms the "size factors" of "capacity to act" (East, 1978: 134). They have been used as components of various independent variables in a number of studies (German, 1960: 139; East and Gregg, 1967: 251-2; Sawyer, 1967: 168; Alcock & Newcombe, 1970: 335, 338; Singer et al, 1972: 25-6; Rummel, 1972: 14; Russett, 1974: 266-8; Cline, 1975: 18-20; Choucri & North, 1975: 15-6, 168-9; East, 1978: 134). They have also frequently been employed as major components of composite indexes of national power (see Merritt and Zinnes, 1989: 11-28, for a recent review and assessment of several power indexes).

While the above studies compare national attributes at a certain time and are often based on capacity-to-act theories, other studies (like the one proposed here) use differential growth rates in their independent variables (Singer et al, 1972; Wilkenfeld et al, 1980: 63). Choucri and North highlight the importance of differential growth rates, but with one minor exception; they do not use rates of change in their model (Choucri & North, 1975: 14-25, 164-175). Organski & Kugler (1980) correlate differential growth rates of GNP with war among contending major powers. Gilpin (1981) and Modelski (1987) both highlight differential growth rates as causes of change, but few of their

⁷ See, for example, Lebow, 1981 pp.66, 245-259, regarding the relative importance of concerns over domestic troubles versus the militaristic and war-prone attitudes among leaders of Russia in 1904 and Germany in 1914.

⁸ Organski and Kugler also list as major powers in the central system of Austria-Hungary (for 1820-1918), Italy (for 1870-1970), and China (for 1950-1970). Their particular definitions result in only three of the major nations being "contenders" in the central system at any one time (Organski and Kugler, 1980: 43-5). Data availability problems have dictated the exclusion of Austria-Hungary, China, and Italy from this study.

⁹ The literature on these fields is extensive. Only selected works will be cited here. Ward lists almost 800 studies done in the last 35 years (Ward, 1985: 561-609), while Hermann et al. list about 1,000 (Hermann et al., 1987: 475-524).

concepts are operationalized. No general studies have been found which use changes in total territorial area as an important independent variable.

Supporters of the status inconsistency theory also emphasize differential rates of change (Galtung, 1978: 130-1; Wallace, 1973: 44-5; Midlarsky, 1969: 36-8, 45; 1975: 114-6, 120, 123 ff.). Both Wallace and Midlarsky, however, attempt to evaluate the relative importance of the independent variables only in producing war and for their systems as a whole, rather than attempting a country-by-country comparison of foreign policy behavior.

Granted that "the nature of our theory of international politics determines how we conceptualize power" (Merritt & Zinnes, 1989: 27), the hypothesis and theory of this study require that power resources be expressed as differential rates of change and compared for individual countries rather than calculating the effect on the system as a whole. The result is that higher rates of increase in power resources become a driving force which stimulate feelings of superiority, rather than merely changing a nation's capacity to act.

Assertiveness. Although the dependent variable is designed to measure one quality of behavior, assertiveness is distinct in a) attempting to represent all types of foreign policy behavior and b) not being measured in terms of specific policies or outcomes.

Other authors have sought to measure foreign policy behavior in terms of separate or composite indexes of participation, conflict, and cooperation. East and Gregg (1967, 250) calculate a combined index of international conflict (measured by threats) and cooperation (measured by the number of treaties concluded) to reflect "international action." Lebovic (1985: 55) also uses a combined measure, but he cites other studies which treat them as separate dimensions (e.g., Rosenau and Hoggard, 1974: 120 ff.; see also Wilkenfeld et al, 1980: 121).

Assertiveness is probably most similar to the concept of "lateral pressure" which Choucri and North define as "the process of foreign expansion of any activity" (Choucri & North, 1975: 16). They well capture the spirit of assertiveness, as does Modelski, in describing an "ascending world power" (Modelski, 1987: 37), Organski and Kugler in their depiction of the power transition (Organski & Kugler, 1980: 28), and even Rosenau in his description of a nation with "intransigent adaptation:" the "readiness of a society to alter the environment," characterized by "a substantial outward flow of persons, goods, and ideas" (Rosenau, 1981: 66-69).

Although Choucri and North portray vividly the spirit of assertiveness, their concept of lateral pressure appears to be unidirectional and unfortunately is operationalized by an outcome, colonial territory, which they themselves admit is limited to a certain era (Choucri & North, 1975: 20, 177-9; 1989: 319 ff.). In addition, the differences between the models used for their 1975 and 1989 studies reveal a restructuring of the roles and relationships of their independent and dependent variables as well as a certain fluidity in theory and concepts (Choucri & North, 1989: 317, 322).¹⁰ Choucri and North do mention several other possible indicators for lateral pressure, including troops overseas, military bases abroad, military aid, and technical assistance (Choucri & North, 1975: 20, fn. #4 on p. 167), but these possible indicators are not explored.

