

**Starting on the Wrong Foot:
Political Independence and Territorial Claims**

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Abstract: Several studies suggest that militarized conflict is more likely in the first decade after a state achieves independence, particularly when independence is gained through "revolutionary" (violent) processes. The prevailing explanation involves the disruption to the local or regional status quo that is posed by the new state. This study argues that identifying a relevant type of disruption -- territorial claims -- can improve our understanding of the linkage between independence and conflict. Where borders are challenged by either the new state or its neighbors, conflict should be much more likely than where the new state's borders are accepted, whether independence occurred through a revolutionary or evolutionary process. Preliminary analysis suggests that -- at least subject to several potential data limitations -- recent independence has not had a generally conflictual effect overall, but territorial claims are closely associated with conflict, especially when these claims begin soon after independence.

Some of the most war-prone countries in the modern world seem to have been fighting from the very beginning of their independence. For example, Israel was invaded by its Arab neighbors on the very day that it achieved independence in 1948, and India and Pakistan began fighting over Kashmir soon after they both achieved independence in 1947. In each of these cases, national independence was accompanied by territorial claims involving at least one neighboring state, which quickly led to full-scale war and spawned a cycle of violence that has lasted over a half century. Yet many other countries are able to avoid militarized conflict at independence, and experience peace for many years.

Despite the serious nature of the Arab-Israeli and Indian-Pakistani rivalries, little systematic scholarly attention has examined the connection between national independence and armed conflict. The few studies to have addressed this topic have focused theoretically on the idea that the emergence of newly independent states can upset the local or regional status quo, creating the potential for conflict and instability. These studies have found that violence is more likely within a decade of independence that is achieved through violence, although less likely in the first decade after peaceful independence, and that nearly half of all enduring rivalries -- like the Arab-Israeli and Indian-Pakistani examples -- began within ten years of independence.

This study seeks to understand the impact of independence on both short-term and long-term conflict potential by focusing on territorial claims. Regardless of the specific process that generated independence, new states that are involved in territorial claims are argued to be more likely to become involved in armed conflict in the short term. Over the longer term, territorial claims that begin shortly after the independence of one or both states

are argued to be more violent than those that do not. Empirical analyses suggest that the presence of an ongoing territorial claim greatly increases the risk of conflict both for newly independent states and for more established states, regardless of how independence was achieved. Outside of territorial claims, there is little evidence of a systematic impact of recent independence on conflict -- although this is attributable at least in part to data limitations that must be overcome in future research.

Theoretical Development

Numerous observers have noted that armed conflict seems to be associated with the independence of new states. For example, Gochman and Maoz (1984) find that the greatest number of militarized disputes has occurred during what they term the nuclear era (1946-1976), and that the disputes during this era were concentrated in the newly independent regions of Asia and the Middle East. Diehl and Goertz (1988) find that territorial changes appear to cluster around times when large numbers of new states become independent, such as the years after World War I (when the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires were broken up) and the early 1960s (when decolonization reached its peak). Tillema (1989) also finds that "new states" (those that became independent after 1945) account for 32 percent of all foreign over military interventions between 1945-1965, and 51 percent between 1965-1985. Each of these observations is primarily descriptive in nature, though, and few scholars have explicitly sought to understand the apparent connection between independence and conflict.

This section of the paper begins by reviewing the few studies that have explicitly focused on recent independence as an explanation for conflict behavior. Separate discussions address both research on short-term conflict propensities, which attempts to explain the likelihood of conflict in a given year regardless of the amount of past or future conflict, and research on longer-term propensities, which attempts to explain the origins of long-term conflictual relationships rather than just isolated episodes. I then present new hypotheses on independence and conflict, which emphasize the role of territorial claims as an explanation for both short-term and longer-term conflict behavior.

Short-Term Conflict Propensities

The first scholar to examine independence and conflict directly was Maoz (1989, 1996), who proposed a political development model (later renamed the "international consequences of state formation" or ICSF model) that emphasizes the processes by which states are formed as an explanation for their conflict behavior. Maoz distinguishes between "evolutionary" states that gradually assume greater degrees of self-government over time and

"revolutionary" states that arise through intense, violent struggle. Evolutionary state formation processes are expected to be largely peaceful, as the new states have time to adapt into the existing international structures and can focus on internal political development, while their neighbors can develop stable expectations about the new states as the transition to independence proceeds gradually and peacefully. Revolutionary processes, on the other hand, should be much more conflictual, as the rapid change and violence that characterize such processes create insecurity and suspicion between the new state and its neighbors.

Maoz' (1989, 1996) empirical analyses offer strong support for his hypotheses. Looking at the conflict propensity of individual states, revolutionary states (defined as those that achieve independence through some degree of political violence) are significantly more conflictual than either older states, and evolutionary states (which achieve independence peacefully) are significantly less conflictual. The statistical significance of this difference disappears after approximately nine years of independence in one study (Maoz 1989), though, and a followup study only compares conflict behavior in the first four years after independence (Maoz 1996). Maoz (1996) finds similar results at the dyadic level of analysis, with less conflict in dyads that include at least one new evolutionary state than in those with two old states, and significantly more conflict in dyads with one or (especially) two new revolutionary states.

