

assumes that adversarial leaders perceive themselves accordingly. Case studies reveal little support for either proposition. Challenger and defender often have quite arbitrary meanings and role perceptions are frequently symmetrical and contested. Self-definitions of role are not only at variance with the theory but may have critical import for behaviour and the outcomes of deterrence encounters. If so, deterrence theory is an inadequate and misleading conceptualization of conflict. It encourages students of international affairs to frame adversarial relationships in terms of roles that are at variance with the self-perceptions of the principal actors. The defining concept of a deterrence encounter may itself be inappropriate given the difficulty of distinguishing deterrer from challenger once a conflict is put in context.

Finally, our analysis of existing studies of deterrence raises important questions about the methods appropriate to its study. Generally speaking, analysts have relied on two methods: detailed comparative analysis of a number of "critical" cases to assess the impact of both structural and process variables; and analysis by aggregating data across a large number of cases to permit the quantitative testing of causal models which incorporate the principal structural explanations. Although these methods are often treated as mutually exclusive, they are more appropriately conceived of as complementary. Each method has different data requirements and permits different kinds of inference.

We believe that the choice of method must be dictated by the nature of the data. The first essential step in the testing of deterrence theory is accordingly the construction of a collection of cases of immediate deterrence success and failure. This kind of collection can be built only through collaboration among historians, area experts, and analysts of deterrence. Once a valid data set is assembled, proponents and critics of deterrence can begin to test their respective hypotheses by their preferred methods with results that will be more meaningful to each other and more in accord with the canons of scientific inquiry.