In contrast to the foregoing, the concept of assertiveness is intended to represent

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outward pressure in its more abstract sense, not tied to specific policies, programs, or outcomes. Operational indicators were sought which would: 1) apply to all types of policies and programs, 2) be essential elements of all attempts to influence the foreign environment, 3) reflect changing levels of influence attempts, and 4) be measurable, preferably on an interval scale. From an examination of America's assertive policies after World War II, four elements were identified which appear suitable (all to be expressed in terms of percentage changes from previous periods):

- a) governmental presence abroad,
- b) central government policy instructions,
- c) public commentary on foreign affairs by the national government,
- d) expenditures on foreign affairs.

Governmental presence can be considered an important measure of the magnitude of a government's assertiveness, since employees or agents are almost always employed to act on the foreign environment. The obvious indicator is the number of civilian and military government employees and agents operating abroad.

Policy instructions by a national government to its overseas employees and agents reflect the intensity of foreign influence attempts. This aspect could be crudely operationalized by the number of outgoing messages sent to overseas government employees each year.

The government's public output of speeches, press interviews, and other publicly issued materials is designed to inform and gain the support of its own public as well as those of foreign countries. This element could reflect both magnitude and intensity, with magnitude measured by a word or page count of official publications on foreign affairs by government officials, and intensity measured by content analysis.

Expenditures on foreign affairs is the fourth element which can sometimes reflect both magnitude and intensity. Governmental expenditures, however, have a number of disadvantages and limitations. Certain foreign policy actions may not require any change in expenditures, such as when a strong nation coerces another nation to agree to the former's policy using nothing but diplomatic persuasion and perhaps vague threats. Secondly, accurate data on actual expenditures (as opposed to budgetary allotments) may not be available for certain countries. More importantly, it is often difficult to determine whether expenditures are intended strictly for defensive purposes or to influence the foreign environment, and also to differentiate between expenditures for domestic purposes and those for foreign affairs (e.g., the U.S. Government, Treasury, Commerce, NASA, Coast Guard, etc. have both domestic and foreign policy functions). When a nation is engaged in a major war, however, increases in overall government expenditures may better reflect the increased magnitude and intensity of that action than changes in the number of government employees abroad and/or communications transmitted.

Based on the foregoing considerations, the likely availability of data, and the time constraints of this study, magnitude will be measured by governmental presence abroad. Three separate indicators will be used: civilian employees abroad, military personnel abroad, and total naval personnel. Naval personnel were included as an equal element on

the assumption that naval vessels are probably used by the major nation states more for exercising influence overseas than for coastal defense.¹¹ Percentage changes in the number of official messages sent by the government to its overseas employees will be used to measure changing intensity.

V. Research Plan

The general approach will be both historical and statistical. Qualitative evidence that relatively higher rates of increase in power resources inflate the sense of importance felt by members and leaders of a nation and that such a rapid growth in the sense of importance is translated into assertive behavior will be sought in historical materials such as contemporary publications and biographies.

For the statistical approach, percentage increases in power resources and in assertiveness over five-year periods are calculated using the indicators described below. For each country a five-year period of change in power resources is tied to the change in assertiveness for the succeeding five-year period. Each such pairing is treated as a case. Although the five-year period is admittedly arbitrary, there are some precedents (Wallace, 1973; Midlarsky, 1969). Because of the special effects of general war periods, changes in both variables during those times will be calculated on an annual basis (data permitting) and new base figures will be used in the immediate post-war period.

Each of the three operational indicators of power resources (changes in territory, population, and GNP) will initially be given equal weight, so a composite index would be the sum or average of the three percentages. Further examination of the data may suggest a different weighing formula—based on the theory, it may even be that the resource manifesting the greatest change would be the most influential factor in any given time period.

Territory means the area controlled by the nation. Territory acquired (or lost) will be weighted according to its proximity to the controlling nation (see Diehl & Goertz, 1988: 104-5 for one such weighing system). Similarly, areas controlled only as condominiums, protectorates, or certain special cases (such as the Panama Canal Zone) will be considered less significant than areas over which a nation has acquired complete sovereignty. Finally, on the assumption that significant territorial additions will affect the thinking of people beyond a mere five years, a system to reflect this continuing but decreasing influence over two succeeding periods will be explored.

