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Power Politics and Interstate War in Africa

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ABSTRACT. The steps-to-war theory suggests that power politics strategies, such as alliance formation, military buildups, hardliner domestic actors, and aggressive crisis bargaining, often have the unintended consequence of escalating a crisis to war. The theory has gathered extensive empirical support in large-N studies, but only a handful of studies have examined the expectations of the theory as applied to specific regions. This paper questions if the steps-to-war theory can explain wars in a region where one might not expect power politics methods to be in operation. I first test the theory statistically by using a sample of only African dyads and then employ a structured comparison and process-tracing methods to examine the steps taken prior to two African wars, the Ogaden War (1977–1978) and the Ugandan-Tanzanian War (1978–1979). This research is unable to falsify the theory in the Africa region, although the theory does require modifications in that the actions of rebel groups are important in motivating territorial demands and arms acquisitions in the region.

KEYWORDS. Power politics, territorial conflict, alliances, rivalry, Ogaden War, Ugandan-Tanzanian War, interstate war

INTRODUCTION¹

The steps-to-war explanation² of conflict argues that *how* states handle sensitive issues with their neighbors greatly affects the probability of war between a pair of states. States that pursue alliances, military buildups, and other power politics measures domestically in response to threats to vital issues (usually territorial) increases the chance of a pair of states will go to war. In contrast, states capable of removing territorial issues from their agenda and pursuing nonpower politics strategies are able to avoid war for prolonged periods, even if other contentious issues arise.³ Although issues regarding the leadership of a regime can be war-prone, territorial issues are the most dangerous category because these are the issues most likely to generate a power politics response.⁴ The steps-to-war theory has gathered wide empirical

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support for various propositions as it seeks to explain conflict based on its occurrence in the international system, but this evidence has been mostly concentrated in large-N, quantitative studies of cross-sectional data, which can ignore the regional context of events.⁵ Only a few studies have examined specific cases from a regional perspective, and these have focused exclusively on explanations of the two world wars.⁶

Douglas Lemke is right to argue that “in addition to their self-admitted preoccupation with the great powers, international relations researchers generally ignore the possibility that the relationships they hypothesize about might not apply across all regions of the world.”⁷ Errol Henderson makes a similar point in suggesting that scholars do not explore the relevancy of their data according to region, nor do they consider the theoretical application of regional dynamics.⁸ The field has neglected a discussion of theoretical domains and an exploration of wars in the developing world. This task is especially important for the steps-to-war theory considering the theory’s emphasis on the diffusion of constructed norms of realpolitik behavior. Indeed, the theory was formulated based on findings principally related to the European state system.⁹ The tests conducted here are thus concentrated on the newest cohort of states: the African system. In this paper, I first conduct a statistical-multivariate test of the steps-to-war in Africa and then extend the analysis with an examination of the steps taken prior to two African wars, the Ogaden War (1977–1978) and the Ugandan-Tanzanian War (1978–1979). Evidence suggests that while overall the theory remains to be falsified in the African region, the theory also must encounter challenges specific to regional actors. These challenges, namely the importance of rebel groups as motivations for territorial action, might be indicative of the challenges to come for the entire global system in the modern era. In general, historical patterns remain unchanged, but it is the slight changes in mechanisms and causality chains that are of interest to scholars and practitioners.

The first stage of this analysis is an aggregate exploration of war onset in Africa. The second stage confines the analysis to a specific set of cases for one outcome (war) in order to explore relationships and mechanisms uncovered statistically but to also add domestic context to events. This research is part of a much larger research program¹⁰ and the wider issue paradigm of international conflict.¹¹ Since the theoretical expectations of the paper have been well developed elsewhere,¹² the goal is to seek only evidence that the steps-to-war theory explains wars in the African state system. This is a system that should provide a difficult test since the norms in the African system are thought to differ from other areas.¹³ Another challenge is that the African state system is much less entrenched and institutionalized than the European state system. The lack of institutionalized borders makes it less likely that some African states will fight territorial conflicts in a traditional manner. Will future territorial disputes in the region follow the typical European path, or does the path diverge according to mechanisms for state construction in the area? With these

aims in mind, I assess the validity of the steps-to-war propositions under a certain pool of cases and analyze scope conditions of the theory.¹⁴ The discussion in the next section begins by outlining the steps-to-war theory.

THE STEPS TO WAR EXPLANATION

The steps-to-war explanation identifies both general underlying causes and a set of proximate causes of war that span all levels of analysis.¹⁵ Underlying causes are seen as the rise of a territorial dispute or other important issues of contention that leads states to rivalry. Territorial issues merely provide a source of conflict that is more likely to end in war than other types of issues. Although most territorial disputes do not end in war, these issues have a higher probability of leading to war than any other issue.¹⁶

Whether territorial issues (or any other issue for that matter) will ultimately end in war depends on how they are handled. If political actors contest issues by resorting to power politics, then the probability of war increases. In spite of the likely dangers, political actors who engage in power politics tend to resort to increasingly higher levels of bellicosity and coercion.¹⁷ Power politics tactics then become a set of proximate causes of war because they follow the rise of territorial disputes and are more closely tied to the outbreak of war. If territorial issues are not handled through coercive power politics, they are less likely to end in war.¹⁸ Without coercive power politics tactics, states engaging in frequent territorial claims would be unlikely to resort to war, partially explaining why early border conflicts in the Africa region failed to generate the typical wars found in other regions of the world. The task for this research is to explain the path to war for those states that experienced the event in this region.

Territorial disputes lead political actors to resort to a series of realist paradigm-informed practices intended to force the other side to back down. These include military buildups, the making of alliances, and demonstrations of resolve in crisis bargaining. In the modern global system, realist folklore tells state leaders that, when faced with threats to their security, they should increase their power by either making alliances and/or building up their military. Both practices are intended to increase a state's security, although they typically produce and exacerbate a security dilemma. Each step produces a situation that encourages—although does not predetermine—the adoption of foreign policy practices that set the stage for actors to take steps toward war.

There are a number of studies in the literature that confirm the theoretical expectations presented in Vasquez's work.¹⁹ What has yet to be uncovered is the relationship between international threats and domestic politics/foreign policy processes. The effects of territorial disputes on pairs of states have important implications both internationally and domestically. First, the logic of the security dilemma (either internally or externally) encourages actors to

take additional measures to increase their military capability; this leads to a downward spiral of increasing insecurity, threat perception, and hostility. States then resort more frequently to coercive diplomacy to get the other side to come to an agreement on outstanding issues. Second, each of these actions has the domestic effect of increasing the influence and number of hardliners within the polity and reducing the number and influence of accommodationists. The increase in hardliners in turn encourages the adoption of power politics practices that fuel hostility and encourage coercive moves that result in the outbreak of international crises. War usually occurs after a series of crises between two states has already taken place, with the crisis that escalates to war having certain characteristics such as a hardliner in power and an ongoing arms race.²⁰

Formal alliances in the data require two states to either agree to support each other in conflict, consult the other side if a conflict situation develops, or requires both sides to remain neutral in the event of a third party conflict.²¹ Military buildups are observed rapid increases in military expenditures based on an increase of greater than 8 percent over a ten year period.²² Alliances and arms races tend to be followed by war because they increase the threat perception of the other side. This leads the target state to try to make a counteralliance if possible or build up its own military, which, in turn, causes each side to overcompensate.²³ Similarly, when a state with an ongoing territorial dispute witnesses a military buildup by its rival, this produces a sense of threat, a feeling of insecurity, and an attitude of hostility, leading it to respond by building up its own military. The danger in power politics tactics like alliances or arms buildups does not come from the technical nature of the threat but from the perceived decrease in security. Once there is a perceived decrease in security, the security dilemma is activated, which often leads to a crisis between the actors because the context of the situation.

