This thesis puts forth a theory of how interstate wars are fought and how certain outcomes and their determinants occur. It begins with an overview of military theory and military science, followed by an overview of the relevant literature in political science.

The Informal Theory of Interstate Warfare is put forth, along with its implications for how interstate wars are fought and won, lost, or fought to a draw. The theory and its several hypotheses are then tested qualitatively in two case studies, that of the Russo-Japanese War, and World War II. The theory and its hypotheses are further tested quantitatively using a data set that contains strategic level, operational level, doctrinal, economic, population, and political variables with an emphasis on ground, naval, and air warfare in order to determine how and why certain war outcomes occur and the determinants of those war outcomes.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis finds strong support for the overall Theory of Interstate Warfare and the several hypotheses it tests. The thesis finds that offensive initiative at the strategic and operational level of war is an important indicator of victory, along with several other military related variables that help determine victory in war. Further, direct and indirect attacks upon an enemy state economy and population also increase a state's chances of victory. The thesis concludes that the overall validity of the Informal Theory is there, and its complementary nature in strengthening the Bargaining Model of War and the determinants of war outcomes areas of study.