

"From Coup To Conflict:
The Onset And Escalation
Of Regime Claims In The
Western Hemisphere, 1816-1992"



John A. Tures
Department of Political Science
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

ABSTRACT

In this study, I analyze the motivations behind a state's decision to call for the removal of another state's government. The purpose of this analysis is to construct a model explaining state behavior concerning the initiation and escalation of regime claims in the Americas. I find that states are motivated by two factors: (1) threats to an otherwise acceptable status quo, and (2) the opportunity to improve an unacceptable set of bilateral relations. Such elements are not only likely to produce the initiation of the verbal challenges to another state's government, but have the propensity to lead countries to use military force in support of these regime claims.

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INTRODUCTION

Q: What Are Regime Claims?

A: Regime Claims Are Verbal Challenges By One State Calling For Another State's Government To Step Down

Q: What Are Some Examples Of Regime Claims?

A: These Conflicts In The Americas Represent Several Examples Of Regime Claims:

- Argentina vs. Brazil (Uruguay) 1825-28
- Ecuador vs. Colombia, 1861-63
- France vs. Mexico, 1861-67
- War of the Triple Alliance (Paraguay vs. Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) 1863-70
- Guatemala vs. El Salvador, 1876 & 1885
- Venezuela vs. Colombia, 1899-1903
- USA vs. Nicaragua (over Honduras) 1907-08, 1909-11
- Bay of Pigs (USA vs. Cuba) 1961
- USA vs. Dominican Republic, 1965
- Contra Wars (USA & Honduras vs. Nicaragua) 1981-89
- USA vs. Grenada, 1983
- USA vs. Panama, 1988-89

Q: Why Is The Study of Regime Claims Important?

A: There Are Several Reasons I Have Chosen To Analyze Regime Claims:

- 1) Several Regime Claims Have Led To Militarized Disputes Or Wars.
- 2) Improve Upon Previous Coverage Of The Regime-Based Issues.

Other Studies And Datasets Focus Only On Wars Or Militarized Disputes Over Who Should Rule A Country.

Because These Studies Only Include Cases Of Armed Action, They Have Difficulty In Predicting Conflict.

I Focus Upon Both Explanations Of Verbal "Pre-Conflict" Or Nonmilitarized Interstate Issues And How These Escalate To More Serious Forms Of Conflict.

- 3) Explain An Important Conflict Subject Through Constructing A Model Of State Behavior And Motives

ISSUE CORRELATES OF WAR
(ICOW) PROJECT

Q: What Is The Issue Correlates Of War (ICOW) Project?

A: Developed By Paul Hensel (1998), The ICOW Project Collects All Interstate Verbal Contentions Over A Variety Of Issues (Territory, Policy, Maritime). This Study Represents A Contribution To The ICOW Project By Analyzing All Regime Issues.

Q: How Does The Issue Correlates Of War (ICOW) Project Offer An Improvement To The Study Of Interstate Issues?

A: Previous Studies Of Interstate Issues Have Included A Militarized Component, Making It Difficult To Predict Conflict With Conflict. Such Analyses Make It Difficult To Avoid Selecting Upon The Dependent Variable.

Morgan (1990) Recommends Seeking Not Only Explanations Of War, But Looking For Cases Where War Is Not Present. We Should Look For Near Wars, Then Explain Why War Did Not Occur.

CONCEPT OF REGIME CLAIMS

Q: How Are Regime Claims Conceptually Defined?