Long-Term Conflict Propensities

Several other scholars have investigated the impact of independence on longer-term cycles of repeated conflict known as interstate rivalries. Goertz and Diehl (1995, 2000) argue that an enduring rivalry is most likely to begin soon after a political shock, which they define (Goertz and Diehl 1995: 31) as "a dramatic change in the international system or its subsystems that fundamentally alters the processes, relationships, and expectations that drive nation-state interactions." They consider numerous shocks at the state, regional, and systemic levels, but political independence is particularly relevant here. Similar to Maoz, they suggest (1995: 37) that the independence of a new state increases interaction opportunities for states in a system or region; disrupts neighboring states' previous pattern of relations with the colony or other entity that has just become independent; creates uncertainty by changing the balance of relative power in the immediate area; and may lead to conflict either as the new state pursues legitimacy or status through conflict, or as its neighbors oppose its independence and seek to return to the status quo ante. For all of these reasons, Goertz and Diehl suggest, rivalries are more likely to develop between adversaries when one of them is newly independent. Unlike Maoz, though, Goertz and Diehl make no distinction based on the process by which independence was obtained; all new states are implicitly

treated as equally likely to become involved in long-term rivalries.

Goertz and Diehl's (1995, 2000) evidence is consistent with their expectations. Over 38% of the enduring rivalries in their study (over 45% in the earlier study) began within ten years of a political independence shock, which is over four times more likely than in equivalent years with no such shock; similar results also hold for proto-rivalries as well as enduring rivalries.¹ Similarly, Wayman (2000: 230-231) notes that over one-third of enduring rivalries (using a different data set) were essentially "born feuding," beginning soon after independence. Long cycles of repeated conflict, then, appear to be unusually likely soon after the independence of a new state.

Stinnett and Diehl (2001) have extended Goertz and Diehl's analysis by analyzing individual conflictual dyads that experienced at least one militarized dispute, in order to identify factors that make these dyads most likely to evolve into proto-rivalries or full enduring rivalries. When the first dispute occurred within ten years of the independence of at least one state in the dyad, the dyad is significantly more likely to reach both proto-rivalry (with a predicted probability increasing from .194 to .248) and enduring rivalry (increasing from .032 to .052). Tir and Diehl (2002) find similar results for the impact of recent independence on rivalry development.² These studies do not distinguish between different processes leading to independence, but they are at least partly consistent with Maoz' arguments about the greatest danger lying soon after independence -- although they suggest a much longer-term effect for conflicts begun during this time than Maoz, who found that the difference in conflict propensities largely dissipated within nine years.

Hypotheses

The prevailing theoretical explanation in these existing studies involves the potential disruption to the local or regional status quo that is posed by the emergence of a new state. For example, Maoz (1989: 204) notes that both the government of a new revolutionary state and its neighbors are likely to see each other as threats, which creates uncertainty and might lead either to make threats or take violent action. In contrast, new evolutionary states have "gradually become adapted into existing international structures and have few ambitions for changing those structures by violently attempting to redefine their external environment." To the extent that violent independence processes almost always generate threats to the

¹ Similar patterns are also found for other types of shocks, such as world wars or periods of major territorial change at the systemic level as well as civil wars, regime change, or democratization at the state level.

² Recent independence has little impact on the number of militarized disputes in the first twenty years of rivalry (Stinnett and Diehl 2001) or on average rivalry severity (Tir and Diehl 2002). The most important effect of independence seems to lie in pushing adversaries into the broad categories of proto- and enduring rivalry, while other factors may account for more of the variation in conflict behavior within these broad categories.

international status quo and peaceful independence processes almost never do, we should expect that revolutionary states should be much more conflictual than evolutionary states, as Maoz suggests -- but it would seem preferable to study specific types of threats rather than to assume their existence. If some new revolutionary states neither make nor receive certain threats to the status quo while some new evolutionary states do, then we could improve our understanding of independence and conflict by identifying and studying these threats.

I explore a particular type of threat, challenges to the territorial status quo, as a primary explanation for conflict involving new states. A variety of literature (e.g., Vasquez 1993; Hensel 1996, 2000) suggests that territorial issues are perhaps the most contentious and war-prone issues in modern world politics. As a result, new states that make demands on their neighbors' territory or that are the target of territorial demands by their neighbors should be especially conflict-prone, regardless of the process that led to their independence. A state could emerge from a protracted rebellion against colonial rule yet recognize the international borders that were established during the colonial era, while another state could emerge from peaceful negotiations with the former colonizer yet be subjected to territorial claims by a neighbor that never accepted the colonizer's rule over the territory in question (Guatemala's claim to Belize and Iraq's claim to Kuwait come to mind). While such cases are possible, and they should differ significantly from revolutionary states that are involved in territorial claims or evolutionary states that are not, Maoz' general argument offers a reasonable expectation for the probability of territorial claims after independence. States that achieve independence through abrupt or violent processes should be more likely to generate greater threats to the territorial status quo than states that achieve independence through more gradual or peaceful processes.³ This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *States that achieve independence through violent (revolutionary) processes are more likely to become involved in territorial claims soon after independence than states that achieve independence through peaceful (evolutionary) processes.*

Turning to the primary dependent variable of interest, militarized conflict, territorial claims appear likely to have a major impact that could reverse some of the findings of earlier research. When such an important issue as territory is under contention, then conflict should be quite likely regardless of the process that led to independence. When an evolutionary state claims territory from a neighbor, or is the subject of such a claim, then the supposed pacifying effects of its peaceful entry into the interstate system should largely disappear.

³ Vasquez (1993: 143) similarly suggests that "evolutionary states can be expected to pose less of a threat to existing understandings about boundaries; whereas revolutionary states may not accept old boundaries."

Similarly, when a revolutionary state manages to avoid contention over territory with any of its neighbors, the supposed conflictual effects of its violent independence should largely disappear.