Population generally includes all citizens of the nation, wherever located, on the assumption that citizens support their nation. Indigenous populations in controlled areas may add a certain superficial prestige to a nation's status, but they do not necessarily constitute power resources—they may even be liabilities. Percentage changes in GNP (or GDP where GNP is unavailable) will be calculated based on constant prices. Where GNP or GDP data is not available, a comparable indicator will be sought (for example, total iron and steel production).

As with power resources, changes in the three indicators for assertiveness will be calculated separately for each five-year period. Since each of the three (civilian and military personnel abroad, total naval personnel) are considered of equal importance, the

¹¹ Modelski highlights this point and even asserts that relative naval power by itself may be a good index of nations' aspirations for global standing (Modelski, 1987: 10). Modelski and Thompson's list of "global power warships" might be used as a substitute for naval personnel (1988: 67-72).

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final indicator will be their sum or average. The net changes in outgoing messages for each of the magnitude indicators will be added to the percentage changes in personnel, after deducting the percentage change in personnel for the same period.

The primary sources of data for these variables will be official governmental data. However, where statistics on several countries have been compiled in a comparable manner, as in the volume by Mitchell (1975), that data will be used (with spot-checking against official data). Secondary sources will be used only where necessary (Choucri & North, 1975: 294-301 list a number of suggestions).

The statistical analysis will first be cross-national in order to determine which nations at what periods had significantly higher rates of increase in power resources and whether those resulted in higher increases in national assertiveness. A time series analysis of those nations with higher rates will examine to what extent such results are consistent with other periods. A combined cross-national time series analysis will also be attempted. Where appropriate, the data will be standardized so as to promote comparability over time periods and between countries. Major 25 to 40-year time segments (based on periods before or after major wars) will initially be examined separately, since exogenous factors may change rates of increase over long time periods.

VI. Conclusions

It has been argued that the theory and concepts presented here can contribute to the analysis of foreign policy behavior and international politics.

The concept of assertiveness as defined and operationalized in this study has certain advantages for studies of foreign policy behavior. Being removed from any specific outcome and neutral as regards conflict and cooperation, assertiveness can be used to measure changes in a broad range of foreign policy actions by one nation, and also to compare rates of change of foreign influence efforts by different nations. While not designed to measure relative guilt for initiating wars, assertiveness can help to determine which nations were more active in trying to exert their influence.

Assertiveness is, of course, only another variable to be used in explaining and predicting specific outcomes. As operationalized in this paper, however, assertiveness may provide a more valid, a more practical, and a more economical means of assessing past national efforts to exert influence abroad than event analyses (such as CREON or COPDAB). In addition, the indicators cited may provide the basis for developing an objective standard measure for comparing the assertiveness of nations at any one time.

The historical examples given in the preceding section suggest the advantages of the theory in analyzing both past and future events as compared to at least two other basic theories.

In contrast to relative-capabilities theories, the parvenu-arrogance theory expects nations with relatively high growth rates to manifest increased assertive behavior long before their power resources match or exceed those of other nations. In addition, any major nation in the international system may be expected to become less assertive (either relatively or absolutely) if its rate of growth becomes lower than others, even though it maintains its relative rank in terms of resources. This applies to the dominant nation as well as those of lower rank. This would not be predicted by relative-capabilities theories.

In comparison to status inconsistency studies, the parvenu-arrogance theory predicts continued growth in assertive behavior by a nation (assuming continued high relative growth of power resources) even after achieving its proper ascribed status. In addition, if the growth rates of the top ranking nation fall below those of other nations, its rate of

increase in assertiveness would be expected to decline (or even become negative) even though its position as number one was not in doubt. As for rising contenders, since the relative rate of change in power resources is the key factor, significantly increased assertiveness would be expected even before a nation reached an objective change in its achieved status (e.g., the second ranking nation catching up on but not close to number one). It would also predict lowered assertiveness for such nations if their relative rate of power increase declined.

It should be noted that the parvenu-arrogance theory, as operationalized, embodies a potential snowball effect. If higher growth rates of resources lead to greater assertiveness, and if that assertiveness manifests itself in territorial acquisitions, the added territory could fuel new assertiveness (because territory is one of the components of power resources). It should be remembered, however, that assertiveness does not necessarily lead to acquiring new territory, nor even to militarily aggressive behavior.

Finally, the theory presented here adds a framework and near-term practical importance to the current debate about whether or not the United States is a declining hegemon (see Kennedy, 1987, 1990; Kugler & Organski, 1989A). It should also prove helpful in forecasting changes in the assertiveness of other nations, such as the Soviet Union (probably decreasing) and a reunified Germany (probably increasing).

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