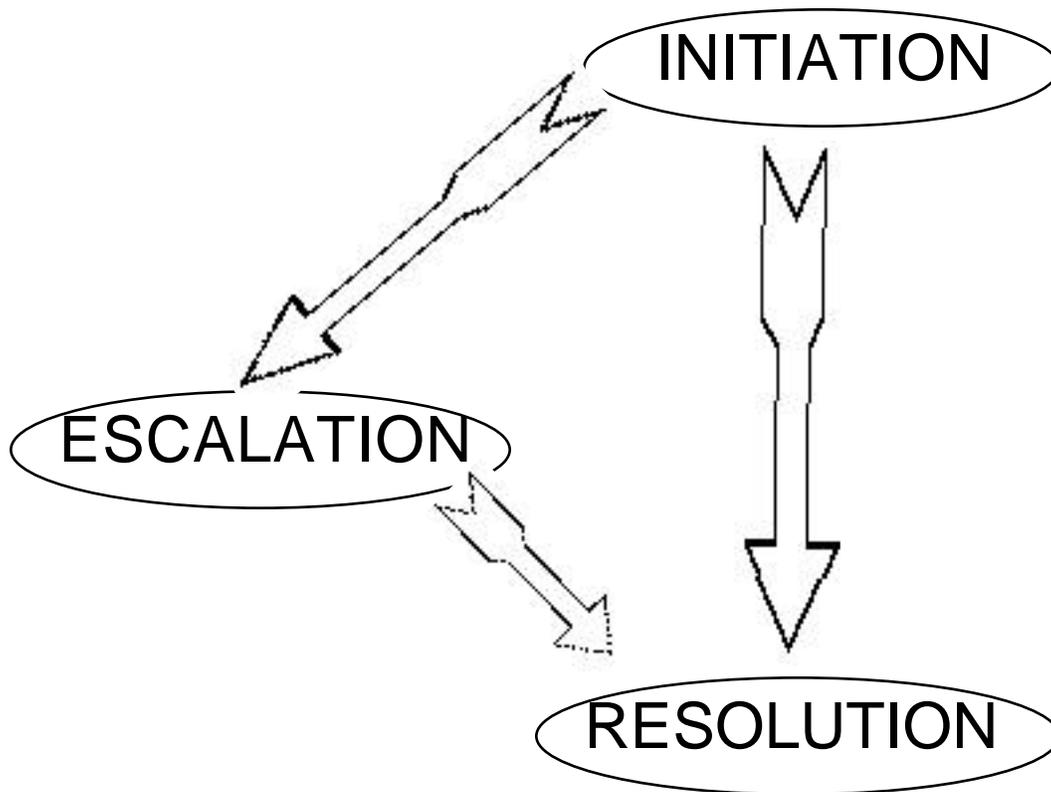
A: Regime Claims Represent Explicit Contention By One State Calling For The Removal Of Another State's Regime. The Challenger Government Feels The Target State's Regime Should Not Hold Power Any Longer; It Must Be Removed.

Q: What Are The Elements of A Regime Claim?

A: Regime Claims Involve Several Key Components:

- Verbal Challenge Issued By One State Against The Regime Of Another State
- Challenge Is Overt (Non-Publicized Threats Are Not Included)
- Verbal Challenge May Be Backed By Armed Force, But Militarization Is Not Required (Covert Operations Are Not Included, Without A Public Claim Against Another State)

STAGES OF REGIME CLAIMS



Q: What Are The Stages Of A Regime Claim? Which Are Analyzed In This Study?

A: - A Regime Claim Has Several Stages. In The Initiation Stage, The Challenger State Issues A Verbal Statement Calling For The Targetted Government To Step Down.

- Some Regime Claims May Move Shift To The Escalation Stage, Where The Challenger State Opts To Back The Verbal Contention With Military Force.
- All Regime Claims Reach A Resolution Stage, Where Several Outcomes Are Possible. The Challenger May Successfully Oust The Target State's Regime, Withdraw Its Claim, Allow It To Lapse, Or Reach A Negotiated Settlement With The Targetted Regime.
- In This Study, I Focus Only On The Initiation And Escalation Stage. I Will Reserve Analysis Of The Resolution Stage For A Future Study.¹

¹In Constructing The Theoretical Model, I Focus Upon The Behavior Of The Challenger State And Its Motives For Initiating A Regime Claim. The Behavior Of A Target State's Regime Is Not Unimportant, And Its Actions May Influence The Challenger State Behavior. These Are Reflected In The Assumptions And Hypotheses. But It Is The Challenger's Decision To Initiate And Escalate The Regime Claim.

