Chapter 3

The Domestic Proximate Causes of Territorial Claims

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Abstract: When do states initiate territorial claims? Existing research focuses on the structural factors that make states more likely to contest particular pieces of territory, the normative justifications states can use to justify their claims, and a variety of dyadic factors. While these factors create the conditions under which a claim could emerge between two states, it does not explain why states issue claims when they do. I argue that territorial claims often emerge as the result of coalition changes within a state. In many cases, the decision to initiate a new claim reflects the differing incentives that new winning coalitions have to do so compared to the old coalition. Using a cure model, I model the probability that coalition changes will lead to claim onset, conditional on the structural factors that make some dyads susceptible to claims to begin with. I find that coalition changes are associated with an increased probability of claim onset.

3.1 Introduction

When do states initiate territorial claims against each other? In 1960, Cuba initiated a territorial claim against the United States (U.S.) over Guantanamo Bay following nearly 60 years of U.S. control. Yet the value of the territory itself, the historical relationship between the two actors, and many features of the dyadic relationship remained static. Why did this claim emerge when it did? The answer lies in the change in the winning coalition of Cuba following the Cuban Revolution. With new actors in power with preferences starkly opposed to U.S. policy, the perspective of the government with respect to the territory changed and led the state to initiate a claim. Similar examples can be found with respect to claims between Nicaragua and Colombia, Germany and Austria, Nigeria and Cameroon, and Uganda and Tanzania.

A vast literature has explored the relationship between territorial conflict and war, and found that territorial claims are closely associated with the onset of militarized disputes and war (e.g., Diehl and Goertz, 2002; Hensel, 2000; Hensel, 2001a; Hensel et al., 2008; Owsiak, 2012; Senese and Vasquez, 2008; Vasquez and Henehan, 2001; Vasquez, 2009). Compared to other issues, territorial conflicts are more likely to lead to militarized disputes and more likely to escalate to war. Moreover, territorial claims are closely associated with the onset of rivalrous relationships, which tend to emerge when territorial claims go unresolved and fester (Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson, 2007; Rider and Owsiak, 2015; Vasquez, 2009). Despite these facts, relatively few studies have sought to understand why territorial claims emerge to begin with (exceptions include Abramson and Carter, 2016; Burghardt, 1973; Englebert, Tarango, and Carter, 2002; Goemans and Schultz, 2016; Huth, 2009; Murphy, 1990; Schultz, 2017; Zartman, 1969). Understanding why territorial claims emerge is necessary to shed light on why such contentious relationships emerge between states and potentially preventing them from occurring to begin with.

The causes of claim onset identified by existing research tend to fall into three categories: the stakes attached to mutually desired territory (e.g., natural resources), dyadic factors (e.g., contiguity), and norms regarding what claims are legitimate (e.g., those based on historical sovereignty). Although all of these explanations undoubtedly contribute to our understanding of claim onset, each of these factors is relatively

static over time. For the most part, the stakes attached to territory do not change over time, dyadic factors change slowly (if at all), and states' ability to appeal to normative arguments based on historical control or self-determination remain fixed. As such, these factors cannot explain changes in behavior over time. Assuming that state leaders are rational, the decision to forego a claim reflects the fact that issuing a claim is expected to be more costly than maintaining the status quo. Issuing territorial claims carries a variety of costs, including the potential for military conflict and rivalry (Vasquez, 2009), increased military spending (Gibler, 2012), and decreased trade and foreign direct investment (Lee and Mitchell, 2012; Simmons, 2005). As such, the decision to initiate a claim implies that the expected utility of issuing a claim has increased above that of doing nothing. Understanding why states issue claims when they do thus requires identifying the proximate factors that lead to changes in the expected utility of issuing a claim.

I propose that one major reason for change over time involves changes in the winning coalition, the group of actors that controls political power within a given country. Since different coalitions have different preferences and goals, major changes in state policy often precipitate major changes in policy (**mattes2016**; Cox, 1982; de Mesquita et al., 2003; Mattes, Leeds, and Carroll, 2015; Mattes, Leeds, and Matsumura, 2016). I argue that changes in the winning coalition act as shocks that have the potential to bring about major changes in a state's foreign policy, including the decision about whether to issue a territorial claim or not. In addition to changes in the underlying preferences of those who control power, new winning coalitions may also have instrumental incentives to issue new claims. Doing so may help the new coalition establish its own legitimacy by diverting attention to international causes and may also allow the new coalition to repress rebel groups operating in claimed territory.

In this chapter I use a cure model to analyze the process of claim initiation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the logic of underlying and proximate causes maps well onto cure models. Whereas underlying causes reflect slowly-changing, structural factors that determine whether an event could possibly happen, proximate causes act as the trigger that precipitate an event and explain why events occur when they do. I test my argument on a global sample using data from the Issue Correlates of War Territorial Change dataset to identify the beginning of territorial claims (Frederick, Hensel, and Macaulay, 2017). Controlling for the

structural characteristics that create the opportunity for claims to emerge, I demonstrate that coalition changes do, in fact, increase the hazard of claim onset among susceptible states. I discuss the implications of these findings in the conclusion.

3.2 The Causes of Territorial Claim Onset

The causes of claim onset identified by existing research fall into three general categories. First, states compete over territory that is attached to valuable stakes such as natural resources, strategic locations, and symbolically valuable land (e.g., Englebert, Tarango, and Carter, 2002; Goemans and Schultz, 2016; Huth, 2009; Mansbach and Vasquez, 1981; Vasquez, 2009). The second category involves the dyadic factors that influence states' desire and ability to pursue claims against a potential opponent. For example, contiguity, major power status, and rivalry all influence states calculations when deciding to initiate a claim against an opponent (e.g., Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson, 2007; Huth, 2009; Rasler and Thompson, 2006; Vasquez, 2009). The third explanation for claim onset lies deals with states' ability to justify their claims in terms of principles such as self-determination or historical sovereignty (e.g., Abramson and Carter, 2016; Burghardt, 1973; Murphy, 1990; Zartman, 1969).