Following realpolitik strategies and tactics, the ruling elite in each state refuses to back down; consequently, disputes tend to stalemate, fester, and repeat. These recurring crises are the real engines of war. They increase the influence of hardliners who then make it more difficult to reach a compromise and manage each new crisis, until eventually a crisis emerges that cannot be managed and escalation to war is the outcome.²⁴ Herein, insecurity and fear is identified as the cause of war in that the tactics pursued to ensure state security actually end up threatening the state in the long run. Based on the theoretical outline the following hypothesis should find support in an examination of the African region if the steps-to-war theory is to be universally applicable across all regions of the world.

H1: The presence of political relevant alliances, military buildups, territorial issues, rivalries, and hardliners in a dyad will increase the probability of war.

DATA ANALYSIS

Vasquez and Valeriano call for more research on the different types of war in order to uncover the dynamics of war onset appropriately according to the time period, region, and size of the conflict.²⁵ This article utilizes their advice to explain the steps-to-war theory more fully by selecting a group of interstate wars using pooled data analysis and case study methods to investigate the applicability of the theory to certain regions. The regional data analysis follows the style of Henderson closely.²⁶

The first step in this enterprise is to reanalyze the findings of Senese and Vasquez with a focus only on the African dyads (only states within the entire Africa continent) in the sample.²⁷ The original data were obtained and all non-African dyads were dropped leaving a sample of 212 dyadic dispute observations. Table 6.1 in Senese and Vasquez²⁸ was chosen as the focus since this statistical regression examines if any militarized interstate disputes (MID) results in war within five years of that MID for the years 1816-2001.²⁹ This table is the most comprehensive in the book and is also a revision of an earlier Vasquez article.³⁰

The unit of analysis here is the dyadic dispute as utilized by the MID project.³¹ This analysis controls for timing in that the alliances and all other variables have to be in effect six months prior to the outcome. The dependent variable is war within five years of the MID. The independent variables of interest are revision type, politically relevant alliances, arms races, and the number of disputes prior to war.³²

The reference category is a policy MID. Since the model ran into the typical problem of perfect predictors and not enough observations in a regional sample, Zorn's³³ analysis of the various potential solutions to the problem were taken into account, and I utilized Firth's method of penalized likelihood estimation.³⁴ This method allows us to fully estimate the model even with bias. A normal logit model results in only 42 observations being utilized and all but 4 covariates drop from the analysis due to perfect predictors. The Firth method is far superior in that all the observations and variables are not dropped from the analysis as can occur with Stata.³⁵

As Table 1 (Model 1) indicates, some of the variables of interest are not statistically significant. The territory variable works remarkably well with a statistically significant coefficient of 3.833. All other variables barring the number of prior disputes (repeated disputes) before war are statistically insignificant. The number of prior disputes variable is positive with a value of 0.828 and statistically significant.

A second model (2) was estimated with the main difference being that all of the outside alliance variables were collapsed together to measure if any state had an active outside alliance prior to war.³⁶ Model 2 also substitutes Thompson's³⁷ strategic rivalry variable for the number of disputes variable

Table 1: Steps to war in African dyads: coefficient estimates, penalized logit model for war within five years.

Independent variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coefficient	S.E.	P> z	Coefficient	S.E.	P> z
Territory	3.833	1.488	0.010	3.235	1.487	0.030
Regime	1.777	2.144	0.407	2.130	2.199	0.333
Other	1.835	2.053	0.372	2.989	2.222	0.179
Allied to each other	0.031	1.741	0.986			
One side has outside ally	0.169	1.160	0.884			
Both sides have outside alliance	1.087	1.087	0.426			
Allied to each other and outside ally	-0.016	1.758	0.993			
No. of prior MIDs	0.828	0.422	0.050			
No. of prior MIDs ²	-0.053	0.028	0.065			
Arms race	-1.422	1.732	0.412	-0.824	1.621	0.611
Thompson rival				2.515	1.554	0.106
Any outside alliance				1.166	0.997	0.242
Constant	-7.53	1.939	0.000	-7.67	2.213	0.001

Policy issue is reference category.

N = 212.

Prob > chi2 = 0.1832 (Model 1), 0.0593 (Model 2).

Penalized log likelihood = -14.475 (Model 1), -20.267 (Model 2).

that Senese and Vasquez utilize for most of their analysis. This was done because there might be a lack of information “bias” for disputes in Africa as measured by the MID project. Colaresi et al. report that 19.1 percent of the strategic rivals as measured by Thompson are sub-Saharan and 19.7 percent are Middle East and North African rivals, so it seems appropriate to test for the presence of strategic rivalry in Africa prior to the onset of war since this data was constructed to be representative of all regions.³⁸

The results in Model 2, Table 1, do clear up some unanswered questions. Territory remains statistically significant and positive. Of interest is that the Thompson rivalry variable is positive and near conventional levels of statistical significance (0.106). The collapsed alliance variable also seems to perform well compared to the four-stage model that Senese and Vasquez³⁹ use, yet it still does not reach statistical significance at 0.242.

Examining the analysis of African dyads from the years 1816–2001 one can conclude that most of the coefficients for the variables of interest are in the hypothesized direction. Yet, the lack of events in the region makes it unlikely one can have confidence that the results are not random since only few variables reach conventional levels of statistical significance. The territory and rivalry variables are positive and statistically significant. The collapsed alliance variable seems to work well but does not reach a level of statistical significance that is conventional. There are many missing data points for arms

races in Africa, so I have little confidence in the coefficients for that variable. In light of this it seems even more important to move on to a case specific investigation of the steps-to-war in Africa to further explore the causal mechanisms and process of conflict onset in Africa as informed by the steps-to-war theory to further understand the dynamics in operation. A qualitative test also has the added benefit of allowing us to analyze the style of domestic leadership and further examine the process of military buildups in each state prior to war.

QUALITATIVE TESTS OF THE STEPS-TO-WAR THEORY IN AFRICA

The case study method used herein follows the focused and structured method of research design.⁴⁰ The analysis is structured to ask the following questions of each case regarding the onset of warfare:

1. What issue is at the heart of the conflict between the dyad? What issue leads to war?
2. Did the leaders of each state seek to build alliances and build up their militaries prior to the conflict?
3. Is there a history of repeated disputes or strategic rivalry prior to the current conflict under analysis?
4. Were hardliners in power (on either side) that impeded the process of conflict resolution?

In addition to relying on a structured and focused theory-testing design, I also employ the “analytical process tracing” method.⁴¹ The onset of warfare is tracked from the diplomatic perspective with a focus on the timing of political actions undertaken before the war starts. Process-tracing is complementary of other research methods, such as statistical analysis, because it provides a different base for causal inference through which to reaffirm or disconfirm previous findings and most importantly through which to move beyond probabilistic statements. The method pursued here allows for a deeper investigation of how war comes about in Africa and how the steps under investigation work. Here a story can be told while also delineating the mechanisms at work.

In the post-1945 period, there are only four potential African interstate wars between states in the Correlates of War (COW) dataset with 1,000 or more fatalities.⁴² The four cases are the Ogaden War (1977), the Ugandan-Tanzanian War (1978), the Eritrean-Ethiopian War (1998), and the Second Congo War (1998–2003). Due to reliable source and space limitations, the Second Congo War has to be excluded from the analysis at this time. The Eritrean-Ethiopian War is also excluded since Ethiopian practices are covered in the Ogaden War.