Focusing on territorial claims also offers an alternative expectation about when conflict can be expected to decrease in the most war-prone settings. Past studies of independence have suggested that the impact of recent independence declines over time, as with Maoz' (1989: 205) suggestion that "After an initial period of adjustment, both new revolutionary and new evolutionary states regress to the mean level of conflict involvement of older states... As new states grow older, they tend to behave like older states irrespective of how they entered the system." Similarly, Goertz and Diehl (1995: 43-44) argue that the impact of independence (or other political shocks) on rivalry should be greatest soon after the shock occurs and should decline over time after that. Maoz' (1989) analyses reveal that the empirical impact of independence seems to fade and become statistically indistinguishable after nine years; Goertz and Diehl (1995) similarly find that the impact of shocks on rivalry is much greater for the first ten years after the shock than for the next ten or subsequent years. Rather than searching for a threshold of time after which differences between groups become indistinguishable, though, the territorial approach suggests that a state -- however and whenever it achieved independence -- will only be likely to attain generally peaceful existence once its territorial claims are resolved.⁴ This approach is similar to an argument by Vasquez (1993: 141-151) that the initial location of borders frequently arises through the threat or use of force -- but once a border is determined to both sides' satisfaction, it is unlikely to lead them to future conflict, and they can generally coexist peacefully.

This discussion suggests the following hypotheses, which use contention over territory to offer an important twist on Maoz' original arguments about the impact of independence processes:

Hypothesis 2: *Militarized conflict is much more likely when a state is involved in at least one territorial claim, regardless of the type of process that led to independence or the length of time since independence.*

Hypothesis 2a: *Militarized conflict in the absence of territorial claims is most likely soon*

⁴ This should not be interpreted as claiming that states only fight over territory, or that states with no territorial claims against each other will ever engage in militarized conflict; Hensel (2000) notes that between one-third and one-fourth of militarized disputes in the modern era have involved territorial issues. Rather, these issues are argued to be the most fundamentally conflictual issues between states, so states with unresolved territorial issues should be more conflict-prone (in general) than states that have settled all of their territorial issues. States without territorial issues (or, indeed, states with territorial issues) can fight over other issues, but they are considered less likely to do so in any given time period than if they had territorial issues.

after independence through revolutionary processes and least likely soon after independence through evolutionary processes, although these differences should weaken over time.

Just as Goertz and Diehl's work on rivalries extended Maoz' work on independence to longer-term forms of conflict, it is worth considering longer-term effects of independence with respect to territorial claims, by studying the amount of militarized conflict that occurs over each territorial claim. This is similar to the studies of interstate rivalry discussed above, which began with all conflictual relationships and studied which ones went on to become proto- and enduring rivalries, except that it also allows us to study the additional step of involvement in the first militarized dispute. Goertz and Diehl (1995: 43) note that a full test of the impact of shocks would require studying dyads that have not experienced conflict as well as those that have. Because not all territorial claims experience conflict -- Hensel (2001) notes that just under half of all claims in the Western Hemisphere have produced at least one militarized dispute -- studying the militarization of territorial claims allows us to provide a fuller test of the impact of independence on armed conflict that has been possible with past work on political shocks.

Bearing this difference in mind, it seems plausible that territorial claims begun soon after independence should be more conflictual than claims began later in an interstate relationship. As Stinnett and Diehl (2001: 725-726) note, independence produces a dramatic change in the international environment. This change may result in greater uncertainty for both the new state and its neighbors, and may increase incentives for either to pursue an aggressive foreign policy and perhaps initiate armed conflict. Although Stinnett and Diehl do not make an explicit theoretical connection between uncertainty, incentives for conflict, and long-term series of confrontations, at the very least the initial outbreak of conflict increases the risk of recurrent conflict and evolution toward rivalry. Hensel (1996, 1999), for example, finds that conflict over territorial issues -- the type of issue being discussed here -- is much more likely to be followed by future conflict between the same adversaries, moving them further down the path to enduring rivalry. Similarly, Tir and Diehl (2002) find that militarized relationships that feature conflict over territory in their early phases are more likely to reach proto- or enduring rivalry.

On the other hand, it also seems plausible that the processes that led to independence should have little systematic impact on militarized conflict over territorial claims. It was suggested earlier that states with territorial claims should be more conflictual than states without such claims, regardless of how they became independent; either evolutionary or revolutionary states with territorial claims should be more conflictual than either evolutionary or revolutionary states without such claims. If this is correct, then it also stands to reason

that how states became independent should have little impact on conflict within territorial claims, which are more salient and more conflictual than most other contentious issues between states. Instead, characteristics of the claimed territory and attributes of the claimants should be more important, as studied by Hensel (2001), Huth (1996), and Huth and Allee (2002), among others. This discussion suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Territorial claims that begin in the first decade after independence will tend to experience more militarized conflict than those that begin later, regardless of the type of process that led to independence.*

Research Design

The first step in testing these hypotheses is identifying the date of each state's independence. Independence dates are identified using the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project's Colonial History data set, version 0.4. A state is considered to be independent when it has control of its own foreign policy and is no longer ruled by a foreign power, whether this occurred through decolonization, secession from a larger entity, or some other comparable process. States that leave the system temporarily due to military occupation (such as Haiti or the Dominican Republic under U.S. intervention, Paraguay after the War of the Triple Alliance, or a number of European states during World War II) are not considered to be newly independent because they are returning to statehood and they have a history as established and recognized nation-states, which is quite different from a former colony achieving independence for the first time.

This coding of independence dates differs for many states from the date when the Correlates of War (COW) project considers them to have joined the interstate system, in some cases by as many as eight decades. Because almost every major data set used in the study of international relations is based on the COW system membership list, using dates of actual independence instead of system membership leaves us with missing data for many states' first years or decades of existence -- an important problem for a study of the first years after state independence. For the Americas and Western Europe, which are the focus of this study's analyses, the problem is especially severe; over half of the countries in these two regions became independent more than a decade before they joined the COW system (including states such as the United States and many European powers, which were independent long before 1816). Yet the alternative -- using COW system membership dates

to measure independence -- may be even worse for this study's purposes.⁵ For example, the Central American countries received their de facto independence after seceding from the United Provinces (or States) of Central America between 1838-1841, but they do not join the COW interstate system until decades later -- ranging from 1868 (Guatemala) to 1920 (Costa Rica) -- because of their population size and/or foreign diplomatic recognition. It would be misleading to code the decade after 1920 as the first decade of Costa Rican independence, because Costa Rica had actually been independent for eight decades before this; if there truly is a difference in conflict behavior for the first decade of state's independence, then this difference would have been felt considerably earlier, and coding Costa Rica's ninth decade of independence as if it were the first would almost certainly affect empirical analyses.

