

Issue Rivalries

Sara McLaughlin Mitchell
Cameron G. Thies

341 Schaeffer Hall
Department of Political Science
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
sara-mitchell@uiowa.edu
cameron-thies@uiowa.edu

Abstract: This paper expands upon the traditional interstate rivalry concept by focusing on two conceptual dimensions of interstate rivalry: issues and militarization. The first dimension captures the number of distinct issues that characterize a dyadic interstate relationship, such as repeated clashes between states over border disputes, maritime zones, or cross-border rivers. The second dimension is very similar to the dispute density approach to rivalry, and captures the number of militarized incidents over specific contentious issues. The first dimension of issue rivalry is coded by identifying pairs of states with two or more (simultaneous) contentious issues. The second dimension of militarized rivalry is coded for single issues (such as a border dispute), capturing the presence of two or more militarized incidents over that issue in the past. Empirical analyses of these two new rivalry measures in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe show some important variation in these rivalry dimensions. Issue rivals and militarized rivals are significantly more likely to employ militarized force and peaceful negotiation techniques to resolve geopolitical issues in comparison with dyads that experience contentious issues in non-rivalry settings. On the other hand, dyads characterized by issue rivalry do not experience disputes that escalate to high levels of violence, such as fatalities or wars. It is only prior militarization of a specific contentious issue that leads states down the path to war.

Forthcoming, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*

A previous version of this paper was presented at the University of Alabama Conference on Territory and Rivalry, October 3, 2009. We are grateful to conference participants and our colleagues at the University of Iowa for their useful comments and feedback at the Political Science Workshop Series.

Interstate rivalries have garnered a great deal of attention in the interstate conflict literature, which is understandable given the large number of militarized disputes and wars that take place in the context of rivalry (Goertz and Diehl, 1992; Vasquez, 1996). Conceptualizations of rivalry typically focus on competitiveness, threats, spatial consistency, time, and hostility (Diehl and Goertz, 2000; Thompson, 2001; Hewitt 2005). Some scholars point to the importance of contested issues in rivalry relationships, such as border disputes, although empirical measures of rivalry rarely capture this issue dimension of rivalry (Bennett, 1998). We wish to bring greater clarity to the conceptualization and measurement of rivalry in order to continue to develop this important area of research in the conflict literature.

We suggest that the focus on contested issues is essential for rivalry research to continue to make progress for three reasons. First, existing approaches often conceptualize the substance of rivalry in terms of issues, but generally fail to incorporate them into empirical measures of rivalry. Thus, the rivalry literature suffers from a mismatch between conceptual and operational measures of rivalry. Second, existing approaches require that militarization characterize rivalry relationships, whereas a focus on issues as the substance of rivalries may lead us to observe rivalries that do not become militarized. Third, rivalry research has been criticized in terms of the “hot hand” phenomenon—that the series of disputes assumed to be causally connected in a rivalry may actually be no different from a stochastically generated series of disputes (Gartzke and Simon, 1999). Issues provide a convincing resolution to this problem, since they can be used to explain the origin of a rivalry prior to the first militarized dispute as well as provide the causal connection between the subsequent series of disputes.

In order to resolve these outstanding problems in the rivalry literature, we develop two new measures of interstate rivalry that take into account more directly the contested issues at

stake in an interstate relationship. We argue that rivalry can be conceptualized along two dimensions: 1) an *issue* dimension, which can be captured by the number of distinct diplomatic issues that characterizes a dyadic interaction, and 2) a *militarized* dimension, which can be coded based on the number of militarized attempts to settle a particular contentious issue. The first dimension allows us to measure rivalry independently of militarization, while the second dimension makes it possible to link a series of militarized disputes to a specific issue.

We test the effects of these new issue rivalry and militarized rivalry measures using data from the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe in the past two centuries (Hensel et al., 2008). We find that pairs of states are more likely to use militarized force over contentious issues when the territorial, maritime, or river issue at stake is part of a broader issue rivalry or militarized rivalry. However, we find that only the militarized rivalry dimension significantly predicts the escalation of disputes to high levels of violence, such as fatalities and wars. This suggests that issue rivalries are competitive, but can be managed in peaceful ways. On the other hand, issue claims that have experienced militarized conflict, especially early in the dyadic relationship, set the stage for further disputes with higher levels of escalation. This confirms patterns observed in the rivalry and crisis bargaining literatures showing that disputes are indeed related over time, and that the choice of a militarized foreign policy tool leads states more often down the path to war.