3.2.1 Territorial Stakes

The emergence of a territorial claim occurs when one state desires territory which the other controls or when two states desire control over the same piece of unclaimed territory. This only happens when there is some piece of territory that both states consider valuable. The literature on contentious issues has established that territory is often tied to tangible and intangible stakes that states prize (e.g., Hensel, 2001a; Hensel et al., 2008; Huth, 2009; Rosenau, 1971). Tangible stakes include a piece of territory's physical characteristics or its contents. These characteristics are often sources of potential economic or strategic value. For example, territory that contains natural resource deposits, arable land, or large population

centers represents a potential source of economic gain and military power. Land may also possess strategic value due to its geographic characteristics, such as the presence of mountain ranges or access to the ocean.

In addition, territory frequently possesses intangible or symbolic value for domestic audiences. Land is often tied to the identity of a particular groups (national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other cultural groups) and thereby highly salient to those groups. Groups that have a cohesive sense of identity may push leaders to reclaim such territory (Englebert, Tarango, and Carter, 2002; Goemans and Schultz, 2016). Issues related to symbolic states tend to underlie claims based on irredentism, secessionism, group unification (e.g., pan-Arabism), and the mistreatment of transnational kin. These claims tend to be particularly salient when the contested territory is part of the state and/or in close proximity to its heartland. Such claims are more likely to threaten core interests of the groups living within the state and have strong nationalist implications.

Salience is related to claim onset insofar as states will not initiate highly costly claims over territory that does not possess some value for the state or the interest groups that control political power. Territory that is strategically valuable is more likely to become the subject of claims (Huth, 2009). Territorial claims are also more likely to begin over economically valuable territory and land that contain natural resources (Goemans and Schultz, 2016; Huth, 2009).[1] Borders are also more likely to be contested when two states share ethnic ties or partition ethnic groups, particularly if that group has access to political power within one state (Englebert, Tarango, and Carter, 2002; Goemans and Schultz, 2016; Huth, 2009).

3.2.2 Dyadic Factors

Several sets of dyadic factors influence whether potential claims involving these issues are likely to emerge between states. One of the most influential factors regards whether two states are contiguous. All else equal, border territory tends to be more salient than other types of territory due to the fact that it has greater implications for state security and national identity (e.g., Hensel, 2001a; Owsiak, 2012; Vasquez, 2009). Contiguous states are also more likely to find themselves competing over other salient issues. For

[1] Goemans and Schultz (2016) find evidence that land containing minerals is more likely to become the subject of claims, but land containing oil is not. Schultz (2017) finds that territory containing oil is not more likely to be contested.

example, since ethnic groups cluster in space, nearby states are more likely to find themselves competing over the status of ethnic groups. As a result, claims tied to border territory are more likely to be highly salient.

Contiguous states also interact more are more likely to view each other as threats. These states are more likely to find themselves competing over both territorial and non-territorial issues (e.g., regional security) which in turn increases the probability that two states view each other as threats to their security and interests (Vasquez, 2009). This amplifies the commitment problem associated with territory by increasing the value of obtaining an economic or military advantage over the other state. In addition, most states other than major powers will have difficulty successfully waging military campaigns over great distances (Boulding, 1962; Lemke, 2002). This matters insofar as the threat of military force is often used to threaten or coerce opponents into relinquishing territory.

Another important dyadic characteristic relates to whether one or both states are major powers and the relative capabilities of the two states. Major powers have an easier time projecting force at a distance and therefore have an easier time contesting territory held by far-flung states and establishing overseas colonies. Major powers are also more likely to have expansive spheres of influence and therefore more likely to have interests in controlling territory in regions outside their own. Dyads that contain two major powers are even more likely to find themselves embroiled in territorial claims as they find themselves competing over their relative spheres of influence, including colonial possessions abroad.

A third set of factors involves whether two states view each other as threats or have previously engaged in military competition with each other. Once states engage in hostile interactions, such as militarized disputes, arms races, and alliance-formation, individuals within those states may develop hostile images of the enemy and come to view their competitors as a fundamental threat to their interests. Rivalries thus tend to take on a life of their own; once states have developed hostile images of the enemy, states may come to compete over issues that were not initially salient (Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson, 2007; Rasler and Thompson, 2006; Dreyer, 2010a; Dreyer, 2010b). Although territorial claims often precipitate rivalries, rivalries may lead states to initiate claims new territorial claims. For example, the claim between India and

Pakistan over the Rann of Kutch emerged out of their existing rivalry due to its strategic military value to Pakistan (Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson, 2007). The tendency of rivalry to beget territorial claims may be particularly likely with respect to economically or strategically valuable territory, as controlling such territory may provide one state a military advantage over the other (e.g., Fearon, 1995).

Other factors that influence the relationship relate to whether one previously held sovereignty over the other. One such factor regards whether one state has previously lost territory the other. States that have lost territory often issue claims over the lost territory. Claims are also more likely to arise between colonizers and their former colonies over the ownership of other territory held by the colonial power. For example, after gaining independence from the United Kingdom (U.K.), Mauritius issued a claim against the U.K. over control of the Chagos Archipelago, a region formerly considered part of the Chagos colony. Claims are also more likely to emerge between two colonial powers that have contiguous colonies. For example, multiple claims emerged between Great Britain and France regarding the boundaries of their respective colonies. These include disagreements regarding the boundaries of neighboring Gambia and Senegal, as well as competing claims to the Sudan that eventually led to the militarized Fashoda Incident.