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM INITIATION: ASSUMPTIONS

Q: Why Do States Care About Other States?

- A:
- 1) A Status Quo Exists Between States
 - 2) The Status Quo Has Value For States
 - 3) Status Quo Among "Relevant" Dyads Characterized As Satisfied Or Dissatisfied
 - 4) States Seek Status Quo Satisfaction With Other States (Relevant Dyads)

Q: Why Do States Care About The Regime Of Other States?

- A:
- 1) States Are Dominant Actors (Inside A Country)
 - 2) A State's Chief Executive Is The Primary Policymaker
 - 3) States Hold Chief Executives Of Other States Responsible For The Maintenance Of Status Quo Satisfaction

Q: Why Do States Care About Coups In Other States?

- A:
- 1) Leaders Implement Their Policies With Relative Consistency
 - 2) Regular Changes in Leadership Produce Relative Policy Continuity
 - 3) An Irregular Leadership Change (Coup) Has The Capacity To Alter The Existing Status Quo
 - 4) In The Wake Of An Irregular Leadership Change, A State Will Remain Satisfied With The Status Quo Or Will Perceive The Situation As Deteriorating
 - 5) In The Wake Of An Irregular Leadership Change, A State Will Remain Dissatisfied With The Status Quo Or Will Perceive The Situation As Improving

Q: Why Do States Use Regime Claims Against Coup Leaders Instead Of Targeting Other Leader Types?

- A:
- 1) States Are Punished For Failed Regime Claims
 - 2) Rulers Which Come To Power Via An Irregular Leadership Change Are More Vulnerable Than Established Rulers Or New Rulers Who Use Accepted Institutions To Achieve Power
 - 3) States Which Are Satisfied With The Status Quo Lack Incentives To Target Leaders Who They Perceive As Likely To Maintain The Status Quo

Q: Among States With Incentives To Initiate A Regime Claim, What Leads States To Use A Regime Claim Against Another State?

- A:
- 1) Regime Claims Are Not Costless Actions
 - 2) States With Incentives To Initiate A Regime Claim Calculate The Costs And Benefits Associated With Making A Regime Claim And Choose Their Actions On An Expected Utility Basis

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM INITIATION: THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

- 1) If States Are Satisfied With A Dyadic Status Quo And A Coup Occurs In The Other State, The Greater The Potential Of Threat To The Status Quo And The More Likely The State Will Initiate A Regime Claim Against The Coup Leader
- 2) If One State Is Dissatisfied With A Dyadic Status Quo And A Coup Occurs In The Other State, The Challenging State Is More Likely To Initiate A Regime Claim Against The Coup Leader If It Perceives The Leadership Change Will Not Alter The Status Quo