Our paper is organized as follows. First, we describe existing conceptualizations and empirical measures of rivalry in the conflict literature. Our review focuses on the three dominant problems we have identified: the mismatch between conceptual and empirical measures of rivalry, the requirement that militarization is an element of all rivalries, and the “hot hand” critique. This is followed by the development of our own conceptualization of rivalry focused on

the two dimensions described above, issues and militarization. The third section of the paper describes the operational measures of these new rivalry concepts. We then evaluate the empirical effects of issue rivalry and militarized rivalry on states' peaceful and militarized conflict management strategies. We conclude with a discussion of other ways in which these rivalry measures give us new purchase for measuring rivalry duration, for linking conflict management strategies dynamically over time, and for thinking about how states link negotiations across different issues.

Conceptualizing and Measuring Interstate Rivalry

The idea of incorporating issues into the identification of rivalries is as old as the rivalry literature itself. The concept of rivalry requires that something provides the impetus for the initiation, duration, and termination of such a relationship. Contentious issues are an excellent candidate to fulfill all three roles. As we demonstrate below, most conceptualizations of rivalry accept that underlying issues are the foundation for rivalry relationships. However, most operational definitions do not explicitly account for issues, or issues are only used to identify one aspect of the rivalry, such as termination. Most approaches to rivalry also assume that issues must be militarized—even to the extent of operationally identifying a rivalry based on the number of militarized disputes. We suggest that not all rivalries will become militarized, thus the current approaches not only fail to identify non-militarized rivalries, but they fail to theorize the differences between these kinds of rivalry. The rivalry literature has also been criticized for failing to provide an endogenous explanation of the first in a series of disputes that empirically identifies a rivalry. We suggest that contested issues may provide the causal origin and linkages across disputes in rivalries, thus effectively countering the “hot hand” critique.

Issues and Militarization in Current Approaches to Rivalry

Goertz and Diehl (1992: 153) initially conceptualized enduring rivalries based on three components: competitiveness, time, and spatial consistency. States in enduring rivalries are thought to be in competition over some tangible or intangible good, which is framed in terms of issues, such as natural resources or territory. While issues would seem to provide the linkage between the conflicts in rivalries, Goertz and Diehl (1992: 153) also note that “one must conceptualize rivalry as more than a continuing conflict over one issue or set of issues.” The connection also requires temporal proximity or some other “thread” that links the competitions, such as regional hegemony or an intangible good like influence. This stance reflects the authors’ focus on militarized competition, which is more apparent in their operational definition of enduring rivalry: “conflicts between the same two states that involve at least five militarized disputes in a period lasting at least ten years” (Goertz and Diehl, 1992: 155). Issues, or any other “thread” that links disputes in the conceptual definition, are assumed but not measured.

Goertz and Diehl (1993) subsequently delve more carefully into the conceptual basis of enduring rivalries by considering alternative explanations for such relationships, with issues provided as one possibility.¹ Yet this discussion of the theoretical basis of enduring rivalries did not affect the conceptual definition developed in their previous article. In fact, Goertz and Diehl (1993: 154) are more conceptually explicit in this article that the competition must be militarized, which more closely matches their aforementioned operational definition.² On an operational level, they recognize the difficulty of coding the beginning and ending dates of a

¹ Although not framed in terms of issues, the political shocks Goertz and Diehl (1995) investigate, such as world wars, dramatic territorial changes, and changes in the distribution of power, as well as domestic shocks, such as new states and civil wars, often have issues at their base. Such shocks may arise from issue-based competitions and may ultimately lead to the onset of new issues.

² The militarized aspect of the rivalry approach is exceptionally clear in the conceptual definition provided in Goertz and Diehl (1996: 292): “a rivalry relationship is a militarized competition between the same pair of states over a given period of time.”

rivalry using the dispute and time density approach. The conditions that give rise to rivalry logically must begin before the first dispute and even a peace treaty between two states may not signal the end of a rivalry. After comparing a number of competing MID-based approaches, they note how the operational definitions produce dramatically different lists of rivalries based on the number of required disputes. Goertz and Diehl (1993: 163) observe that most definitions rely on temporal proximity to imply a connection between disputes, but few link disputes with issues.

More recently, Diehl and Goertz (2000) have drawn conceptually on issues as a way to identify the beginning and ending dates of a rivalry, as well as a means to link the disputes within the rivalry. The following excerpt from Diehl and Goertz (2000: 23-34) seems to moderate their stance on the importance of militarization to the rivalry concept.