Measuring Types of Independence

Following Maoz (1989, 1996), this study distinguishes between revolutionary and evolutionary processes leading to independence. Evolutionary processes occur gradually and peacefully, whereas revolutionary processes are much more rapid and violent. Maoz operationalized this using the Polity II data set's measurement of "events signifying polity formation," specifically using the variable ORIG2 ("Circumstances of new nation's birth"). This variable distinguishes between "nations established in circumstances of international or internal war" (values 1-4), which correspond to Maoz' category of revolutionary independence, and "nations established in circumstances free of violent conflict" (values 5-9), which correspond to Maoz' category of evolutionary independence. Unfortunately, the Polity data project stopped collecting this variable after Polity II, which ran through 1986; a number of members of the COW interstate system either achieved independence after this time or were left out of the various versions of the Polity data sets for other reasons such as the size of their population. I have thus used the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Colonial History data set, version 0.4, which collects this information for each member of the COW interstate system (including the dozens of cases that are left out of the Polity 2 data set).

Measuring Conflict

Following Maoz (1989), militarized conflict is measured with the Correlates of War (COW) project's Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set, version 3.02, which currently covers the entire world from 1816-2001 (Ghosn et al. 2004). Militarized interstate disputes are interactions between two or more states that involve the threat, display, or use of militarized force. These disputes are used in analyses at a variety of levels of analysis, corresponding to different dimensions of the linkage between independence and conflict: for

⁵ Maoz (1989, 1996) measured independence based on the date of COW system entry, preferring the loss of precision in measuring actual independence to the removal of states from analysis.

nation-state-level analyses, the dependent variable is whether or not the state has ever engaged in at least one militarized dispute; for state-year-level analyses, the dependent variable is whether or not the state engaged in at least one militarized dispute in the year of observation; and for claim-year-level analyses, the dependent variable is whether or not the two participants in a specific territorial claim engaged in at least one militarized dispute over their claim in the year of observation.⁶

Measuring Territorial Claims

The presence of territorial claims is measured using the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Territorial Claims data set, which currently covers claims to territory in the Americas (North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean) and Western Europe (including Scandinavia). A territorial claim is defined as explicit disagreement between official policymakers of two or more states over the ownership of a specific piece of territory (Hensel 2001). In most of this study's analyses, the presence or absence of a territorial claim is measured by a dummy variable, indicating whether or not a state or dyad was involved in at least one claim during the year of observation. This study's final analysis is limited to the population of territorial claims in the Americas and Western Europe, and replaces the dummy variable for the presence of an ongoing claim with a measure of the claim's salience. This variable, introduced and described by Hensel (2001), ranges from zero to twelve and measures for each claimant the presence or absence of six different indicators that are thought to make the territory more valuable: a strategic location, valuable economic resources, ethnic or other identity ties to the territory, a permanent population rather than uninhabited territory, mainland rather than offshore territory, and homeland rather than colonial territory.

Control Variables

This study's multivariate analyses will control for several relevant variables that may help to explain conflict patterns. First, drawing from the extensive literature on the democratic peace (e.g., Russett and Oneal 2001), it is reasonable to expect that armed conflict will be less likely when both potential adversaries are democratic. This study's dyadic analyses thus control for joint democracy using a dummy variable indicating whether or not both states in the dyad had values of at least six on the Polity IV index of institutionalized democracy, a commonly used threshold in the international relations literature.

⁶ For the purposes of territorial claim-year-level analyses, additional work was required to investigate each MID that occurred between two participants in a territorial claim, in order to determine whether or not the dispute in question involved an effort by one or both sides to change the status quo over this specific territorial claim. The resulting codings are available as part of the downloadable ICOW data at <<http://data.icow.org>>.

Additionally, the literature on power transition theory and power parity (e.g., Kugler and Lemke 1996) reveals that armed conflict is most likely between states with approximately evenly matched capabilities. This study's dyadic analyses thus control for parity using the COW project's Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) measure, which measures each state's global share of six capability indicators: military personnel, military expenditures, iron and steel production, energy consumption, total population, and urban population. The CINC score is converted to a dyadic measure by dividing the stronger state's CINC score by that of the weaker state in the dyad; if the stronger state has less than three times the capabilities of the weaker state, then the dyad is coded as being in rough parity, as opposed to preponderance by the stronger side.

Empirical Analyses

Hypothesis 1 suggested that states that achieve their independence through violent (revolutionary) processes are more likely to become involved in at least one territorial claim in the first decade after independence, while states that achieve their independent through nonviolent (evolutionary) processes are less likely to do so. Table 1A addresses this hypothesis for the 21 minor powers in the Americas and Western Europe that became independent no more than five years before joining the COW interstate system; 43 other states became independent too early to be included in this table. It should be noted that this table, and the rest of the paper's analyses, are limited to minor powers to ensure the fairest possible comparison of conflict behavior. Without this limitation newly independent states' conflict behavior would be compared with the great powers (the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy are all included in these two regions), which would ensure that almost all types of new states would be significantly less conflictual than the referent category.