3.2.3 Normative Justifications

Another important set of factors relates to the potential justifications states can use legitimate a claim to domestic and international actors (Abramson and Carter, 2016; Burghardt, 1973; Murphy, 1990; Zartman, 1969). Although contested territory will always be valuable for one reason or another, these explanations are limited insofar as they cannot explain why some valuable pieces of land are contested while others are not. At the international level, such claims are difficult to justify unless they follow international norms regarding the legitimacy of claims and may create the perception that a state is a purely revisionist or expansionist power. Unless states can justify their claims in terms of existing norms, they will often have trouble eliciting support from third parties or will have difficulty convincing actors such as the International Court of Justice that they have a valid claim. At the domestic level, such justifications are

highly salient and thus make it easier for leaders to rally support for a claim and convince domestic actors to bear the costs associated with it.

States often attempt to avoid these costs and/or garner support by couching their claims in terms of norms that resonate with domestic and international audiences. These include principles such as self-determination, irredentism, territorial integrity, and historical sovereignty. International and domestic actors tend to view these types of claims as more legitimate and are more likely to side with claimants that have such ties to territory. Moreso than other justifications, claims based on historical ownership tend to be particularly persuasive to international actors (Murphy, 1990).

The fact that states can only credibly appeal to such norms over some territorial claims helps explain why states issue claims over some valuable pieces of territory but not others. In many cases, the presence of valuable territory that both states desire is not sufficient to lead states to issue claims. For example, claims based on historical sovereignty help explain why Ecuador initiated a claim over oil-rich border territory held by Peru but did not contest other oil-rich regions in Peru and Colombia (Murphy, 1990). Although Ecuador claimed territory belonging to Peru, it did not issue claims over additional oil-rich territory in northeastern Peru or on its border with southwestern Colombia. This leads Murphy (1990) to conclude that Peru chose to contest the particular territory because it could justify that claim based on "questionable circumstances surrounding a 1942 protocol awarding the territory to Peru," (Murphy, 1990, p. 538).

3.2.4 Gaps in the Literature

Although the literature on claim onset has done much to identify the circumstances under which claims could potentially emerge between two states, existing research does little to explain the decision to initiate a claim itself. Assuming that rational actors create policies designed to maximize their expected utility, the choice to avoid initiating a claim implies that the expected utility of doing so is less than that of maintaining the status quo. The decision to initiate a claim thus implies a shift in the expected utility of initiating a claim such that it comes to exceed the expected utility of foregoing a claim. Since most of the structural factors discussed above remain fixed over time, they cannot explain variation in the expected utility of

issuing a claim over time. Answering the question of why states issue claims when they do thus requires identifying time-varying factors that lead to changes in the expected utility of issuing a claim.

3.3 The Proximate Causes of Claim Onset

Assuming that two states are structurally predisposed to become involved in territorial claims, what are the triggers that lead a potential challenger state to initiate a claim when they do? Becoming involved in a territorial claim is potentially a very costly prospect, insofar as doing so may lead to a highly militarized rivalrous relationship as well as economic costs (e.g., Lee and Mitchell, 2012; Simmons, 2005; Vasquez, 2009). As such, the decision to initiate a claim often represents a large change in a state's foreign policy that has the potential to have serious consequences. Understanding claim onset thus requires understanding when states make such dramatic changes to their policies.

One model related to the occurrence of dramatic changes in policy is the punctuated equilibrium model of public policymaking (Durant and Diehl, 1989; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Diehl and Goertz, 2000; Jones, Baumgartner, and True, 1998). The model holds that large shifts in policymaking rarely occur as the result of incremental changes to policy; instead, changes in policymaking often occur rapidly, then settle into an equilibrium state that persists for long periods of time. Rapidly changing conditions may be especially conducive to change as they lead to the emergence of a crisis atmosphere, which can, in turn, increase pressure on policymakers and alter the ways in which policymakers think about policy (Jones, Baumgartner, and True, 1998). Similarly, Russett (1990) argues leaders and elites have stable attitudes over time and that such attitudes are only disrupted by dramatic shocks.

In international relations, the punctuated equilibrium model has been used by Diehl and Goertz (2000) to describe enduring rivalries. Contrary to theories that view rivalries as emerging and dying out as the result of long-term, incremental changes in an interstate relationship (e.g., Hensel, 1999; Hensel, 2001b; Vasquez, 2009), Diehl and Goertz (2000) argue that rivalries begin and end during periods of rapid change. The underlying premise is that fundamental changes in the relationships between states often occur as a result of structural breaks or shocks. Generally speaking, interstate relationships exhibit long

periods of stasis. States tend to have persistently positive or negative relationships which only change during periods of intense, rapid change that fundamentally alters the nature of their relationship. Applied to rivalry, Diehl and Goertz (2000) argue that rivalries emerge in periods of such rapid change, during which quickly changing circumstances lead to rapidly escalating hostilities. After emerging, rivalries "lock-in" and become entrenched over the long term, until they dissolve in a similar period of rapid change. Because rivalries are entrenched processes, the relationship between rivals should only dissolve as a result of dramatic disruptions to the status quo, as well.

Diehl and Goertz (2000) argue that shocks at both the domestic and international level are capable of producing rivalry. At the domestic level, these shocks tend to be related to changes in leadership or new forms of government. Because different governments have different preferences, large changes in foreign policy such as beginning and ending rivalries are often brought about by changes in those who hold power at the domestic level (see also Bennett, 1997; Vasquez, 2009; Rooney, 2018). Diehl and Goertz (2000) also argue that shocks at the international level, such as world wars and shifts in power polarity, can upset the stability of interstate relationships. Such events may transform the international environment in which international interactions occur, creating new opportunities for both conflict and compromise. For example, the dissolution of the Soviet Union lead to the end of many patron-client relationships between the Soviet Union and its allies, creating conditions conducive to the realignment of such countries.

Although Diehl and Goertz (2000) focus on the evolution of rivalries, the concept of shocks can be applied to explain other phenomena which entail dramatic changes in the dyadic relationship between two disputants. Initiating a new claim has the potential to produce large changes in the bilateral relationship between states. As noted above, the decision to break with the status quo and initiate a new claim implies that the expected utility of doing so has changed. As with the punctuated equilibrium model of rivalry, I argue that shocks at the domestic and international level increase the probability that states issue claims by leading to fundamental changes in the nature of the actors involved and/or substantially altering the nature of the relationship between two states.