What characterizes a rivalry relationship is not military force, but conflict over one issue or set of issues. Issue constancy over time thus permits one to say that all the competition in the rivalry belongs to the 'same' relationship. The advantage of issue conceptions is that they make one more certain that the various incidents in a rivalry belong together as part of the same relationship. Because the issue or issues remain constant, one can link the various disputes of a rivalry. In addition, this approach makes it easier to code the beginning and end of rivalries. Once the issue or issues have been resolved, the rivalry is over.

Yet, the actual operationalization of this issue-based approach is only partially incorporated in the most recent iteration of their work (Klein, Goertz and Diehl, 2006). The rivalry concept in this latest version adds a requirement for linked conflict, in which "the interrelation of issues primarily determines whether disputes belong to the same rivalry" (Klein, Goertz and Diehl, 2006: 337). Issues may stay the same through the course of a rivalry, or they may change yet still be part of the same rivalry. Yet, the beginning and ending dates of a rivalry are still tied to the militarized disputes, or the "behavioral manifestation," of rivalry; the way in which issues are identified is not entirely clear.

Thompson has been very critical of the aforementioned dispute density approaches to rivalry. Thompson (1995) objected to identifying rivalries based on the number of disputes that any pair of states might engage in over the course of their history. He argues that this approach produces lists of rivalries that lack face validity, often as a result of huge capability imbalances between the opponents (e.g. US-Haiti, Russia-Sweden). Many historically relevant great power rivalries also fail to be classified as rivals, such Great Britain and France in the 19th Century (Thompson, 1999). The dispute density approach sometimes misses important minor power rivalries as well, such as inter-Arab rivalries.

Thompson (1995: 200) suggests focusing on the level of identification and recognition that distinguishes a rivalry from lesser types of competition. The key here is non-anonymity—rivals must recognize each other as such. Thompson (1995: 200) grounds this mutual recognition in issues, following Vasquez's (1993: 76) contention "that issues are approached and ultimately defined not in terms of one's own value satisfaction, but in terms of what the gaining or loss of a stake will mean to one's competitor." This is measured by looking at the "key decision makers' own observations about who they thought their principal enemies and opponents were" (Thompson, 1995: 201). Only "principal" opponents are considered rivals, and this identification may change over time as the issues at stake change.

Thompson also argues for a distinction between positional and spatial rivalries, which blends the issues at stake with the capabilities of the actors. Only more powerful states are concerned with positional gains and losses, including great powers at the level of the international system and regional powers at the regional level. Positional rivalries require rough symmetry in capabilities and tend to have more deadly consequences (e.g., France-Germany, US-USSR). Spatial rivalries concerning the control of territory are much more common and less

deadly (e.g., Argentina-Chile, Greece-Turkey). They also do not require capability symmetry between the participants. The distinction between positional and spatial rivalries can be cast in terms of the different types of issues under contention (Vasquez, 1996; Thies, 2001a: 695-697; Thies, 2001b: 401-405). For example, Thies (2001b) argues that territorial issues form the basis for a form of territorial nationalism that linked the series of conflicts comprising the Argentine-Chilean spatial rivalry.³

Thompson's (1995) principal rivalries approach morphed into his strategic rivalry approach. Conceptually, strategic rivals must view each other as "(a) competitors, (b) the source of actual or latent threats that pose some possibility of becoming militarized, and (c) enemies" (Thompson, 2001: 560). The requirement that strategic rivals must be competitors subsumes the aforementioned spatial and positional rivalry distinction, since the state that is viewed as a competitor is largely determined by relative capabilities and location. The enemy condition ensures the non-anonymity of states in a rivalry. The source of actual and latent threats could certainly involve issues, such as territory or status in the system. Operationally, strategic rivals are identified by examining the foreign policy histories of states to identify when key decision makers viewed each other as meeting the aforementioned criteria, in much the same way as proposed for principal rivalries. Even so, identifying precise beginning and ending dates is acknowledged to be a difficult process. It is also difficult to know how exactly issues figure into the coding of strategic rivalry given the subjective coding process used in this approach.

The "Hot Hand" Critique

³ Positional and spatial rivalries are also thought to have different causes and effects, thus the need for a conceptual distinction between them that is ignored in the dispute density approach (Colaresi, Rasler and Thompson, 2008). For example, Thies (2001a) has argued that different social psychological mechanisms are likely to be driving competition and socialization between states with different levels of capabilities.