The analysis here focuses on the military, diplomatic, and political elements at work between the parties involved in critical disputes on the African continent. Of course the social, racial, and cultural factors behind the conflicts in question are important factors in the onset of violence, but they are beyond the scope of this analysis. For all cases, conventional datasets and historical sources were used to investigate the steps toward war.⁴³ Here I will outline the datasets frequently used in this analysis. I define *rivalry* as competition and struggle between two or more actors over some issue that may vary over time. Here I rely on the coding provided by Diehl and Goertz⁴⁴ and also Thompson⁴⁵ to discover if there is a rivalry in operation prior to the conflicts in question.⁴⁶ Diehl and Goertz measure rivalry by coding for the number of MIDs a pair of states has had during its lifetime. States with three to five disputes are coded as proto-rivals, and states with more than six disputes in a 20 year period are classified as enduring rivals. Thompson's dataset of strategic rivals are coded based on mutual perceptions and historical investigations. Both datasets measure the same processes yet rely on completely different methods of verification.

Alliances are formalized written treaties that compel the states involved to engage in some sort of action in the event of conflict. Alliances are coded based on the Gibler and Sarkees dataset.⁴⁷ Arms races are accelerated rates of weapons acquisitions between a pair of states. Sample's⁴⁸ dataset for formal mutual military buildups in the system is relied on to measure arms buildups, but I also utilize the Gibler, Rider, et al. dataset⁴⁹ in some cases where necessary since its temporal domain is extends a bit further than Sample's, and their measure uses Thompson's strategic rivals instead of MIDs to code races. Other capability indicators are also utilized where possible to identify singular military buildups that might impact the course of conflict.⁵⁰

While I utilize conventional databases and operational definitions to investigate factors typically identified as leading to war in the steps-to-war theory, I also use my own judgment and reading of history to categorize variables. Contextual knowledge here can help allude to factors that lead to war and may also provide for future refinements of the variables inherent in the steps-to-war theory. The clearest example comes in relation to the arms race variable, which is expanded on here through the use of spending data and specific notes regarding arms purchases or military realignments. I have also added a variable for domestic leadership styles.⁵¹ Hardliners are those actors who exhibit inflexible demands on important issues.⁵² Distinctions between inflated threats and true intentions are typically unambiguous. Accommodationists are leaders who readily accept treaties and propose negotiation before a conflict erupts. They may also refer or appeal to institutional bodies for support. Most actors are represented by quotes that illustrate their public hardliner tendencies.

This article will determine whether the steps-to-war theory is in operation in each case accompanied with an analytical process tracing technique,

tracing the various events that precipitated each crisis in order to understand the causal mechanisms at work. The timing of events is also examined. Is there a pattern at work in these cases, and could this pattern be generalized to all cases of warfare? Of course other variables may be important for the process of war onset; however, the question here is about the generalizability of the steps-to-war theory. This study seeks only to investigate if the causal processes thought to be at work are actually in operation in a region that the theory would be least likely to apply to.⁵³ If this study is able to find evidence that the steps are not in operation for the wars in Africa then this finding would call into question the generalizability of the propositions.

OGADEN WAR (1977–1978)

The Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia was the first genuine interstate conflict in Africa during the post-1945 period. The typical elements of the steps-to-war are in operation in this conflict, all driven by outstanding territorial claims and the power politics actions taken to firmly establish a change in the territorial situation. A factor uncovered here and excluded from the steps-to-war theory is internal armed opposition groups that may drive leaders to display strength to enforce their hold on power. Rebel groups may drive the enforcement of territorial boundaries, shift leaders toward a hardline orientation, and push an arms buildup. In short, the mechanism for the steps-to-war after 1950 seems to require an element of uncertainty caused by rebel or terrorist actors.

In 1950, Britain established a provisional border between Ethiopia and Somalia. In the process, it included the Ogaden region as part of Somalia. Ethiopia expended much effort to regain the Ogaden region from the British, and it was finally officially restored in 1954. This led to bitter rivalry between Somalia and Ethiopia in which both claimed the territory and people of the region.

There was popular support in Somalia to unite all people of Somali culture into a single nation-state.⁵⁴ One such territorial claim by Somalia was the Ogaden region in Ethiopia, which was considered “stolen” during the colonial partition. “The new republic was committed to the unification of all Somalis, including those in the Ogaden, the then French territory of Djibouti, and the North Frontier District of Kenya. But it was the Ogaden which became the primary focus of Somali irredentalism.”⁵⁵

The primary rebel actor in this conflict was the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which operated in the Ogaden with the support of the Somalian military.⁵⁶ Mengistu Haile Mariam was the leader of Ethiopia in February 1977 after the third internal coup for the Derg or “Committee,” a Marxist-Leninist group.⁵⁷ Mengistu accused Somalia of supplying the WSLF with regular armed forces, an accusation that Somalia denied. The attacks

by the WSLF were cleverly planned operations intended to take advantage of internal Ethiopian instability, which in the postwar years saw the overthrow of its emperor by the Derg. Many of the WSLF leaders were former Somali officers who had resigned their posts.⁵⁸

Somalia invaded the Ogaden region on July 23, 1977. With a force of 35,000 soldiers and 15,000 WSLF fighters, Somalia gained the initiative. The Soviet Union had supplied arms to both sides and attempted to mediate the situation. However, when Somalia continued its assault, the Soviets cut off all aid to Somalia and increased aid to Ethiopia, sending nearly 1,000 advisors, and 15,000 Cuban troops.⁵⁹

Somalia initially controlled as much as 90 percent of Ogaden, but their forces were eventually defeated when reinforcements from the Soviets and Cubans allowed the Ethiopians to counterattack. Additionally, air superiority allowed the Ethiopians to decimate the Somalian tank forces and supply lines. Somali leader Siad Barre ordered a retreat on March 9, 1978. The WSLF continued operations until at least 1981. On April 4, 1988, the two sides signed a communiqué to end the hostilities.

Issues at Stake

The primary issue at stake in this conflict was territorial. Valeriano and Vasquez⁶⁰ classify this war as “complex territorial power politics” based on the MID revision codes.⁶¹ The Ogaden region had no distinguishable wealth or strategic value. Somalia claimed the Ogaden region in Ethiopia due to the presence of ethnic Somalis living within the boundaries of Ethiopia as well as outstanding colonial border disagreements. In turn, Ethiopia viewed the region as part of its historical sphere of control.⁶² Ethiopia quickly asserted its territorial claim over Ogaden on grounds that it had been a part of their empire only years earlier and based their assertion on claims of sovereignty recognized in the 1942 and 1944 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreements. Eventually, the Ogaden was restored to Ethiopia on September 23, 1948, in fulfillment of British promises. Doing so did not solve the problem and set the ground for future conflict.⁶³

From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, the area experienced significant instability, yet war did not emerge. This was primarily due to military inadequacy in the region and also due to attempts to create institutional accountability in the region. Ethiopia took a leading role in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 with the organization being housed in Addis Ababa. One of the pillars of the new organization was the acceptance of colonial boundaries as originally established, thus reinforcing Ethiopia’s claims on the Ogaden region. Resolution 16, passed in 1964 by the OAU, states that the organization “solemnly declares that all member states pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence.”⁶⁴ The OAU and the United Nations continued to deny Somalia’s territorial claims to the Ogaden throughout the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁵

Somalia, however, pointed to at least 500,000 Muslims of Somalian decent living in the Ogaden at the time as support for its territorial claim. Actions by rebel groups in the region made settling the territorial question all the more difficult.