At the domestic level, one cause of changes in the government's preferred policies is a change in the leadership or winning coalition of a state. Various actors compete to influence the direction that state policy takes. Depending on regime type, these actors may include individual voters, businesses, organized interest groups, the military, and government bureaucrats, each of whom has their own policy preferences. The set of societal actors that is able to successfully unify and exert control over the political process is referred to as the winning coalition. In order to gain power, leaders must obtain the support of the winning coalition. Subsequently, they must maintain this support by making policy that aligns with the preferences of the winning coalition or else risk being removed and replaced by someone else. As a result, leaders tend to make foreign policy decisions that align with the interests of their winning coalition (de Mesquita et al., 2003).

Although incumbent leaders and coalition members' preferences may change over time, the fact that the structural causes of territorial claims remain constant over time means that a given leader or ruling coalition to change their policy with respect to the issuance of claims, absent major changes in the international environment or dyadic relationship that alter the opportunity or willingness of states to take action. As such, large shifts in the direction of state policy (e.g., issuing a territorial claim) are most likely to occur due to changes in the domestic actors that control the levers of power (Cox, 1982; Mattes, Leeds, and Carroll, 2015). When a new coalition takes power that values a piece of territory more highly than its predecessor, it is thus possible that the relative valuation of a state's options (i.e., issue a claim or maintain the status quo) changes as well. I posit that coalition changes may be associated with changes in state policy related to territorial claims for two reasons. First, different winning coalitions may have different goals with respect to foreign policy and therefore value the decision to issue a territorial claim more highly. Second, new coalitions may have instrumental reasons for issuing claims as a means of engendering support for and/or suppressing opposition to the new government.

3.3.1 Changes in the Winning Coalition's Preferences

The first reason why new winning coalitions may have an incentive to initiate territorial claims relates to a fundamental change in the preferences of the government's leadership. Because different coalitions have their own distinct interests, coalition changes often entail large changes in the goals and preferences that those with political power wish to pursue (Cox, 1982; de Mesquita et al., 2003; Mattes, Leeds, and Carroll, 2015; Mattes, Leeds, and Matsumura, 2016). For example, a change from a government controlled by ethnic group A to ethnic group B may result in a government that, contrary to their predecessor, cares about unification with group B's ethnic kin in neighboring countries. Similarly, a change in the economic interests that support the government may lead the government to care about controlling territory with certain types of economic value (e.g., resources) more than other economic aims.

The preference change mechanism is exemplified by the claim between the U.S. and Cuba over Guantanamo Bay. Although Cuba was coerced into leasing the territory to the U.S. in 1903, American control of the territory went uncontested by the Cuban government for nearly six decades. This changed following the Cuban Revolution, when the American-backed military government that presided under Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro on January 1, 1959. By the end of the following year Castro had repudiated the U.S.' right to maintain control of the occupied territory, initiating a claim that persists until today. What explains the sudden reversal of Cuban policy? The answer lies in a change of the preferences of the state's winning coalition. The shift from a government controlled by pro-U.S. interests to one that was fundamentally opposed to U.S. foreign policy. Contrary to the military junta, the coalition of supporters that brought Castro to power harbored strong anti-American sentiments (Morley, 1982; Wright, 2000).

Another example involves the claim between Nicaragua and Colombia over the San Andreas and Providencia archipelago. After signing a treaty resolving the dispute in 1928, the dispute remained dormant for over 60 years. In 1979 the Sandinista government took power and declared the old agreement null due to the fact that it had been signed under pressure from the U.S. At the same time, Nicaragua renewed its claims against Colombia to the banks of Quita Suensueno, Serrana, and Roncador. Like the Cuban case,

the change in the foreign policy interests of those in control of the government dictated whether they would choose to pursue a territorial claim that had implications for its relationship with other regional actors. An additional example includes Germany's 1933 decision to issue a claim to Austrian territory following the rise of the Nazi party, which campaigned on the issue of reclaiming the Rheinland.

3.3.2 Generating Support Using Territorial Claims

A second reason why coalition changes may be associated with new territorial claims is that new coalitions may attempt to use claims strategically as a means of consolidating their hold on power. Rather than emerging from some underlying preference for obtaining a piece of territory, governments may have instrumental reasons for issuing claims (although this mechanism is not mutually exclusive with the first). Leaders often use foreign policy actions to build support among domestic audiences, especially when they can appeal to nationalist sentiments. When faced with foreign threats, individuals tend to "rally around the flag" and support the government in power (Mueller, 1973). Leaders may thus try to construct or lay up threats in the international system as a means of engendering support from domestic audiences. This behavior is exemplified by diversionary theory, which holds that leaders may intentionally involve their states in conflicts as a means of stoking such support (e.g., Russett, 1990; MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, 1992; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Meernik, 1994; DeRouen, 1995; Gelpi, 1997; Fordham, 1998; Mitchell and Prins, 2004; Pickering and Kisangani, 2005; Mitchell and Thyne, 2010; Tir, 2010)

Because territorial claims are highly salient and strongly tied to nationalist sentiments, Tir (2010) argues that initiating diversionary conflicts over territory is particularly likely to be effective. This logic can also be applied to the decision to initiate territorial claims. By stoking perceptions that a foreign actor poses a threat to highly salient territory, initiating a claim may help leaders construct a narrative that supporting the government is necessary to oppose a threat to the fundamental interests of the state. This is especially likely to be effective if the incumbent coalition can draw a contrast to their predecessor's foreign policy with respect to a potential territorial claim. Since territorial claims are highly likely to be

militarized compared to other issues, issuing new claims is one way in which leaders could hope to provoke a rally around the flag effect.