Thompson is not alone in criticizing the MID-based rivalry literature. Gartzke and Simon (1999: 785) argue that researchers have simply assumed that previous disputes within a dyad are “the primary explanation of subsequent disputes within conflict dyads.” They suggest that what is required to successfully make this argument is the identification of a cause for the initial dispute in a series, which is omitted in the enduring rivalry approach. They argue that other theories of war or conflict are left to explain the initiation of enduring rivalries, since this literature lacks an endogenous explanation for the first dispute.⁴ Without an endogenous explanation, any theory that can account for an initial dispute is as good as enduring rivalry in accounting for subsequent disputes. Enduring rivalries are therefore neither a necessary or sufficient condition to explain recurrent conflict. Much like a basketball player successfully making a series of baskets in a row, a series of dyadic militarized disputes would appear systematically related, but could simply be driven by a random process. In order to avoid the “hot hand” phenomenon, one must show that a series of events are linked causally—or in their empirical estimation, that these events occur significantly differently from a series of unrelated events. Gartzke and Simon (1999) find that the number of dispute series classified as enduring rivalries is consistent with the number of dispute series generated by a stochastic process. In essence, the international system is generating “high-frequency series of low-probability dispute events,” or what appears to be the hot hand of enduring rivalries.

Colaresi and Thompson (2002) respond by arguing that the rivalry context itself is what changes the decision maker’s calculation about how to react to issues that arise between states. In a rivalry context, otherwise objective information is processed through the lens of mistrust and

⁴ For example, Goertz and Diehl (1996) explicitly suggest that many of the existing explanations for war may be suitable for rivalry as well. Lemke and Reed (2001) caution that those who study any rivalry dynamic should also control for the conditions that make rivalry more likely in the first place in their study of great powers and the rivalry-war process.

the history of past conflict. This results in crisis triggers (e.g., threats, sanctions, mobilization military forces) that ultimately lead to the escalation of conflict. As Colaresi and Thompson (2002: 269) note, “as states continue to come into conflict, the number and importance of issues may increase. Therefore, crises involving protracted conflict/rivalry should be more prone to multiple and high salience issues, as well as greater violence.” While this logic drawn from the protracted conflict literature (e.g., Azar et al., 1978; Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997) makes a great deal of sense for understanding the linkage between crises and disputes, it does not address the problem of explaining the initial crisis/dispute as identified by Gartzke and Simon (1999). This requires us to explain the origin of the rivalry context itself, rather than assume the existence of a rivalry context that operates to connect crises and disputes. However, we believe that the centrality of issues in this discussion moves us in the right direction.

Bennett’s work on rivalry termination comes closest to dealing with this criticism, as he tried to incorporate issues into his conceptual and operational definitions of rivalry. Bennett (1996: 160) conceptualized “interstate rivalry” as “a dyad in which two states disagree over the resolution of some issue(s) between them for an extended period of time, leading them to commit substantial resources (military, economic, or diplomatic) toward opposing each other, and in which relatively frequent diplomatic or military challenges to the disputed status quo are made by one or both of the states.” The issues at stake can include territory, external political policies (e.g., promotion of religion or ideology), or internal political policies (e.g., treatment of ethnic minorities or presence of a particular leader in power). Bennett also recognizes that the issues at stake may change over the course of the rivalry. He acknowledges that issue disagreements can occur even among relatively friendly states, but it is only when such disagreements are characterized by the lack of willingness to compromise and the willingness to use military force

to resolve the disagreement that we see rivalries form; hence militarization is still an important requirement of rivalry. The end of a rivalry occurs when formal agreements are signed or public renunciations of claims are issued by the rivals.

Operationally, Bennett (1996) modifies Wayman and Jones's (1991) MID-based approach to rivalry, which requires 5 MIDs, spanning a period of 25 years with no more than a 10 year gap between disputes unless the primary issue at stake is unresolved. The major modification is the requirement that the issues at stake in the dyad are connected over the life of the rivalry. Rivalries end once the primary issue at stake in the rivalry is formally resolved (Bennett 1996: 173-174). The beginning of the rivalry is still coded based on the date of the first MID, thus Bennett fails to fully anticipate Gartzke and Simon's (1999) critique. Bennett (1996; 1997; 1998) finds that highly salient issues (border or homeland territory) increase the duration of a rivalry.