Alliances

Theoretically, alliances are a way for a state to augment its power and to protect itself in an anarchic environment. Unfortunately, statistical studies have consistently demonstrated a link between alliances and conflict onset.⁶⁶ The reason this link is so important is because the fear and insecurity alliances typically engender in a dyad. In this case, Somalia took particular care to become aligned with China and the Soviet Union rather than the West, particularly because it bore resentment toward Great Britain after losing territory to Ethiopia. In 1963, Somalia officially refused Western military assistance valued at 6.5 million pounds in favor of Soviet aid valued at 11 million pounds.⁶⁷ Somalia was also the only non-Arabic speaking state to join the Arab League.⁶⁸ These alliance-building patterns by Somalia raised tensions in the dyad, creating conditions for the development of rivalry and engagement in an arms race.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, was supported by the United States through much of its post-World War II era. Initially this support was sought to balance British interest in the region.⁶⁹ The Ethiopia-U.S. Treaty signed in 1953 included the use of the communications base in Asmara by the United States in return for a military aid program. "By 1970, Ethiopia had come to absorb some 60% of U.S. military aid to the whole of Africa."⁷⁰

During the Cold War the United States funded the Ethiopian military. Links with Israel have also been suggested by others.⁷¹ Eventually, the alliance soured with the rise of anti-American sentiment internally and new technology that made the Ethiopian bases irrelevant to U.S. strategic interests. In 1974, Somalia signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union,⁷² and three years later, the Derg cut off ties with the United States.⁷³ The damage had already been done since both sides had powerful outside allies prior to the war. The shifting nature of alliances commitments has always been a reality of European statecraft, and it appears Africa experiences the same problem in some cases. Sometimes who the allies are matters less than the presence of an alliance in the first place.

Armed with alliances, both sides continued to assert their claims in the conflict, but it was the fear that Soviet support of Ethiopia would eventually end possibilities of future integration of the Ogaden territory that spurred the Somalis to action.⁷⁴ Lewis notes the disturbing events of 1977 from the Somali point of view: "The new Cuban-trained and Russian-armed peasant army, numbering at least 70,000, was proudly paraded in Addis Ababa. If the Ogaden Somalis were to recover their independence there was clearly not much time left."⁷⁵ This alliance realignment, which spurred Somalia to act,

demonstrates how in addition to increasing military capabilities, the shifting dynamics of interstate alliances can help cause conflict due to a state's future concerns and time horizons. It seems that the balanced alliance pattern facilitated the development of the rivalry between the two states. When the Soviets switched to the Ethiopian side, the Somalis decided to act before it was too late, and the Somalis would no longer be able to restock their Soviet supplies.

On November 13, 1977, a final rupture occurred between the Soviets and Somalis. Lewis notes, "All naval, air and ground military facilities—including the important communications and submarine missile handling station at Berbera—were withdrawn, the Somali-Soviet treaty of friendship (whose terms Russia had violated by supplying arms to Ethiopia) was renounced, and 6,000 military and civilian personnel and their families given a week to leave the country."⁷⁶ Prior to this, Somalia had arranged support from Saudi Arabia while hoping for a brief conflict limited to Ethiopian involvement.

Allied against Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya signed a mutual defense pact (alliance #3550) and issued a joint statement condemning Somali aggression on September 7, 1977.⁷⁷ Kenya had its own long-standing rivalry with Somalia and allowed Ethiopia to receive arms shipments through Kenyan territory while at the same time denying Somalia access to its airspace.

Overall, the constellation of alliances that Ethiopia's Mengistu was able to assemble resulted in an Ethiopian victory and domination of the region for years to come. Aside from the official alliances given in Table 2, there are known unofficial connections with Eastern European states and Cuba, South Yemen, Israel, and Libya, all of which enabled Mengistu to reimpose Ethiopian rule in the Ogaden.⁷⁸

Table 2: The Ogaden War (1977–1978)

Start date	7/23/77 Somalia invades Ogaden region				
Main issue	Territory (Ogaden region)				
Domestic actors	Ethiopia: Mengistu (Accommodationist)				
Domestic actors	Somalia: Siad Barre (Hardliner)				
Alliances					
Ethiopia–United States	1953–1977				
Somalia–Arab League	Start Year: 1974; alliances #3120, #3523				
Ethiopia–Kenya	Start Year: 1963; alliance #3550				
Ethiopia–Soviet Union	Start Year: 1978, alliance #3583 ¹³¹				
Arms Races					
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Ethiopia	\$48.5m	\$74.8m	\$125m	\$125m	\$125m
Somalia	\$16m	\$21.4m	\$23m	\$26.2m	\$31.7m
1975, 1978 (Sample 2002)					
1972–1974 (Gibler, Rider, and Hutchinson 2005)					
Rivalry Coding					
Diehl and Goertz (2000)—Enduring	Duration: 1960–1985 w/ 9 MIDs pre-1977				
Thompson (2001)—Strategic	Duration: 1960–1988				

Military Buildups

Prior to the war, there was a military arms race in the region, partially motivated by domestic-internal security concerns. Somalia acquired weapons from Egypt, China, and the Soviet Union. This led to a tit for tat increase in weapons acquisitions by Ethiopia, which acquired advanced Northrop F-5 aircraft from Iran. At the time the *New York Times* noted a developing arms race between Ethiopia and Somalia.⁷⁹ In 1974, Somalia joined the Arab League and was able to solicit resources and military supplies from its new Arab allies. The militarization of each side further raised tensions in the dyad.⁸⁰ Sample notes an arms race in the dyad in the years 1975 and 1978.⁸¹

Despite the early advantage that Somalia appeared to hold, the loss of Soviet support resulted in a loss of initiative. Additionally, the loss meant that Somalia had great difficulty repairing and resupplying their Soviet-made arsenal. On the other side, Ethiopia had an active air bridge to the Soviet Union, resulting in immediate delivery of equipment and troops early in the conflict. This strategic advantage eventually allowed Ethiopia to prevail.⁸²

Apart from the previously mentioned arms race, Ethiopia also had an arms race against Sudan from 1973 to 1975, whereas Somalia and Kenya had an arms race from 1977 to 1979.⁸³ The data shows a steady increase in military expenditures for each state.⁸⁴ In context of multiple military buildups, the region was escalating toward war in the late 1970s; all it needed was a trigger.

Rivalry

The Somali–Ethiopian rivalry started with the independence of Somalia in 1960 and conforms to the class of rivalries born fighting.⁸⁵ Fueling the rivalry was an immediate adoption of conflict posture based on Somali claims to the Ogaden territory. Furthermore, all major rivalry datasets (see Table 2) code Ethiopia and Somalia as rivals.

The first militarized dispute was recorded in 1960 over movements of Somali tribesman across the border. There were brief “border wars” in 1961, 1963, and 1964.⁸⁶ The OAU reaffirmed established borders in Ethiopia’s favor,⁸⁷ an important decision consistent with the organization’s founding mission. The ongoing rivalry and inability to settle border claims (at least in Somalia’s favor) made the rivalry persist at least until the mid-1980s.

Hardliners

I identify Siad Barre as the main hardliner in the Ethiopia–Somalia dyad. Barre, the third president of Somalia, used internal discord in Ethiopia as an opportunity to attack and claim a territory he felt was part of Somalia. Barre rose to power in 1969 after a coup and maintained a dictatorship for the length

of his rule until 1991. This quote is indicative of Barre's overall posture: "If you try to force me to stand down, I will leave the city as I found it. I came to power with a gun; only the gun can make me go."⁸⁸ Barre's rule was characterized by a monopoly on intrastate violence and the use of external threats to impose order domestically.