One example of this mechanism involves a dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula. The roots of the claim lay in a transfer of territory between their colonial parents. In 1913 the United Kingdom and Germany signed an agreement delimiting the border between their respective colonies of Nigeria and Cameroon. In doing so, Britain ceded control over the Bakassi Peninsula to Germany. Although the colonial parents reached a general border agreement, it did not fully demarcate the boundary, and uncertainty over the exact location of the border persisted. Following World War I, Cameroon was split between Britain and France, with the northern portion of Cameroon (including the Bakassi Peninsula) being incorporated into Nigeria. When Britain and France granted the two colonies independence in 1960, there were disagreements over whether British Cameroon should remain part of Nigeria or be reunited with French Cameroon, now the Republic of Cameroon. Separate plebiscites were held in northern and southern British Cameroon, and, as a result, the northern portion of British Cameroon became part of Nigeria, while the southern portion, including the Bakassi Peninsula, became part of the Republic of Cameroon. Notably, the residents of the Bakassi peninsula were ethnic Efiks and therefore were affiliated with groups in southeastern Nigeria rather than those in Cameroon.

Although some disagreement over the exact location of the boundary persisted, the unresolved boundary issues did not become a point of contention between the two states and both worked cooperatively to interpret and implement the terms of the 1961 plebiscites. Following the split, correspondence between the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments affirmed that the Bakassi Peninsula was now part of the Republic of Cameroon (Omeje, 2004). Cameroonian ownership of the Bakassi Peninsula was reaffirmed by General Yakubu Gowon, head of the Nigerian government, in agreements in 1971 and 1975. This changed in 1975 when Murtala Ramat Muhammed led a successful coup within Nigeria's military-led government, removing Gowon from power. In the weeks afterwards, Muhammed repudiated Gowon's actions and claimed the Bakassi Peninsula belonged to Nigeria.

When considering the stakes and relationship between the two governments, the sudden decision to issue a claim over territory that had largely been settled is puzzling. In theory, the territory was salient for both countries: it contains valuable natural resources, constitutes a strategic location, and has ties to ethnic groups in both states. In addition, both states had claims to the territory based on identity, historical ownership, and homeland status. Nonetheless, Nigeria did not issue a claim over the territory until the Muhammed administration took power. Historical evidence and the fact that the other factors that potentially motivated a claim remained fixed support the fact that the claim was motivated by domestic political considerations. With the new regime suffering a "crisis of legitimacy," (Ugwu, 2012, p. 17), the decision to repudiate the recent agreement made by Gowon constituted an attempt by Muhammed to stoke nationalist support and legitimate the seizure of power by characterizing Gowon's actions to reaffirm the previous agreement as an attempt to give away territory that rightfully belonged to Nigeria (Konings, 2005; Ugwu, 2012).

Another reason why coalitions may have instrumental reasons to issue new territorial claims is rooted in the existence of rebel groups opposed to the new regime. Following the seizure of power by a rebel group, opposition groups may continue to attempt to overthrow the government. In doing so, opposition groups often seek sanctuary in neighboring states to avoid state repression (Salehyan, 2007). This has the potential to stoke tensions between the two states, especially if the sanctuary state explicitly supports the rebel groups. Even when the state does not provide support to rebels, however, the target state may attempt to seize or invade territory that contains rebel groups in order to suppress their activities, provoking concerns over sovereignty and increasing hostility between states (Salehyan, 2008).

One example involves the claim between Uganda and Tanzania over the Kagera Salient, the area in northern Tanzania between the Kagera River and the 1° parallel that formed the boundary between the two. Although the Salient had formerly been under the control of the Bugandan Kingdom within Uganda, the 1° border line established by the United Kingdom and Germany placed it under Tanzanian control. In doing so, it placed members of the Ganda ethnic group on each side of the line. Establishing the boundary at the 1° also forewent the possibility of establishing a boundary along the natural border created by the

river. As such, there were historical, ethnic, and geographic concerns that could potentially motivate and justify Ugandan claims to the territory (Griffiths, 1986).

Nonetheless, the border went uncontested for many years. Even after the two states obtained independence in 1961-1962, the border issue did not arise as a point of contention. However, this changed in 1971 following the military coup that brought Idi Amin to power. The Kagera Salient became home to opposition groups that supported the former president, Milton Obote. Having had a close relationship with Obote, Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere welcomed members of the opposition who had been exiled and tacitly supported the activities of rebels in the Kagera region. The fact that opposition groups inhabited the Salient gave Amin an incentive to issue a claim to the region to protect his new regime (Griffiths, 1986; Roberts, 2014). The emergence of the claim was thus a direct consequence of the change in the governing coalition and the interstate divisions it produced (Valeriano, 2011). Although the claim could also be justified in terms of concerns related to ethnic unification, historical control, and creating natural geographic borders, none of these arguments were advanced until Amin took action against the rebel groups residing in the area.

Ultimately, the foregoing discussion shows that the specific reasons that a new coalition may wish to initiate a claim when the previous coalition did not may differ. Nonetheless, the above scenarios all share a common premise–that new coalitions may have an incentive to initiate claims that previous coalitions did not. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Dyadic territorial claims are more likely to begin after a dyad member experiences a change in its winning coalition.

3.4 Research Design

I analyze the causes of claim onset by modeling the time until a dyadic territorial claim emerges between two states. The unit of analysis is the dyad-year. The dependent variable is the time until the onset of territorial claims according to the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Territorial Claims Dataset, (version 1.01; Frederick, Hensel, and Macaulay, 2017), which contains data on all international territorial claims

during the period 1816-2001. Dyads enter the dataset in 1816 or in the first year in which both states are members of the Correlates of War system. Dyads exit the data when a new claim begins and are coded as censored in 2001 or when one state exits the international system.