[Table 1 about here]

The evidence in Table 1A supports Hypothesis 1. All four states which joined the COW system upon (or soon after) independence became involved in at least one territorial claim in their first decade, while less than one-third of the seventeen evolutionary states did so; this result is statistically significant ($X^2 = 6.50$, 1 d.f., $p < .01$). Table 1B indicates that the same general pattern holds when the entire period after independence is considered, which allows us to examine all 64 minor powers in these two regions. Nearly all of the revolutionary states (88.9%) became involved in at least one territorial claim at some point after joining the COW system, as compared to 77.8% of states that became independent before 1800 and only 42.9% of evolutionary states; this is also statistically significant ($X^2 = 13.78$, 2 d.f., $p < .001$). It should be noted that the relatively small proportion of evolutionary

states is consistent with Maoz' argument that revolutionary states should be more threatening to the status quo than evolutionary states, although well over one-third of all evolutionary states had territorial issues as well, which supports this study's call for measuring contentious issues directly rather than simply assuming that such issues are most likely in certain situations.

Hypotheses 2 and 2a concern the impact of both independence and territorial claims on conflict, suggesting that conflict is much more likely when territory is under contention regardless of independence processes, while conflict in the absence of territorial claims is more likely after revolutionary independence and less likely after evolutionary independence. Table 2 evaluates these hypotheses using logit analysis, where each observation is one year in the history of a state and the dependent variable is the outbreak of a militarized dispute involving that state. Three models are provided: an aggregated model of all observations, regardless of whether a territorial claim is ongoing (Model I), a model of years with territorial claims (Model II), and a model of years without territorial claims (Model III).

[Table 2 about here]

The aggregated analysis in Model I supports Hypothesis 2, because the coefficient for the impact of ongoing territorial claims is positive and highly significant ($p < .001$). Controlling for the processes that led to independence, then, a state is much more likely to become involved in militarized conflict while it is involved in at least one territorial claim. This model also includes six dummy variables related to independence, all but one of which fall well short of conventional standards of statistical significance. Conflict is no more or less likely in the first decade after either revolutionary or evolutionary independence, or in subsequent years after evolutionary independence; it is significantly less likely in subsequent years after revolutionary independence. Finally, two other dummy variables address states that became independent more than ten years before joining the COW system; these cases should not be included in the evolutionary or revolutionary analyses because we are unable to study their corresponding conflict behavior shortly after independence as well as later. Neither of these variables has a significant effect, either.

Model II's analysis of only those years when a territorial claim was ongoing produces identical conclusions to Model I, offering further support for Hypothesis 2's suggestion that the presence of an ongoing territorial claim trumps any impact of independence processes. Model III examines only those years when no territorial claim was underway, and finds a weak effect for evolutionary independence in the hypothesized direction. Conflict is less likely in the first ten years after evolutionary independence, although this reaches only borderline levels of statistical significance ($p < .08$); states that achieved independence through evolutionary processes too early to allow study of their first decade are also less

likely to engage in militarized conflict ($p < .06$). States that achieved independence through revolutionary processes are not systematically more or less conflict-prone, although there are relatively few observations in the data set; no militarized disputes occurred in the 13 observations in the first decade after revolutionary independence without an ongoing territorial claim, excluding this variable from the analysis.

This approach is generally consistent with that of Maoz (1989), who compared conflict propensity in the first ten years after both revolutionary and evolutionary independence with the conflict propensity of the reference group of older states. The result for the first ten years after evolutionary independence is consistent with Maoz' finding, but Maoz also found that the first years after revolutionary independence were more conflictual. There are numerous possible explanations for these findings, but the most convincing explanations seem to involve the data sets that were used. Maoz' analyses used version 1 of the MID data, which included less than 1000 militarized disputes between 1816-1976. This current analysis uses version 3 of the MID data, which includes over 2300 disputes between 1816-2001 -- some 1500 of them between 1816-1976, or nearly 600 additional militarized disputes during the same period that were identified in later versions of the data set. Version 3 of the MID data also covers 25 more years than the version used by Maoz, during which 42 new states became independent (largely with the end of the Cold War) and 800 further disputes occurred. With so many new states and so much additional conflict in this later period, as well as with over 50% more militarized disputes in the same period studied by Maoz, it seems unsurprising that some of the results may have changed.⁷

Moving from short-term to long-term conflict propensities, the remaining analyses focus on militarized conflict patterns within specific territorial claims. Past research on independence and interstate rivalry (by Goertz and Diehl, Stinnett and Diehl, and Tir and Diehl) has studied militarized relationships in order to predict which of them will reach proto-rivalry or enduring rivalry. Table 3 broadens the analysis to examine the initial outbreak of conflict as well, categorizing every territorial claim in the Americas and Western Europe by the type of independence and indicating whether the claim led to any militarized conflict specifically over the territory in question.⁸ For the purposes of analysis, a territorial claim is considered to feature a revolutionary dyad if either state achieved its independence

⁷ Another difference is that the Polity II data set employed by Maoz does not include a number of smaller states in the COW interstate system, typically Caribbean islands and other micro-states with small populations.

⁸ This dummy variable is necessitated by the small number of cases in many cells in the tables. Alternative tables that break down the number of disputes, e.g. following Goertz and Diehl's categorization of rivalries by 1-2, 3-5, and 6 or more disputes, produce similar results; similar results are also produced by an ANOVA of the number of militarized disputes per claim. These more detailed analyses will be reported in the table once more territorial claims are available, which will overcome the problem of too few cases in some of the table cells.

through a revolutionary process; an evolutionary dyad if both states achieved independence through an evolutionary process, or if one state did and the other is classified as an old state; and an old state dyad if both states achieved independence before 1800.