Barre's desire to claim the Ogaden was in part personal. "Not only was the Ogaddeen area more central to the Somali economy and society, but it also was crucial to the legitimacy of Siyadd's regime. Siyadd's mother was from the Ogaadeen clan, and the Ogaadeen people played a central role in the president's tribal coalition."⁸⁹ For Barre, conflict in order to regain lost territory was personal and shows the individual agency of foreign policy actors in the region.

Mengistu of Ethiopia is identified as an accommodationist during this conflict even though he was a tough negotiator. Coming to power in February 1977, Mengistu spent much of his rule, prior to the invasion, eliminating domestic opposition. His rule and time with the Derg was notably violent. Yet Mengistu was not ready for war in 1977 and did not seek to press the territorial issue. In fact, he may have been willing to support Ethiopian devolution of territories.⁹⁰ Notes from a diplomatic meeting between Cuba, Ethiopia, and Somalia in March 1977 indicate that Mengistu was not seeking to push this conflict into a war, while Somalia appeared uncompromising. "This [settlement] proved impossible to attain, because Siad Barre unequivocally rejected all of the suggestions presented at the meeting. While the meeting did not lead to an agreement, nevertheless Siad Barre promised not to attack Ethiopia."⁹¹

Barre's promise to not attack did not hold for long. He doubted that Ethiopia would gain the military support of Cuba and the Soviet Union so quickly and was blinded into action by his massive military buildup and the internal weakness of Ethiopia at the time. This path to war demonstrates that there need not be hardliners on both sides of the conflict to start a war.⁹²

Sequencing and Causal Linkages

Table 2 shows the timing of each important variable in this analysis. The war began in July of 1977. The territorial claim on the Ogaden region was present at Somalian independence in 1960. This issue sparked the beginnings of the rivalry between the two states. Ethiopia was allied to the United States from 1953 to 1977. Ethiopia also acquired an alliance with Kenya in 1963 as an early response to the territorial issue and emerging rivalry with Somalia. In 1974 Somalia joined the Arab League to develop its own alliance ties and counter Ethiopian predation. Arms races are observed in 1972, 1974, 1975, and 1978 in response to these developing alliance ties and the repeated disputes festering between the two states. There is a causal

chain of events that show first a territorial claim, then alliance developments. Rivalry then emerges, and the response by each state is to build up power. With these four cumulative variables (territorial claim, rivalry, alliances, and arms race) in operation, the rise of a strong hardliner coupled with insecurity led to war between the two states in 1977. I now will move on to the Uganda–Tanzanian War to further examine the predictions contained in the steps-to-war theory.

UGANDA–TANZANIA WAR (1978–1979)

Some theories contend that “great men” are responsible for the movements of states throughout history.⁹³ Idi Amin may be such a man, although not of the “great” variety. His impact on Uganda was particularly negative. The hardliner Amin is considered to be the driving factor throughout this analysis because he initiated dyadic processes—the arms races, rivalry, and territorial claims, which are the causes of the Ugandan–Tanzanian War. Amin had a distinguished career with the King’s African Rifles and later Uganda’s own independent armies that was also punctuated by frequent charges of corruption and mismanagement. In January of 1971, Amin organized a coup in Uganda against Milton Obote when he was informed of Obote’s intention to arrest him on charges of fraud and misappropriation of funds.⁹⁴

Prior to the war, Uganda’s economy was weakening due to a sharp downturn in the price of its primary export, coffee. The loss of revenue resulted in difficulties paying for new military equipment. At the same time, internal repression was partially overshadowed by threats against Tanzania.⁹⁵ “As he had done numerous times in the past, Amin tried to use Tanzania as a scapegoat to divert attention from his internal troubles and to cover up the massacre of dissident troops.”⁹⁶

Around May 1978, Amin started to move troops near the Tanzanian border. In July 1978, Radio Uganda broadcast charges of an Obote and Tanzanian planned invasion.⁹⁷ This presented the opportunity for Ugandan troops to “pre-emptively” cross into Tanzania on October 9, 1978, and formally annex the undefended Kagera Salient across the Kagera River boundary a month later.⁹⁸

The Ugandan army was not very effective, or loyal, to Amin and apparently spent most of its time looting Tanzanian territory. Tanzania mobilized its forces and joined with the newly formal rebel group, the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA), to counterinvade Uganda.⁹⁹ “But when Tanzania mobilized her army and went on the offensive, the truth about Amin’s ‘mighty army’ became evident for all to see. Amin’s army was ‘efficient’ in shooting unarmed civilians, but was incapable of fighting a trained army.”¹⁰⁰ Qadhafi of Libya sent 3,000 troops to support Amin, which briefly held off Tanzanian attacks. Tanzania took the capital, Kampala, on April 10, 1979, and Amin fled to Libya and then Saudi Arabia.¹⁰¹

Issues at Stake

The war is classified as “complex territorial power politics” by Vasquez and Valeriano,¹⁰² based on the MID revision codes.¹⁰³ Uganda claimed a portion of Tanzania, which it invaded. The territory fought over has been described as “a small slice of not especially fertile land” situated on the boundary between the two states west of Lake Victoria.¹⁰⁴

A concomitant issue was rebel support operating in the disputed territory. Uganda wanted to control the area under concern because it was a potential strategic base of operations for activities against Amin. “Uganda’s reason for wanting the 710-square mile Kagera salient is clear—it is the main staging ground for anti-Amin activities. But Kampala has given a dubious rationale for the invasion by asserting that the Kagera River was once the recognized line between German and British spheres of influence in East Africa.”¹⁰⁵ Ideology was not a factor in this dispute since Tanzania’s overriding concern with the rule of Amin was due to his ability to destabilize the region and specifically to threaten its territorial integrity rather than any ideological disputes. “Tanzania has practically vowed to topple President Amin.”¹⁰⁶

Sometimes territorial issues are just a pretext for war, yet they are still evident and important. It is relatively easy to mobilize domestic support for territorial issues. It is also likely that a regime can be toppled when it does not press an important territorial claim.¹⁰⁷ This dispute has all of these characteristics. While the territory in question may be of little consequence for Ugandan power, it was nevertheless the clear motivating pretext for war and also characterized the rivalry between the two states. Others¹⁰⁸ may suggest complex interpretations of Amin’s motives in this case, but sometimes a territorial dispute is just a territorial dispute. For much of Amin’s time in power, he desired land in Tanzania. He wanted to “fulfill his dream of seizing a belt of land through northern Tanzania to the port of Tanga, thus providing Uganda with its own access to the sea.”¹⁰⁹

Alliances

Prior to the conflict, Uganda was aligned with the Soviet Union, Sudan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. The alliance with the Soviet Union (1965) provided military equipment and training for Amin’s armed forces. Initially the Soviet Union was weary of supporting Amin but quickly changed its attitude after he broke relations with Britain and Israel. The financial support from Libya and Saudi Arabia also allowed Uganda to survive as a state in the face of complete economic collapse.¹¹⁰ Tanzania established an alliance with Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia that began in 1976 (alliance #3572) to counter the threat of South Africa.

Military Buildups

Uganda was a military state at the time of Amin's coup. Karugire notes that "after independence, the Ugandan army was greatly expanded, not because Uganda needed to defend itself against anyone, but because a greatly expanded army was necessary to control the whole country, if necessary by force."¹¹¹ It can be suggested that Amin was building up his military to maintain domestic rule. Even if this is the case, it still remains that the weapons acquired were threatening to his neighbors and emboldened him to attack first.