We believe that the move toward incorporating issues into the dispute density approaches to rivalry is a step in the right direction. Rather than start with disputes and add issues, as in Bennett (1996; 1997; 1998) or Klein, Goertz and Diehl (2006), we start with issues. Just as issues proved useful in documenting the linkage between disputes (Klein, Goertz and Diehl, 2006) or the termination of rivalry (Bennett, 1996: 1997; 1998), so can they be useful to document the initiation of a rivalry. As Gartzke and Simon (1999) argued, any causally meaningful definition of rivalry must account for the initial dispute. Issues can be documented as existing prior to militarized conflict, as we can track their origins back to the beginnings of diplomatic contention over the contested issues. Our approach also allows for some rivalries to exist without militarized conflict unlike the prevailing approaches in the literature. Issues can then form the linkage across a rivalry with or without militarized disputes. Finally, the

resolution of the underlying issue(s) allows us to date the termination of a rivalry more accurately. In general, we believe that our issue-based approach to rivalry provides a much closer connection between conceptual and operational definitions of rivalry than currently found in the literature and resolves some of the main critiques of rivalry research.

Issue Rivalry

The issue-based approach to world politics challenges the realist notion that states' foreign policies are guided only by broad strategic goals, such as the pursuit of power (Rosenau 1971; O'Leary 1976; Potter 1980; Mansbach and Vasquez 1981; Randle 1987; Diehl 1992; Vasquez 1993; Hensel 2001; Hensel et al 2008). In this viewpoint, states compete over specific issues, which can be defined as "a disputed point or question, the subject of a conflict or controversy" (Randle, 1987: 1). Examples of contested issues include border disputes, the use or ownership of rivers or maritime areas, regime survival, the treatment of individuals abroad, and economic interests for firms and industries. Issues have tangible values to states, such as security, survival, and wealth, and intangible values, such as identity, justice, independence, and status. Issues that are salient along both dimensions, such as territorial disputes, are more likely to result in militarized attempts to settle the issue at stake.⁵ Cooperation is also more frequent when highly salient issues are involved, as disputing states will seek out peaceful negotiations more frequently (Hensel 2001; Hensel et al 2008).

The issue-based approach tends to focus on the variation across issues by capturing the salience of the contested issue. For example, Huth and Allee (2002) code several variables related to the salience of territorial claims, such as strategic importance and ethnic kinsmen

⁵ For more discussion of how issue salience relates to states' peaceful and militarized conflict management strategies, see O'Leary (1976), Mansbach and Vasquez (1981), Vasquez (1993), Huth (1996), Hensel (2001), Huth and Allee (2002), Hensel and Mitchell (2005), and Hensel et al (2008).

living in the area. Hensel et al (2008) create a twelve point scale to capture the salience of three issues: territorial claims, maritime claims, and river claims. Maritime areas are delineated based on the presence of resources, such as oil and migratory fishing stocks, as well as strategic choke points. River salience is coded based on factors like navigational importance, hydroelectric power, and pollution. As noted above, most of the action in issue empirical models stems from variation in foreign policy strategies for highly salient issues relative to less important ones.

While the issue approach has given us great purchase for understanding the management of contentious issues, scholars have not fully explored the broader rivalry context of issue management. Some pairs of states contend primarily over a single issue while other dyads have a variety of distinct issues ongoing at any given point in time. While some of the conceptual work on rivalry notes the importance of issues, it is unclear how exactly issues matter. Some discussions imply a focal issue, such as a border dispute, that results in repeated militarized disputes over time. Others note that the issues at stake could evolve over the course of the rivalry, which is why the conceptual emphasis often shifts to the relevance of leaders' threat perceptions about their rivals, as Thompson's (1995, 2001) approach illustrates.

In this section, we describe the process by which interstate issue claims arise and the foreign policy strategies states employ to resolve them. As we show, the broader context within which a single issue is handled matters; dyads with many different diplomatic points of disagreement handle their issues differently than dyads with only one primary geopolitical issue in contention. Pairs of states that have militarized an issue historically also handle the management of geopolitical issues in ways that are distinct from dyads that have used primarily peaceful conflict management strategies.

The Onset of Issue Claims

There are many different types of issues that could become the focus of diplomatic disagreements between countries ranging from security issues to economic issues to the treatment of foreign nationals living abroad. In this paper, we focus our attention on geopolitical issues that involve competing interstate claims over the ownership or usage of a land or water geographical space. This includes territorial disputes over the ownership of a specific piece of territory, such as the British-Argentine conflict over the Falklands Islands and the Bolivia-Paraguay conflict over the Chaco Boreal. The use or abuse of rivers that cross interstate borders can also result in diplomatic disagreement. Examples of river conflicts include the Nicaragua-Costa Rica dispute over the San Juan River and the Syria-Israel conflict over the Jordan River. Maritime disagreements have been frequent in the post-WWII era as well, including the British-Icelandic spar in the 1970s over fishing rights off the Icelandic coast and the Canada-Spain Turbot war in the mid 1990s, which resulted in the Canadians firing on a Spanish trawler.