Table One

STAGES IN REGIME CLAIM BETWEEN CHALLENGER AND TARGET

STAGE ONE: REGIME CLAIM INITIATION DECISION TREE

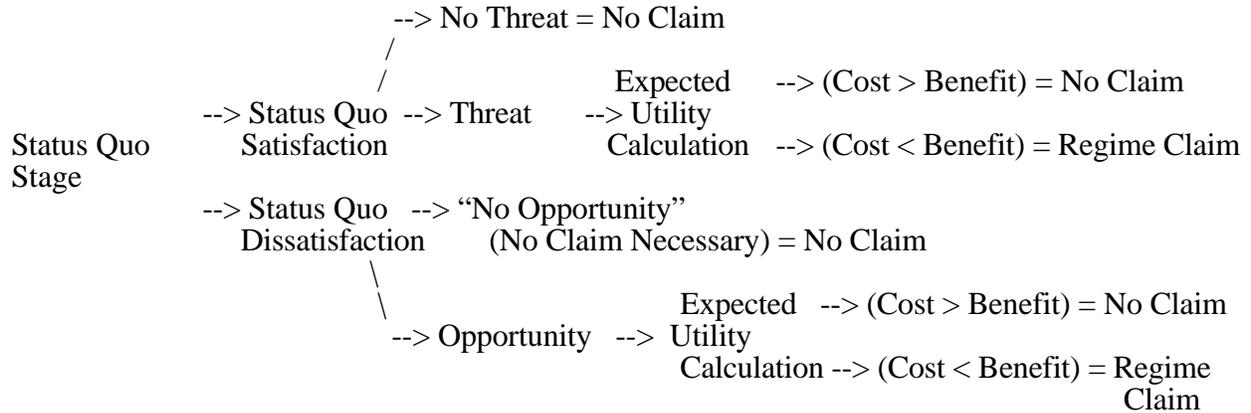


Table Two

EXPECTED UTILITY MODEL: INITIATION STAGE

$$EU(C) = [P(X|C) * U_x] - [(1 - P(X|C)) * U_x']$$

$$EU(\sim C) = [P(X|\sim C) * U_x] - [(1 - P(X|\sim C)) * U_x']$$

C = Regime Claim

$\sim C$ = No Regime Claim

U_x = Utility Associated With Provision Of Goods From Existing Status Quo

U_x' = Utility Associated With Nonprovision Of Goods From Existing Status Quo

$P(X|C)$ = Subjectively Defined Conditional Probabilities Decisionmaker Associates With Good Provided Given "C" Occurs

$P(X|\sim C)$ = Subjectively Defined Conditional Probabilities Decisionmaker Associates With Good Provided Given " $\sim C$ " Occurs

Adopt C if $EU(C) > EU(\sim C)$; Adopt $\sim C$ if $EU(C) < EU(\sim C)$

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM INITIATION:
HYPOTHESES

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Utility For The Status Quo?
What Leads A State To Perceive That A Coup Represents A Threat To
A Satisfactory Status Quo?

- A:
- 1) If States Are Economically Interdependent
 - 2) If States Share A Security Alliance
 - 3) If Both States Share The Same Regime Type
 - 4) If Both States Have Long-Term Regimes

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Utility For The Status Quo?
What Leads A State To Perceive That A Coup Represents An
Opportunity To Revise An Unsatisfactory Status Quo?

- A:
- 1) If Both States Have An Ongoing Territorial Claim
 - 2) If Both States Have An Unresolved Issue From A Previous
Military Dispute
 - 3) If Both States Shared A Colonial Bond

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Utility For The Status Quo?
What Leads A State To Perceive That A Coup Does Not Represent An
Opportunity To Revise An Unsatisfactory Status Quo?

- A:
- 1) If Challenger Backs The Coup
 - 2) If Coup Leaders Offer Internal Benefits
 - 3) If Coup Leaders Offer External Benefits

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Perception That It Can
Achieve A Favorable Outcome?

- A:
- 1) If The Challenger Has More Power Than The Targetted State
 - 2) If The Challenger "Coalition" Is Stronger Than The Targetted State
 - 3) If The Targetted State Suffers From Economic Or Political
Instability
 - 4) If The Targetted State Does Not Have An Alliance With A Major
Power
 - 5) If The Challenger Is Not Currently Fighting A Militarized Dispute
With Another State
 - 6) If The Ousted Leader Of The Targetted State Has Not Been Killed
In The Coup

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM ESCALATION: ASSUMPTIONS

Q: What Leads States Who Have Initiated Regime Claims To Use Militarized Force?