Amin frequently requested military support from his informal allies; in fact, his rule depended on foreign support. At different times, his government took money from countries such as China, France, Israel, the United States, and the Soviet Union.¹¹² After being rebuffed by Israel and Britain in 1972 with a formal economic embargo, Amin turned to various Arab republics and the Soviet Union for military assistance. By 1975, \$48 million in military supplies had made their way from Moscow to Amin's army. Libya was also a key partner in the Amin military buildup. "In return for Amin's verbal denunciations of imperialism and Zionism, Gaddafi gave Uganda an immediate loan of \$25 million."¹¹³ The combined support provided Amin with considerable military might. For its international support, Tanzania relied on China. President Julius K. Nyerere's Tanzania received aid, technical assistance, and military supplies from Beijing.¹¹⁴

The news media at the time noted an arms race between Kenya and Uganda on the one hand and the second involving Tanzania, which, fearing the overflow from a possible Kenya–Uganda conflict, bought anti-aircraft missiles from the USSR.¹¹⁵ The COW data on military spending is represented in Table 3.¹¹⁶ Prior to the start of war in 1978 Uganda and Tanzania were racing to build up their respective militaries to deter the other from attacking. Weapons gathered by Amin were also meant to deter internal aggression. Yet the presence of weapons made it all the more likely that Amin would target a neighbor since he had the means to do so. Sample¹¹⁷ notes mutual military buildups in the years 1973–1975 and 1978. The data supports the steps-to-war theoretical expectation that the presence of arms racing prior to the conflict will be observed in the dyad.¹¹⁸

Rivalry

Amin's Uganda had a long-standing rivalry with Tanzania. Once Obote was toppled he maintained residence in Tanzania. In 1972, Obote attempted to send troops into Uganda to overthrow Amin. Although the attempt was aborted, Amin used the event as an excuse to repress his population.¹¹⁹ From this point on, Uganda attempted frequent incursions into Tanzania to mobilize domestic support against the external threat. The *New York*

Table 3: Ugandan–Tanzanian War (1978–1979).

Start date	10/9/78 Uganda invades Tanzania			
Main issue	Territory (Kagera Salient)			
Second issue	Rebel group activity			
Domestic actors	Uganda: Idi Amin (Hardliner)			
Domestic actors	Tanzania: Nyerere (early Hardliner shifts to Accommodationist)			
Alliances				
Uganda–Soviet Union				1965
Uganda–Sudan				Start Year: 1972; alliance #3572
Tanzania–Angola, Mozambique, Zambia				Start Year: 1976; alliance #3572
Arms Races				
<i>Country</i>	1975	1976	1977	1978
Uganda	\$86m	\$99m	\$135.8m	\$156m
Tanzania	n/a	\$97.6m	\$136.5m	\$264.9m
Mutual military buildup: 1974, 1978; Uganda: 1973, 1975 (Sample 2002); 1977–1979 (Gibler, Rider, and Hutchinson 2005)				
Rivalry Coding				
Diehl and Goertz (2000)—Proto				Duration: 1971–1979 w/ 5 MIDs
Thompson (2001)—Strategic				Duration: 1971–1979

Times reported that “Ugandan troops briefly invaded Tanzania and its aircraft bombed a Tanzanian town . . . [in its response] Tanzania led a campaign within the Organization of African Unity and elsewhere against the Amin Government.”¹²⁰ Outright war was averted in 1972 due to international condemnation of the proposed invasion. Somali President Siad Barre was able to negotiate a truce between Tanzania and Uganda on October 7, 1972.¹²¹

After a brief lull, the rivalry flared up again in 1975 after Tanzania refused to attend an OAU meeting in Uganda.¹²² Subsequently Amin supported internal efforts to topple Tanzania’s Nyerere. He made frequent statements that Tanzania was attempting to invade Uganda, announcing falsely that “Tanzania had actually invaded Uganda in July 1974 and September 1975, and that an invasion was imminent in March 1973, August 1975, February 1977 and just prior to the 1978 OAU meeting in Khartoum.”¹²³ Despite these provocations, Tanzania seemed to restrain itself from acting. In fact, during the invasion of Tanzania in 1978, there were so few troops in the invaded area that Uganda quickly took the territory despite Amin’s claims that there was a military buildup at the border.

The source of the rivalry between Uganda and Tanzania appears to be personal. Nyerere of Tanzania had established a close bond with the deposed leader of Uganda, Milton Obote, and consequently opposed Amin on these grounds. One can see from Diehl and Goertz’s coding that in the period preceding the outbreak of the conflict, the dyad was involved in a total of five interstate military disputes. The fifth militarized dispute resulted in the 1978 war with the four previous low-level conflicts laying the foundation. The persistent rivalry between the two states led to increased threat

perceptions and decreasing confidence levels, which led to spiraling hostilities and eventually war.

Hardliners

Amin's rule by force and international intimidation clearly places him into the hardliner category. Amin's frequent suggestions that Tanzania was about to invade (or already had invaded) Uganda made the situation only more intractable while helping him bolster internal support. "I will instruct the Uganda Air Force and Seaborne Regiment to destroy the Tanzanian camps where the enemy is planning to launch another invasion. . . . We must stop them and the only way to do it will be to strike at them before they can enter the country."¹²⁴ This is yet another example of provocative behavior typical of hardliners. Amin never intended to employ diplomacy after 1975 primarily because the domestic economic situation was deteriorating, and maintaining rivalry allowed Amin to perpetuate his monopoly on power.

Nyerere of Tanzania can be faulted for initiating early conflict with his hardline tactics in 1971–1972. His support of the deposed Obote and calls for Amin to be overthrown helped lock the states into rivalrous behavior. Even though he was a domestic peacemaker, his support of the Ugandan opposition directly led to the rivalry between the two states. Yet Nyerere's belligerence had ceased by 1975, and he alone cannot be faulted for the war in 1978. Consequently one finds Nyerere an early hardliner who had different internal problems on his hands by 1978 and shifted to become an accommodationist. Obote maintained such a low profile after 1973 that he never gave a press conference in Tanzania, and his supporters mainly lived in poverty, not gathering financial support from potential allies.¹²⁵ Obote still maintained a posture of encouraging rebellion and dissention, but he was not publicly supported by Tanzania at the time.

Even though Tanzania did not publicly support rebellion against Amin's Uganda, it also did not crack down on rebel activities within its territory, and anti-Ugandan activities seemed to be on the rise in 1978. There was no response from Tanzania to early accusations of its invasion of Uganda in 1978. "Nyerere had years before deciding that it only exacerbated the situation to answer all Amin's ludicrous charges and provocations."¹²⁶ Yet Nyerere did not tolerate Amin and was willing to go to war to rid himself of an important enemy. Nyerere commented, "There will never be peace in East Africa until Amin goes."¹²⁷ Nyerere is a classic case of an accommodationist being dragged into war through necessity.

Sequencing and Causal Linkages

Table 3 details each event on the road to war between Uganda and Tanzania. The war began on October 9, 1978, when Uganda invaded the

Kagera Salient. By April of next year, however, Tanzania was able to regroup and repel the invading Ugandan army, sending Amin fleeing into exile. Uganda sought an early alliance with the Soviet Union in 1964 to gain a military presence in the area. The rivalry between Uganda and Tanzania began in 1971 when Amin became head of state and Tanzania harbored Obote, Uganda's deposed leader. The territory in the Kagera area then became particularly important due to its strategic importance for rebels plotting attacks against Amin.¹²⁸ Early in the life of the rivalry, in 1972, Uganda allied with Sudan. Tanzania did not sign a formal alliance until 1976, two years before the war broke out. There was an early arms race within the dyad in 1974 and, later, in 1977 and 1978.