I code the onset of a claim using a dummy variable for whether a new ICOW claim began between two states in a given year. A territorial claim exists when a high-level official representative of one state officially indicates she regards a specific piece of territory as belonging to their state. Importantly, ICOW does not code the existence of a claim when opposition leaders or other societal groups make claims to land, but the officials governing the state do not.

Most dyads never experience claim onset. It is therefore necessary to use a cure model to distinguish between those dyads that are at risk and those that are not to obtain consistent estimates of the influence of variables that affect the timing of claim onset. My theory provides an explicit distinction between issues that influence the underlying risk of an event (i.e., structural causes that create the motivation or opportunity for claim onset) and those that influence the timing of claim onset. Thus, the use of a cure model is ideal for modeling the process that generates claims and provides greater theoretical insights by indicating *how* each variable influences claim onset. I use the cure equation to model the structural factors that influence claim onset and the hazard component to model the proximate causes.

3.4.1 Specifying the Hazard Equation

To assess Hypothesis 1 regarding how changes in the winning coalition influence claim onset, I use the Change in Source of Leader Support (CHISOLS) dataset (Mattes, Leeds, and Matsumura, 2016). CHISOLS identifies when the societal groups that form the primary base of support for political leaders changes. I use a dummy variable for whether the winning coalition in at least one state within a dyad occurs within a given year (lagged by one year to avoid simultaneity bias). The CHISOLS data begins in 1919. The analysis thus covers the timespan 1919-2001.

I also include three other variables for other domestic level shocks, which may influence both support for the government (and therefore leaders' decision-making regarding costly behaviors) and lead to

changes in the relationship between two states (Diehl and Goertz, 2000). First, many claims begin between countries and their neighbors when one country becomes a newly independent state. As new states emerge, claims may emerge between new states and their parent states regarding the territory that belongs to each state. Claims may also emerge with a new state's neighbors. For example, neighboring states may perceive a new state as weak and attempt to prey on them (Maoz, 1989). I code a state as becoming newly independent in the year it enters the Correlates of War (COW) state system (Correlates of War Project, 2017).

Second, I control for civil wars, which may influence the level of support for a government, the probability of coalition changes (i.e., if the government is replaced by its opposition), and a state's ability to dedicate resources to pursuing costly international policies. I code whether a country experiences a civil war in a given year using the COW Intrastate War dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002). Third, to distinguish between the effects of coalition changes and institutional changes, I include an indicator of regime change (**mattes2016**; Marshall and Jaggers, 2013). Each of these control variables is lagged by one year.

3.4.2 Specifying the Cure Equation

The cure equation accounts for fundamental characteristics of the dyadic relationship that determine whether two states have incentives to compete over the same piece of land. To model the probability that a piece of territory that both states desire exists, I include several of the structural variables discussed in the literature review. Since contiguous states are more likely to become involved in territorial claims, I include whether two states share a land border using data from Stinnett et al. (2002). Dyads that contain major powers are more likely to become involved in claims, especially when they contain two major powers. I capture this using dummy variables for whether whether a dyad contains one or two major powers, with two minor powers left out as the reference category (Correlates of War Project, 2017).

Since states are more likely to become involved with claims with their former colonizers or parent states, I include a measure of whether one state was ruled by the other prior to independence. The data come from Hensel (2018) and capture whether one state was ruled as "a colony, dependency, League of

Nations mandate, UN Trust territory, or other type of possession, as well as states that have seceded from existing states and states that have merged into existing states," immediately prior to independence. As noted above, dyads in which there has been an exchange of territory between two states are more likely to become involved in new claims. I measure this using a dummy variable for whether there has previously been a transfer of territory between the two states (Tir et al., 1998). To account for potential clashes between two colonial powers regarding the boundaries of their respective colonies, I include a dummy variable for whether two states have contiguous colonies using the Correlates of War Colonial Contiguity dataset (Correlates of War Project, 2020).

States that have mutual security interests will pay higher costs from initiating claims. To account for this, I include a dummy variable for whether two states share a defensive alliance (Gibler and Sarkees, 2004). In addition, two states are less likely to become involved in territorial claims once both have become democracies (Gibler, 2012; Gibler and Owsiak, 2018; Owsiak and Vasquez, 2019). I control for this using an indicator for whether both states have a Polity score above five (Marshall and Jaggers, 2013). Since states that view each other as fundamentally hostile powers are more likely to become involved in claims, I include a dummy variable for whether two states are involved in a rivalry in a given year (Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson, 2007).

3.5 Results

Table 3.1 presents the results of the analysis. The first column presents the estimates for the variables included in the hazard equation. The values presented are hazard coefficients. Positive coefficient estimates are thus associated with an increased probability of failure and a decreased survival time. Hypothesis 1 posits that dyads that are susceptible to territorial claims are more likely to become involved in such claims following a coalition change in one of the dyad members. The estimated coefficient for coalition change is positive and significant, which indicates that coalition changes are associated with an increased hazard rate among the set of susceptible observations. Put otherwise, dyads that are likely to become involved in claims often experience claim onset in the wake of a coalition change. Exponentiating the estimated

coefficient of 0.22 produces a hazard ratio of 1.25, which indicates that coalition changes are associated with a 25 percent increase in the hazard rate among susceptible cases.

To further assess the substantive effects of coalition change, Figure 3.1 plots the conditional survival function (i.e., the survival function for dyads that are susceptible) when the coalition change variable is equal to zero and one (with all other variables held constant at their medians). The vertical distance between the survivor curves can be interpreted as the difference in the probability of survival curves at a particular time point t. From this plot, it can be seen that the substantive effects of coalition change are relatively small. At its maximum, the difference between a median case that experiences a coalition change and one that does not at the same time point is about 8 percent.