[Table 3 about here]

This table shows that there is no statistically significant difference in conflict behavior based on independence, although the low significance levels can be attributed at least in part to the small number of cases in many cells of the table. As the top portion of the table reveals, militarized conflict occurred in over half of the territorial claims in revolutionary dyads (44.8%), as compared to less than one-third of claims in evolutionary dyads (30.8%) and less than one-fourth of the claims in older dyads (22.6%). This difference reaches borderline statistical significance ($X^2 = 5.44$, 2 d.f., $p < .07$), and is even greater if the number of disputes per claim is considered; ten of the territorial claims included in this table produced at least five militarized disputes, of which nine were in revolutionary dyads and the ninth was in an evolutionary dyad.⁹

Table 3 supplements this aggregated analysis with separate analyses of the militarization of territorial claims in evolutionary dyads and in revolutionary dyads. In both cases, militarized disputes occur in a smaller proportion of claims that begin in the first decade of independence than in claims that begin after that time, but there is an important problem. Well over half of the claims in each table -- 14 of 26 in evolutionary dyads and 56 of 87 in revolutionary -- occur in dyads that became independent more than ten years before joining the COW system. In these cases, we are unable to tell whether the claim in question began in the first decade after independence or subsequently, because the ICOW territorial claims data set follows the example of almost all international relations data sets by only collecting data on the interactions of COW system members. Furthermore, in these cases we are unable to observe the presence or absence of militarized conflict in the intervening years between independence and COW system membership. There may be many more militarized claims than the table currently reveals if we were to consider interactions before system entry, and some of these early cases would be classified in each of the other categories in the table. For now, there is no easy solution to the problem -- it can be minimized by continuing collection of territorial claims data in other regions, because the two regions that are currently completed are the only two with substantial numbers of states that achieved early independence; most states in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia became independent in the twentieth century and experienced little to no lag between independence and COW system entry, because entry into the League of Nations or United Nations is accomplished much

⁹ These supplementary result is not reported in the table for reasons of space; it is slightly less significant ($X^2 = 7.20$, 4 d.f., $p < .13$), at least in part because of the small number of expected or observed cases in several cells.

more easily now than achieving recognition by the great powers in the previous century. As for the cases in these two regions that have currently been collected, the only solution is further study of the early histories of each state before COW system entry.

Bearing these caveats in mind, Table 4 examines the impact of recent independence on states' interactions within ongoing territorial claims. For both evolutionary and revolutionary states, four variables are included to measure the impact of different aspects of independence. Three were already seen in Table 2, corresponding to observations in the first decade after independence, subsequent observations, and cases that achieved independence more than ten years before COW system entry. The fourth variable indicates whether the territorial claim began in the first ten years after independence, to see whether such claims are more dangerous overall (even after the first decade has passed) than claims that began later.

[Table 4 about here]

Several results stand out in Model I. For evolutionary dyads, conflict is much more likely in claims that began in the first ten years after independence ($p < .01$); claims that began later after independence and claims in dyads that were already independent more than a decade before COW system entry are less likely to engage in militarized conflict in a given year. For revolutionary dyads, conflict is much more likely in claims between states that were already independent well before system entry ($p < .001$), although we are unable to tell whether these cases were equally conflictual in their early years before joining the COW system, or whether the claims in question began soon after independence or later. As for the control variables, militarized conflict is more likely over more salient territorial claims ($p < .001$) and when there is rough parity between the claimants ($p < .001$), although joint democracy does not have a significant effect ($p < .31$).

Model II examines the time since independence more directly than Model I, which only included a variable indicating whether or not each claim began soon after independence. This allows us to determine whether cases that did begin shortly after independence are more conflictual in their early years only, or whether they remain more conflictual as time passes. Consistent with Model I, the most dangerous years for claims in evolutionary dyads appear to be the first ten years after independence ($p < .001$), but subsequent years remain highly conflictual as well ($p < .02$). The results for revolutionary claims and for the control variables remain the same in Model II.

These results suggest that recent independence can matter in either of two ways. At least for evolutionary claims, claims begun in the first decade after independence are significantly more conflict-prone than other claims, particularly but not exclusively in the first decade after independence. For revolutionary dyads, there is little systematic difference

between observations during the first ten years after independence and later years, or between claims begun in the first ten years after independence and those begun later; the most dangerous cases are claims between states that were independent well before joining the COW system, with the same caveats that were noted above in discussing Table 3. This offers only mixed support for Hypothesis 3, which had suggested that claims begun soon after independence would be more militarized than those that began later. Evolutionary claims clearly fit this hypothesized pattern, while data limitations prevent us from drawing a definitive conclusion about revolutionary claims.

Discussion

This paper has been a preliminary investigation into the relationship between independence and militarized conflict. Past research has distinguished between the type of process that led to independence, and has argued that independence achieved through violent processes can be dangerous because of the potential to upset the local or regional status quo. This paper has argued that a better approach would be to identify specific challenges to the status quo, rather than simply assuming that all violent independence processes produce such challenges while few or no peaceful processes do so. Specifically, this paper's analyses have focused on territorial claims, which can occur after either violent or peaceful independence processes.

Over two-thirds of all minor powers in the Americas and Western Europe have engaged in militarized conflict, particularly states that achieved independence through revolutionary rather than evolutionary processes. Consistent with previous work, evolutionary independence processes appear to have been followed by less militarized conflict in the first decade after independence. Unlike past work, though, revolutionary independence has not been followed by any systematic increase in conflict soon afterward, and has actually been followed by a significant decrease in conflict in later times. Contention over territory has been a much stronger predictor of conflict patterns than the process or timing of independence, with conflict being much more likely for states that are involved in at least one territorial claim than for those that are not. Finally, examining behavior within territorial claims, independence appears to have had a mixed effect on conflict.