In this case, a personal rivalry develops between the leaders of Uganda and Tanzania. Territory becomes a primary source of dispute early in the rivalry. Power politics tactics of alliances and arms races also develop early in the rivalry. The spark for war was hardliner Amin's own insecurities and his desire to root out insurgents operating on disputed territory.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Some wars in Africa do indeed follow the traditional steps-to-war pattern, with modifications, as evidenced by the data analysis and case study investigations. First, there is a territorial issue that brings up either ethnic nationalistic claims or the claim is tied to rebel group activity in the territory. While territory may not dominate the entire course of conflict (regime conflicts are also important in Africa), it typically is a background factor that influences the conflicts in question and can provide personal motivations for leaders to launch combat operations. Alliances are then formed and military buildups position the states involved against their main enemies, and all sides descend into a conflict spiral. Rivalries emerge with consequences for all states throughout the region (both wars dragged third parties into the conflict). Finally, a hardliner(s) in power pushes the states toward war.

The problem with the outlined path is that most wars in Africa are not of the interstate variety and instead are indicative of intrastate war patterns. By and large, the African region is an interstate war peace system in that it has seen a comparative lack of war in relation to other regions. The norms of judicial statehood have held up. Yet this outcome is likely a relic of the past, and we will see more and more direct interstate conflict in Africa over border demarcation issues as the states in the system gain the ability to effectively challenge other nation-states or breakaway from their colonial partitions (e.g., Southern Sudan).

The new factor relevant to the steps-to-war explanation uncovered by this analysis is the importance of domestic armed rebel groups. These groups may

push states toward power politics strategies so leadership may retain their grasp on power. It seems that rebel groups can be triggers to steps and represent the factor that sets off the causal mechanism in the analysis. As Lemke notes, power politics theories can help explain action by nonstate actors, and the politics processes examined here can also be triggered by nonstate actors.¹²⁹ Future research on territorial conflict in the modern era would wisely focus on the types of activities promoted within contested territorial claims. In both cases examined here (and also the cases left out: Eritrean-Ethiopian War and the Second Congo War) there is evidence that the territorial claims became important because rebels were using these territories as bases of operations. The contested nature of these claims makes them in effect regions without governance and acceptable locations to base rebel and terrorist activities. This is a new pattern of interactions that scholars of territorial questions must study to remain relevant in the current era of state interactions because these actors can control the destiny of territorial questions.¹³⁰

The overwhelming causal mechanism in this analysis tends to be perceptions of insecurity. It is the insecurity that power politics tactics impose on targeted states that leads to arms racing or alliance seeking, which then results in conflict and war. Insecurity is caused by the opposing actor's strong assertions of (1) territorial rights, the search for (2) formal allies and (3) armed rebel groups, and the (4) acquisition of military hardware. The insecurity caused by these power politics tactics creates opportunities for military action. The willingness to act in a confrontational manner is further strengthened with repeated disputes that fester in the form of rivalry, rebel groups, and hardliners who come to power and are willing to use violence to achieve their goals. These power politics moves can be observed in each case. Somalia experienced insecurity due to the rising military power and allies of Ethiopia, so it targeted the Ogaden region. Uganda's insecurity stemmed from the rebel strongholds in Tanzanian territory and the allies of Tanzania. In the Uganda-Tanzania case, a combination of territory and rebel forces in operation are the prime causes of war, while the Somalian aggression fits the pattern of traditional territorial aggrandizement.

What policy advice can one give to solve this recurring pattern? In terms of Africa, there are many possibilities. Arguably the most viable solution is to encourage the further development and strengthening of the African Union (AU), successor to the Organization of African Unity, as a facilitator of negotiations to avert territorial disputes. By relying on the steps-to-war framework, the AU could enhance its mission by identifying and mediating active territorial disputes among its members, monitoring alliance-building patterns and inhibiting their further development, helping to enforce the UN arms embargo to stifle military buildups, and deterring rivalry development by promoting confidence building measures. The only institutions that seem to work in active prevention of war are those that allow admission based only on the

renunciation of territorial conquest and readjustment, as was evident in the Concert of Europe in the early 1800s. The AU could work in a similar manner and limit the engagement of war in the region by curtailing territorial disputes before they erupt into war.

The frequency of unsettled and unaddressed territorial questions in the region, festering rivalries, alliance building patterns, armed rebel groups, and arms acquisitions makes the African region a location ripe for future war. This research becomes even more relevant on the eve independence for Southern Sudan. The unsettled boundaries, particularly the city of Abeyi, for the new state will likely be a source of rivalry and conflict for decades to come. Based on this research, it seems the steps-to-war explanation applies to more than just the European region. Future research should help develop early warning indicators of regional wars and propose ways to mediate territorial disputes before they become personal or become attached to rebel or resource claims.

NOTES

1. I thank Errol Henderson, Douglas Gibler, Christopher Zorn, Victor Marin, John Van Benthuisen, and John Vasquez for comments or suggestions on early drafts. Megan Preusker, Vitaliy Vozynek, and Michele Zetek provided research support.
2. See John Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) or John Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
3. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, 146–147.
4. See John A. Vasquez and Brandon Valeriano, “Classification of Interstate War,” *Journal of Politics* 72, no. 2 (2010): 292–309; John Vasquez and Marie T. Henehan, “Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816–1992,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38 (2001): 123–138.
5. John Vasquez, “The Probability of War, 1816–1992,” *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 1–27; Paul Senese and John Vasquez, “Assessing the Steps-to-war,” *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005): 607–633; Paul Senese and John A. Vasquez, *The Steps to War: An Empirical Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Michael Colaresi, Karen Rasler, and William R. Thompson, *Strategic Rivalries in World Politics: Position, Space, and Conflict Escalation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
6. John Vasquez, “The Causes of the Second World War in Europe: A New Scientific Explanation,” *International Political Science Review* 17, no. 2 (1996): 161–178; John Vasquez and Douglas Gibler, “The Steps to War in Asia, 1931–45” *Security Studies* 10, no. 3 (2002): 1–45.
7. Douglas Lemke, “African Lessons for International Relations Research,” *World Politics* 56 (2003): 115.
8. Errol Henderson, “Disturbing the Peace: African Warfare, Political Inversion and the Universality of the Democratic Peace Thesis,” *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (2008): 25–58.
9. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*.
10. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited*.

11. Richard Mansbach and John Vasquez, *In Search of Theory: A New Paradigm for Global Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
12. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*; Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*.
13. Errol Henderson, *Neopatrimonial Balancing and Africa's International Conflicts* (2010), unpublished manuscript.
14. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).
15. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*.
16. John Vasquez and Brandon Valeriano "Territory as a Source of Conflict and a Road to Peace," in *Sage Handbook on Conflict Resolution*, eds. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and I. William Zartman (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009).
17. Vasquez and Valeriano, "Classification of Interstate War."
18. See Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*, Chapters 5 and 6.
19. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*.
20. Vasquez (1993) does not suggest that a hardliner has to be existence on both sides, only one side. The key caveat is threats needs to be reciprocated, and accommodationists can and often are dragged into war by domestic elites or the mass public.
21. Douglas Gibler and Meredith Sarkees "Coding Manual for v3.0 of the Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Data Set, 1816–2000," Typescript (2002).
22. Susan Sample, "The Outcomes of Military Buildups: Minor States vs. Major Powers," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 6 (2002): 669–692.
23. It should be noted that military buildups, especially in Africa, may be motivated by internal domestic concerns. Yet the important point for the theory is that these actions, no matter who they are directed at, tend to threaten a potential enemy in the neighborhood.
24. Michael Colaresi, *Scare Tactics: The Politics of International Rivalry* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005).
25. Vasquez and Valeriano, "Classification of Interstate War."
26. Henderson, "Disturbing the Peace."
27. Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*.
28. *Ibid.*, 192.
29. A MID is a use, display, or threat of force by explicit government sanctioned actors. These instances of force can include simple threats all the way to outright warfare.
30. Vasquez, "The Probability of War."
31. Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, et al., "The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21 (2004): 133–154.
32. Consult Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*, 185–191, for a full explanation of the research design and variables. Revision type codes in MID are used for the issue variables of territory, regime, policy, and other. All alliances are politically relevant alliances in that they have to be active in the region of the dispute. The rivalry variable in use looks at the number of disputes prior to the onset of war with the expectation that the more disputes a pair of states engage in, the more likely it is for there to be war. Some may have concerns with using this variable as a "rivalry" variable, so I have

also used the Thompson rivalry indicator in Model 2. Arms races are taken from the work of Sample.