The relatively small substantive effect may be due to the fact that there are frequent coalition changes but only a small subset of those actually precipitate conflict. Based on my theory, coalition changes are associated with claim onset because the particular coalition in power has specific interests in initiating a claim. However, in many cases, it is to be expected that there will be a continuity of preferences between a new and old government. There are thus many more instances in which a coalition change does not produce claim onset than there are those that do. Moreover, coalition changes are not necessary conditions for claim onset, as other events in the domestic or international realms may help precipitate claims. Nonetheless, the results indicate that some coalition changes are associated with claim onset and thus support the probabilistic hypothesis that coalition changes increase the risk of claim onset among susceptible dyads. The additional variables included in the hazard equation (civil war, independence, and regime transition) are all insignificant. This suggests that the primary reason why states may issue new claims at the domestic level is changes in those who hold control of the levers of power, rather than other domestic factors.

The results for the variables included in the cure equation are presented in the second column of coefficients in Table 3.1. The estimated coefficients in the cure equation are logistic regression coefficients. Positive values indicate that, all else equal, higher values of a variable are associated with an increased

Table 3.1: Model of the Onset of Territorial Claims, 1918-2001

	Hazard Coef.	Logit Coef.
Coalition Change	0.22*	
	(0.08)	
Civil War	0.09	
	(0.08)	
Independence	0.7	
	(1.71)	
Regime Transition	-0.24	
	(0.35)	
Contiguity		1.27*
		(0.24)
Major-Minor Dyad		1.8*
		(0.18)
Major-Major Dyad		2.19*
		(0.49)
Previous Territorial Change		0.18
		(0.27)
Former Colony		0.49
		(0.33)
Colonial Contiguity		2.86*
		(0.32)
Defensive Alliance		-0.03
		(0.12)
Joint Democracy		-0.79*
		(0.3)
Rivalry		2.04*
		(0.21)
Intercept		-9.72*
		(0.11)
Number of Observations	729557	
Number of Failures	186	

Note: Standard erros in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$.

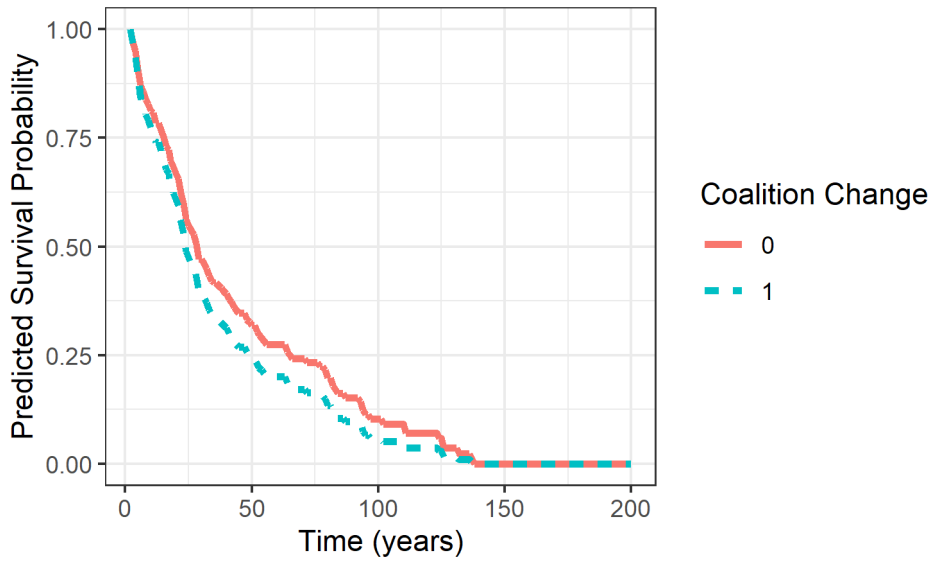

Figure 3.1: Conditional Survival Curves for Coalition Changes

likelihood that a dyad is susceptible to becoming involved in a territorial claim. Negative coefficient estimates indicate that higher levels of a variable are associated with a lower degree of susceptibility.

The variables included in the cure equation generally behave as expected. The results indicate that the effect of contiguity is significant. The positive coefficient of 1.27 indicates that the log-odds of being susceptible to territorial claims are greater in contiguous states than noncontiguous states. To assess the substantive effects of each significant variable in the cure equation, Table 3.2 presents the percent change in the predicted probabilities when each variable is set to zero and one, with all other variables held constant at their medians. Contiguity is associated with a 256 percent change in the probability that states are susceptible to territorial claims.

Notably, the substantive effect of contiguity is among the lowest in the table. This is somewhat surprising, given that contiguous states might be expected to be much more likely to become involved in claims. This indicates that many other factors play a more important role in determining susceptibility than contiguity. This is important when considering the possibility of using only contiguous dyads or politically relevant dyads in an analysis. Although these dyads are more susceptible to claim onset, there are

Table 3.2: Percent Change in Predicted Probability of Territorial Claim Onset

	Variable = 0	Variable = 1	Percent Change
Contiguity	6.02E-05	2.14E-04	256
Major-Minor Dyad	6.02E-05	3.64E-04	505
Major-Major Dyad	6.02E-05	5.37E-04	792
Colonial Contiguity	6.02E-05	1.05E-03	1640
Joint Democracy	6.02E-05	2.75E-05	-54
Rivalry	6.02E-05	4.63E-04	669

Note: Predicted probabilities calculated with all other variables held at their medians.

many claims between noncontiguous states that are not captured by using such case selection techniques. This provides evidence that using techniques that model the underlying probability of claim susceptibility, such as cure models, are a better approach to accounting for the heterogeneous susceptibility between dyads.

As expected, major power status has a positive and significant effect on a dyad's susceptibility to territorial claims. The estimated coefficient for mixed dyads (i.e., those that contain one major and one minor power) is 1.80. Table 3.2 indicates that mixed dyads are 505 percent more susceptible to claims than those that contain two minor powers. The coefficient estimate for dyads that contain two major dyads is also positive and significant, indicating that these dyads are more susceptible to territorial claims than dyads composed of two minor powers. The coefficient estimate of 2.19 is even greater than that for mixed dyads, indicating that these dyads are even more susceptible. Dyads that contain two major powers are 792 percent more likely to be susceptible to territorial claims than those containing two minor powers.