- A:
- 1) Decisions To Escalate A Regime Claim Are Made By A Single Unitary Actor, The Head Foreign Policymaker Of The Challenger State.
 - 2) Regime Claim Initiators Have Two Basic Strategies: Military And Nonmilitary.
 - 3) Regime Claim Initiators Choose Their Strategy Based Upon Expected Utility Calculations.
 - 4) The Costs Of Military Defeat Are Higher Than The Costs Of Making An Unsuccessful Regime Claim.
 - 5) There Are Two Kinds Of Regime Claim Outcomes: Those Where The Coup Leadership Are Removed And Those Where The Coup Leadership Remains In Power.
 - 6) Leaders Which Come To Power In A Targeted State As A Result Of A Regime Claim Are More Likely To Implement The Policies Of The Challenger State.
 - 7) Coup Leaders Who Remain In Power In A Targeted State After The Conclusion Of A Regime Claim Are Less Likely To Implement The Policies Of A Regime Claim Initiator.

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM ESCALATION:
THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

- 1) Factors Which Reduce The Costs Of Using Military Force Are More Likely To Lead To Regime Claim Escalation
- 2) Factors Which Increase The Benefit Of Using Military Force Are More Likely To Lead To Regime Claim Escalation

Table 3

STAGE TWO: REGIME CLAIM ESCALATION DECISION TREE

Regime	Expected	--> (Cost > Benefit) = No Militarized Interstate Dispute
Claim	--> Utility Calculation	--> (Cost < Benefit) = Militarized Interstate Dispute

Table 4

EXPECTED UTILITY MODEL: ESCALATION

$$EU(D) = [P(X|D) * U_x] - [(1 - P(X|D)) * U_{x'}]$$
$$EU(\sim D) = [P(X|\sim D) * U_x] - [(1 - P(X|\sim D)) * U_{x'}]$$

D = Militarized Dispute

$\sim D$ = No Militarized Dispute

U_x = Utility Associated With Provision Of Goods From Existing Status Quo

$U_{x'}$ = Utility Associated With Nonprovision Of Goods From Existing Status Quo

$P(X|D)$ = Subjectively Defined Conditional Probabilities Decisionmaker Associates With Good Provided Given "D" Occurs

$P(X|\sim D)$ = Subjectively Defined Conditional Probabilities Decisionmaker Associates With Good Provided Given " $\sim D$ " Occurs

Adopt D if $EU(D) > EU(\sim D)$; Adopt $\sim D$ if $EU(D) < EU(\sim D)$

THEORETICAL MODEL OF
REGIME CLAIM ESCALATION: HYPOTHESES

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Utility For The Status Quo?
What Leads A State (Which Has Already Initiated A Regime Claim)
To Perceive That A Coup Represents A Threat To A Satisfactory
Status Quo?

- A:
- 1) If Both States Are Members Of An Economic Alliance Or Organization
 - 2) If Both States Are Members Of An Alliance Allowing The Challenger State To Station Troops In The Target State
 - 3) If Both States Share The Same Regime Type And Are Long-Term Regimes
 - 4) If The Challenger State's Post-Colonial Puppet Regime Has Been Ousted In The Target State

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's Utility For The Status Quo?
What Leads A State (Which Has Already Initiated A Regime Claim)
To Perceive That A Coup Represents An Opportunity To Revise An
Unsatisfactory Status Quo?

- A:
- 1) If Both States Have An Ongoing Territorial Claim Over Land Containing Valuable Resources
 - 2) If Both States Have An Issue Unresolved From A Previous War

Q: What Factors Are Associated With A State's (Which Has Already Initiated A Regime Claim) Perception That It Can Achieve A Favorable Outcome?

- A:
- 1) If The Challenger State Holds A 3:1 (Or Greater) Power Ratio
 - 2) If The Challenger State Joins A Regime Claim Backed By A Major Power
 - 3) If The Target State Faces A Civil War Or Severe Economic Recession
 - 4) If The Challenger State Is Not Currently Fighting A War With Another State

CONCLUSION

Q: What Are The Future Goals Of The Study Of Regime Claims?

- A:**
- 1) Conduct Empirical Tests Of All The Hypotheses Of Regime Claim Initiation And Escalation**
 - 2) Construct A Theoretical Model Of State Behavior Concerning The Resolution Of Regime Claims**
 - 3) Expand The Analysis Of Regime Claims Beyond The Americas To Include Other Regions.**

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