33. Christopher Zorn, "A Solution to Separation in Binary Response Models," *Political Analysis* 13 (2005): 157–170.

34. David Firth, "Bias Reduction of Maximum Likelihood Estimates," *Biometrika* 80 no. 1 (1993): 27–38.

35. *Stata* is a commonly used statistical program: www.stata.com.

36. Those states only allied together were not counted as positive observations.

37. William Thompson, "Identifying Rivals and Rivalries in World Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 45 (2001): 557–586.

38. Colaresi et al., *Strategic Rivalries in World Politics*, 70.

39. Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*.

40. George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.

41. George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 205.

42. Meredith Sarkees, Frank Wayman, et al. "Inter-state, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution Over Time, 1816–1997," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 no. 1 (2003): 49–70.

43. Vasquez and Valeriano (2010) provide codes for each variable for all interstate participants wars in the system.

44. Paul Diehl and Gary Goertz, *War and Peace in International Rivalry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.).

45. Thompson, "Identifying Rivalries in World Politics."

46. Vasquez (2004) traditionally utilizes the dispute density approach to rivalry, but this is because the analysis in Senese and Vasquez (2008) was begun before the Thompson (2001) data became available and the authors felt that there is a peak point at which a rivalry is war prone. I make no similar assumption and follow Colaresi et al. (2008) in the use of the strategic rivalry data to also test the theory.

47. Douglas Gibler and Meredith Sarkees, "Measuring Alliances: The Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Dataset, 1816–2000," *Journal of Peace Research* 41 no. 2 (2004), 211–222.

48. Sample, "The Outcomes of Military Buildups."

49. Douglas Gibler, Toby Rider, et al., "Taking Arms Against a Sea of Troubles: Interdependent Racing and the Likelihood of Conflict in Rival States," *Journal of Peace Research* 42 no. 2 (2005): 131–147.

50. An arms race is characterized as a mutual process, yet this measure may be inaccurate in that the arms races may not be concurrent and the reaction by an "other" state may lag for years as it seeks to reorganize its military or find arms suppliers in a fractured international environment.

51. Brandon Valeriano and Victor Marin. "Causal Pathways to Interstate War: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of the Steps to War Theory," *Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies*, 2 (Summer 2010): 1–26.

52. See Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*.

53. David Collier, "Translating Quantitative Methods for Qualitative Researchers: The Case of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* 89 (2005): 461–466.

54. David Laitin and Said Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 131.
55. Zewde Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855–1991* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2001), 182.
56. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 135.
57. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 253.
58. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 141.
59. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 141–142.
60. Valeriano and Vasquez, “Classification of War,” Table 2; see also Paul Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 222–223.
61. A complex territorial war is a war with more than two parties fighting over an issue of a territorial nature.
62. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 132; I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1998), 110.
63. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 124, 129.
64. http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/african/docs/ahsg/ahsg4.doc.
65. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 138.
66. Senese and Vasquez, *The Steps to War*.
67. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 201.
68. Alliances #3120 and #3523 according to Gibler and Sarkees, “Coding Manual.”
69. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 184.
70. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 187.
71. Tom Cooper, “Ogaden War, 1977–1978,” ACIG.org.
72. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 139.
73. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 254.
74. While counterintuitive, having the same ally is still a step to war since research simply asks if the sides have an outside alliance partner. The point is that allies embolden states to take tougher stances on issues and thus push states toward war. In this case, both sides are briefly allied to the Soviet Union, but Somalia eventually loses its patron in response to its actions against the more important Ethiopia.
75. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 233.
76. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 235.
77. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 234.
78. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 241.
79. John Kandell, “Poor Nations Are the Buyers,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 1977.
80. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 139–140.
81. Sample, “The Outcomes of Military Buildups: Minor States vs. Major Powers.” Arms races do not have to be observed the year prior to or during a war since weapons endure long after acquired.
82. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 234.

83. Gibler, Rider, et al., "Taking Arms Against a Sea of Troubles."
84. J. David Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816–1985," *International Interactions* 14 (1987): 115–132.
85. Gary Goertz and Paul Diehl, "The Initiation and Termination of Enduring Rivalries: The Impact of Political Shocks," *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (1995): 30–52.
86. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 136.
87. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 182.
88. Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Custom of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 414.
89. Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 140.
90. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, 233.
91. Transcript of the Meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Haig and Cuban Vice Premier Carlos Rodriguez, November 23, 1981; the document is on file at the National Security Archive.
92. Vasquez (1993) never suggests that both sides need hardliners in power, only one.
93. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (New York: Stokes and Brothers, 1888); Alexander George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13 (1969): 190–222.
94. Samwiri R. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1996).
95. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (New York: Free Press, 2005).
96. Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1982).
97. Avirgan and Honey, *The War In Uganda*.
98. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*.
99. James Ciment, *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II* (New York: M.E. Sharp, 2007).
100. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*.
101. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 3.
102. Vasquez and Valeriano, "Classification of War," Table 2.
103. see also Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, 224–225.
104. John Darnton, "Implications of Uganda's Invasion Overshadow the Scale of Fighting," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1978.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Colaresi, *Scare Tactics*.
108. Ibrahim Msabaha, "War on Idi Amin: Toward a Synthetic Theory of Intervention," *The African Review*, 12 no. I (1995): 24–43.
109. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 11.

110. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 83, 25.
111. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*.
112. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 11–13.
113. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 11.
114. Anthony Hughes, “Disintegration of the Community of East Africa,” *The New York Times*, March 6, 1977.
115. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 117.
116. Singer, “Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816–1985.”
117. Sample, “The Outcomes of Military Buildups.”
118. It should be noted that Senese and Vasquez (2008) frequently question if an event (arms race or alliance) occurs within five years of a war, not one year as commonly assumed.
119. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*.
120. Ibid.
121. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 36.
122. P. Godfrey Okoth, “The OAU and the Uganda-Tanzania War, 1978–79,” *Journal of African Studies*, 4 no. 3 (1987): 152–162.
123. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 37.
124. Judith Listowel, *Amin* (New York: IUP Books, 1973).
125. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 39.
126. Avirgan and Honey, *War in Uganda*, 51.
127. “Tanzania and Uganda: Behind the Lies,” *The Economist*, December 2, 1978, p. 66.
128. This factor represents a classification category typically left out of territorial analysis. The use of a region for rebel or terrorists actors can prompt the territory in question to become more important than it would be otherwise.
129. Douglas Lemke, “Power Politics and Wars without States,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (2008): 774–786.
130. Douglas Lemke, “Intra-national IR in Africa,” *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011): 49–70.
131. The 1977 defense agreements were signed prior to the war to support the Ethiopians, but a formal “20 year friendship” was ratified in 1978 (Alliance #3583).