Contrary to Huth (2009)'s findings, whether two countries have previously exchanged territory is not significantly associated with susceptibility to claim onset. This may indicate that states fully delineate territorial transfers when they occur and that subsequent disputes are not likely to emerge between them. Alternatively, it may reflect the fact that states that lose territory to another state rarely initiate new claims against the previous challenger. Whether one state was formerly a dependent territory or colony of the other is also not significantly associated with susceptibility to claim onset. Thus, the example of the

Chagos Islands disputes between the United Kingdom and Mauritania discussed above is likely to be an aberration and prior dependency status is unlikely to be a generalizable cause of territorial claims. This may indicate that newly independent states tend to establish relatively well-defined boundaries with their parent states upon gaining independence. In addition, this measure only accounts for whether a state that gains independence was a possession of their parent state immediately prior to independence. If that territory was formerly ruled by other countries besides the immediate parent, these relationships are not captured by the data used.

Colonial contiguity has a large, significant relationship with susceptibility to claim onset. The coefficient of 2.86 indicates that states which have colonies next to each other are more likely to become involved in territorial claims. Somewhat suprisingly, colonial contiguity has the largest substantive effect of any of the variables included in the cure equation. Table 3.2 shows that the probability that two states with contiguous colonies are 1,640 percent more likely to become involved in a territorial claim. Notably, this relationship holds when controlling for both contiguity and the presence of major powers within the dyad. This suggests that colonial contiguity has an additional effect of territorial claims and is not simply picking up on the large amount of colonial activity conducted by major powers. This may be due to the fact that other major players in the international system are not considered major powers, such as Portugal and Spain, but still engage in a great deal of colonial activity.

Whether two states possess a defensive alliance was not found to be significantly associated with susceptibility to claim onset. This likely indicates that alliance ties are not sufficient to deter one state from claiming territory possessed by the other when the domestic coalition values it highly enough to issue a claim. The estimated coefficient for joint democracy is negative and significant, indicating that dyads containing two democracies are less susceptible to experiencing territorial claims than dyads containing at least one non-democracy. Although the relationship holds, it is unclear whether there is a causal connection between democracy and the onset of territorial disputes. On the one hand, since democratic leaders are more accountable to their constituents, they may be less willing to take potentially controversial actions like issuing claims. However, this assumes that the winning coalition does not support issuing a claim,

which runs contrary to the theory laid out above. Alternatively, the size of the selectorate may matter. Whereas issuing territorial claims may benefit narrow interest groups (e.g., ethnic groups), they may be unpopular with the public as a whole. Since democratic leaders are more susceptible to experiencing coalition changes, they may therefore be more constrained from pursuing claims that would benefit a small portion of the selectorate. However, the literature on the territorial peace suggests that democracy does not have a causal effect on territorial claims. Instead, the correlation between democracy and claim onset is likely merely an artifact of the timing of events. Scholars have argued that the sequence of events typically occurs such that states resolve their most salient territorial claims (i.e., those involving borders) prior to becoming democracies (Gibler, 2012; Gibler and Owsiak, 2018; Owsiak and Vasquez, 2019). The observed correlation is thus due to a selection effect, namely, that jointly democratic states are thus less likely to find themselves competing over territory to begin.

Finally, the coefficient estimate for rivalry of 2.04 has a positive and significant relationship with the onset of territorial claims. The percent change in the predicted probability of claim onset is 669, which indicates that rivals are much more susceptible to territorial claims. This implies that states that view each other as fundamental threats to their security or interests are more likely to become involved in territorial claims. This may be because territory with potential strategic or military value takes on heightened importance when engaged in prolonged hostile confrontations with an enemy, as in the example of the Rann of Kutch discussed above.

3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

In this article I seek to answer the question of why leaders begin territorial claims when they do. Although existing studies demonstrate that a variety of dyadic factors and territorial attributes predict claim onset, they do not consider the question of timing. I propose that states issue claims when there are changes in the winning coalition of one of the disputants. Since different coalitions have different preferences and incentives to issue claims, such changes may bring a government to power that has an incentive to issue a claim where the previous government did not.

The findings of my study are consistent with the idea that changes at the domestic level influence the timing of claim onset. The analysis indicates that changes in a state's leader or winning coalition are associated with an increased probability of claim onset. Although the substantive effects are relatively small, they indicate that susceptible dyads are more likely to experience claim onset in years in which there is a coalition change. Previous research indicates that territory that is highly salient to domestic audiences is more likely to become the subject of dispute. My findings complement this research by suggesting that changes in the preferences of the governing elite, and thus the salience of the territory to high-level decisionmakers, affects whether or not states choose to initiate claims over valuable territory. These findings are robust to the inclusion of a large array of structural variables that predict the potential for claims to emerge between states, thus alleviating the problem associated with the inclusion of many dyads that are not at risk of claim onset.

Generally speaking, the results of the cure equation indicate that the structural factors that influence the potential for claims to arise have effects consistent with previous research. The results of the cure equation highlight the importance of using a cure model or other mixture-type model to model the susceptibility of states to claim onset, rather than using case selection devices such as politically-relevant dyads to eliminate cases from the sample. While contiguity and major power status influence whether claims may emerge, other variables also have a major influence on the probability of claim onset. For example, colonial contiguity has the largest substantive effect of any of the variables in the cure equation. However, limiting the sample to politically relevant dyads would effectively eliminate dyads between colonizers such as Spain and Portugal and their former colonial possessions. Likewise, my findings indicate that rivalries (which often emerge over territorial claims) increase the probability that states become involved in additional territorial claims in the future. Using politically relevant dyads has the potential to eliminate some rivalrous dyads from consideration. I discuss potential ways to extend the theory and findings in this chapter in the concluding chapter.

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