Overall, this paper's preliminary results offer at best mixed support for the findings of past research on independence and conflict, for several important reasons. One important reason is that identifying specific contentious issues is an important improvement beyond implicitly assuming that threats to the status quo can largely be measured by the type of process that produced independence. Ongoing territorial claims significantly increase the risk of conflict for states that achieved independence through either evolutionary or

revolutionary processes during the COW era, as well as for states that had already achieved independence in the more distant past. Because most revolutionary states became involved in territorial claims soon after independence and relatively few evolutionary states did, this factor could go a long way toward explaining the earlier finding that revolutionary states are more conflictual and evolutionary states are less conflictual soon after independence.

A second likely reason is the difference in data sets that have been used. The current MID3 data set includes well over twice as many militarized disputes as the earlier version used by Maoz (including hundreds more in the 1816-1976 period studied by Maoz). It is quite possible that including so many additional cases could change the results of analyses that depend on the occurrence of conflict in specified time frames, particularly when most of the newly added disputes occurred well after independence. Furthermore, this study has coded independence data for dozens of countries that were left out of the Polity data set used by Maoz, many of which have not been involved in as many militarized disputes -- whether because they became independent so recently that they were not coded by Polity (and thus have not had much time in which they could engage in militarized conflict) or because they are so small and unlikely to be involved in conflict (such as Monaco, Andorra, or some of the Caribbean states excluded by Polity due to small populations).

A third explanation for the difference involves the distinction between de facto independence and membership in the COW interstate system. This study has attempted to determine when each state actually became independent, while earlier work (by both Maoz and Goertz and Diehl) relied on COW system membership. Unfortunately for the purposes of this paper, the COW system's population threshold and diplomatic recognition criteria lead it to exclude decades of history after independence for numerous Latin American and European states. We thus have no way to observe these states' conflict involvement in the first few decades after independence, when sources such as Ireland (1938, 1941) list numerous conflicts over territory, political regimes, and other issues. Unfortunately, these states' early conflict propensities can only be studied systematically if the appropriate data sets are updated to cover the entire period when each state was independent, rather than the period when it met the COW criteria -- a worthy goal, but an unlikely prospect for the immediate future because of the extensive time and resource demands that such a project would entail.¹⁰

Although these are substantial differences from earlier work in this area, I believe that

¹⁰ A glimmer of hope involves Gleditsch and Ward's (2001) alternative system membership list, which includes most of the years between de facto independence and COW system membership. In order to make better use of this list, Gleditsch has unofficially extended the Polity 4 data set to cover the intervening years. No comparable extension is available for the COW capabilities or militarized dispute or ICOW territorial claims data, though.

the current study offers a better and more appropriate test of the impact of recent independence on armed conflict. There remains room for improvement, though, before I will be satisfied that this study provides an accurate picture of the impact of independence on conflict. One important extension -- which will be undertaken in the near future -- is the addition of further regions to the analysis. ICOW data on territorial claims in the Middle East will be completed shortly, and will be added to the analyses once available. This will greatly increase the number of states whose first decades of independence can be examined, as most states in the Middle East -- unlike many in the Americas and Western Europe -- joined the COW interstate system around the same time as achieving independence.

A second extension involves closer connections with the literature on state-building. It may be that leaders of new states find themselves unable to engage in much armed conflict, for a number of reasons. Their attention and resources may be focused on domestic opponents, leaving them unable to pursue foreign adventures; they may also lack the economic development, military capabilities, or infrastructure potential that might be needed for interstate conflict. And since many of the states in these regions became independent in the nineteenth century, well before advances in transportation and communications technology made it possible to overcome geography and distance to fight foreign adversaries (see, e.g., Lemke 1995). Lemke (2002) has investigated these and other possibilities to try to explain the lack of observed interstate conflict among independent African states, and they may also help to explain the apparent lack of interstate conflict for many Latin American and European states in the first years after independence.

Another extension might involve greater distinctions between independence processes. This study has followed the example of Maoz (1989) in distinguishing between states that achieved independence through evolutionary and revolutionary processes, but more fine-grained distinctions are possible. For example, Hensel et al. (2005) have identified substantial differences in conflict behavior based on the colonial heritage of states involved in territorial claims; at least in Latin America, claims between two former Spanish colonies have been the most dangerous because of colonial-era borders that were vague, contradictory, or poorly defined. Similarly, Tir (2005) has focused on conflict between rump and secessionist states after independence produced through secession, and has identified situations that are especially dangerous (like Maoz' work on independence, secession through violence processes has been much more likely to lead to violence afterward). Future work would do well to distinguish between decolonization and secession as well as between violent and peaceful processes generating independence.

Finally, future research might also benefit from the study of additional potential threats to the status quo after independence. This study has found that territorial claims make

a substantial difference in conflict behavior after independence. Territory only represents one type of challenge to the status quo, though, and fewer than one-third of all militarized interstate disputes between 1816-2001 have concerned territorial issues. While territory may be more conflictual than most other types of issues, identifying and studying other types of issues -- or other dimensions of the status quo that might be challenged by a new state or its neighbors soon after independence -- would help to improve our understanding of new states' conflict potential.

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Table 1: Independence and Territorial Claims for Minor Powers (State-Level)

A. Within Ten Years of Independence

1+ Terr. Claim in 1st 10 years?	Type of Independence Process:		
	Evolutionary	Revolutionary	N
Yes	5 (29.4%)	4 (100%)	9 (42.9%)
No	12 (70.6)	0 (0.0)	12 (57.1)
Total	17	4	21 [†]

$$X^2 = 6.59 (1 \text{ d.f.}, p < .01)$$

[†]This table excludes states that achieved de facto independence more than five years before joining the COW interstate system, because we are unable to observe their behavior for more than half of their first decade.

B. Any Time between 1816-2001

1+ Terr. Claim?	Type of Independence Process:			
	Pre-1800 [†]	Evolutionary	Revolutionary	N
Yes	12 (77.8%)	9 (42.9%)	24 (88.9%)	45 (70.3%)
No	4 (22.2)	12 (57.1)	3 (11.1)	19 (29.7)
Total	16	21	27	64

$$X^2 = 13.78 (2 \text{ d.f.}, p < .001)$$

[†]States that became independent before 1800 are included in the pre-1800 column regardless of the specific process that led to independence, for consistency with the rest of the analyses in this paper.

Table 2: Recent Independence, Territorial Claims, and Minor Power Militarized Conflict (State-Year-Level analysis)

	Model I Combined model	Model II During terr. claims	Model III No terr. claims
Variable	Coeff. (Robust SE)	Coeff. (Robust SE)	Coeff. (Robust SE)
Constant	- 1.63 (0.07)***	- 1.26 (0.09)***	- 2.02 (0.10)***
Territorial claim	0.81 (0.09)***	---	---
<i>Evolutionary Independence</i>			
First 10 years	- 0.41 (0.26)	- 0.10 (0.38)	- 0.64 (0.36)*
Later years	- 0.07 (0.13)	- 0.05 (0.17)	- 0.08 (0.21)
Early independence	0.08 (0.13)	0.24 (0.15)	- 0.71 (0.38)*
<i>Revolutionary Independence</i>			
First 10 years	- 0.78 (0.47)	- 0.57 (0.49)	---
Later years	- 0.40 (0.13)***	- 0.44 (0.17)***	- 0.31 (0.21)
Early independence	0.06 (0.09)	0.07 (0.11)	0.16 (0.20)
	N = 5637	N = 3467	N = 2170
	LL: -2569.29	LL: -1831.07	LL: -734.48
	X ² = 134.51	X ² = 16.10	X ² = 9.94
	p < .001 (7 df)	p < .02 (6 df)	p < .08 (6 df)

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Notes

- Early independence means that the state became independent more than ten years before joining the COW system, so we can not observe its first decade of independence. Such cases are treated separately rather than treated as "later years" to allow a fairer comparison of the earlier and later years for the same set of states; we do not know how conflictual these early states were in their first decade.

Table 3: Independence and Conflict over Territorial Claims involving Minor Powers

A. All Territorial Claims

Type of Dyad in Territorial Claim:

1+ MIDs over Claim?	Pre-1800	Evolutionary	Revolutionary	Total
Yes	7 (22.6)	8 (30.8)	39 (44.8)	54 (37.5)
No	24 (77.4)	18 (69.2)	48 (55.2)	90 (62.5)
Total	31	26	87	144

$X^2 = 5.44$ (2 d.f., $p < .07$)

B. Claims in Evolutionary Dyads Only

1+ MIDs over Claim?	Early Independence	Claim Begins in First Decade	Claim Begins Later	Total
Yes	3 (21.4)	1 (20.0)	4 (57.1)	8 (30.8)
No	11 (78.6)	4 (80.0)	3 (42.9)	18 (69.2)
Total	14	5	7	26

$X^2 = 3.13$ (2 d.f., $p < .21$)

C. Claims in Revolutionary Dyads Only

1+ MIDs over Claim?	Early Independence	Claim Begins in First Decade	Claim Begins Later	Total
Yes	32 (57.1)	2 (14.3)	5 (29.4)	39 (44.8)
No	24 (42.9)	12 (85.7)	12 (70.6)	48 (55.2)
Total	56	14	17	87

$X^2 = 10.35$ (2 d.f., $p < .01$)

Notes

- A revolutionary dyad is one in which at least one state became independent through a revolutionary process. An evolutionary dyad is one in which one or both states became independent through an evolutionary process, but neither did so through a revolutionary process. A pre-1800 dyad is one in which both states became independent before 1800.
- Early independence means that both states became independent more than ten years before joining the COW system, so we can not observe their first decade of independence. In such cases, we do not know whether these claims (or other claims) began in that decade, and we do not know how much militarized conflict occurred before the claimants joined the system.
- This table aggregates cases where the same dyad engages in a second claim over the same territory after the conclusion of a first, e.g. when the challenger seizes the territory but its opponent then begins its own claim for the territory, or when a new government reopens a claim that had been settled. This allows us to study the complete history of the dyad's contention over a specific territory based on when the dyad first contended over that territory.

Table 4: Independence and Conflict over Territorial Claims involving Minor Powers (Dyad-Year-Level analysis)

	Model I	Model II
Variable	Coeff. (Robust SE)	Coeff. (Robust SE)
Constant	- 5.85 (0.34)***	- 6.53 (0.45)***
<i>Evolutionary Independence</i>		
Claim began in		
first 10 years	1.00 (0.32)***	---
First 10 years of claim	---	2.39 (0.56)***
Later years of claim	---	1.21 (0.49)***
Early independence	0.81 (0.61)	0.57 (0.57)
<i>Revolutionary Independence</i>		
Claim began in		
first 10 years	- 0.18 (0.31)	---
First 10 years of claim	---	- 0.03 (0.69)
Later years of claim	---	0.15 (0.44)
Early independence	1.09 (0.42)***	0.81 (0.37)**
Claim salience	0.30 (0.04)***	0.32 (0.04)***
Rough parity	0.75 (0.16)***	0.73 (0.16)***
Joint democracy	- 0.32 (0.31)	- 0.27 (0.31)
	N = 5587	N = 5587
	LL: -719.30	LL: -715.95
	X ² = 130.28	X ² = 144.22
	p < .001 (7 df)	p < .001 (9 df)

***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Notes

- Early independence means that the state became independent more than ten years before joining the COW system, so we can not observe its first decade of independence. Such cases are treated separately rather than treated as "later years" to allow a fairer comparison of the earlier and later years for the same set of states; we do not know how conflictual these early states were in their first decade.