In this paper, we do not fully problematize the formation of new issue claims.⁶ Instead, our sample of cases includes only those pairs of states in the Western Hemisphere or Western Europe that have at least one diplomatic disagreement over territorial, maritime, or river issues between 1816-2001.⁷ Opportunities for new geopolitical interstate claims depend on a wide variety of factors, many of which can not be directly manipulated by state leaders. One important factor is a state's geographical configuration and its topographical features. States that share very long land borders, such as the United States and Canada, may have more

⁶ We use the term "claim" in the same manner as Hensel et al (2008) to distinguish diplomatic disagreement over an issue from other forms of interaction, such as the threat or use of militarized force. We reserve the term "dispute" for militarized forms of engagement.

⁷ This emphasis on geographically based issues may miss the coding of some positional rivalries involving great powers, as the set of issues over which they contend is much broader. For example, Britain and Russia are positional rivals for much of the 19th and 20th century even though they have no specific geopolitical issues in contention in Europe. Other dyads, such as the United States and Russia, are both issue rivals and positional rivals. Yet the geopolitical issues at stake represent only a small part of the total set of issues over which they interact. If one were interested in studying major power dyadic relationships, a simple focus on issue based rivalries would be misleading.

opportunities for territorial claims than states with very short borders. Mountains, deserts, or rivers form natural boundaries between states and can diminish the chances for specific territorial conflicts. Many border disputes emerge in colonial areas, increasing the overall chances for major powers to experience territorial claims. Virtually every land border in the Western Hemisphere has been contested at some point in time (Hensel et al 2008), which meshes well with the view of territorial disputes as a key step to war (Vasquez 1993; Senese and Vasquez 2008).

There is also considerable geographical variation across states that results in different opportunities for water-based issue claims. Some states like Bolivia and Belarus are land-locked and are much less likely to experience conflicts over maritime areas. Other pairs of states like the US and Canada share more than one ocean-based border, which increases opportunities for maritime conflicts; in fact, US and Canada have experienced six distinct maritime claims (Hensel et al 2008). Maritime claims often involve access to fishing, mineral, or petroleum resources; the extraction of these resources further depends on states' economic development levels. Much like the gravity model predicts that larger, more populous states will experience more interstate trade, we expect more populous and economically advanced countries to experience more opportunities for geopolitical disputes. Some countries like Japan, Spain, and Taiwan have fishing fleets that travel around the world, increasing their opportunities for maritime conflicts with other states.⁸

Rivers flowing across borders vary considerably around the world as well. To have an opportunity for a river-based issue claim, states generally must belong to the same river basin.

⁸ The United States provides a good example of an issue claim opportunity rich state both in terms of geographical features and advanced economic development. Of all dyads coded by the ICOW Project in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe, the United States and its neighbors have by far the largest number of issue claims. US and Canada have 18 different territorial, maritime, and river issue claims between 1816-2001, while the US and Mexico have 17 issue claims. The US and United Kingdom rank third with 10 issue claims, while six dyads have experienced 5 issue claims (Honduras-Nicaragua, Bolivia-Chile, Chile-Argentina, Belgium-Netherlands, France-Germany, and Russia-Finland).

There is also a considerable amount of variance in the number of shared rivers across dyads, which creates variation in opportunities for river claims. For example, the US and Canada share over 30 cross-border rivers that are at least 100 miles in length, while Guatemala and Belize share only one cross-border river, the Belize river.⁹ The presence of valuable resources on land or in the river/sea will also influence states' willingness to expend diplomatic energies to make claims to new geopolitical areas. In short, if one wanted to fully understand the emergence of new diplomatic issue claims, one would have to explore the effects of geography, capabilities, historical relationships, and salience of the contested resources, *inter alia*.

We focus on a different question. Instead of understanding why some issues arise while others do not, we focus on how states manage geopolitical issues that do occur. We are particularly interested in how the bargaining context influences the use of peaceful or militarized foreign policy strategies. Hensel et al (2008) find that states are more likely to employ both peaceful and militarized conflict strategies to manage geopolitical issues that are highly salient and that have experienced a history of previous militarized conflict. Yet this research does not consider the overall context within which particular conflict management decisions are made.

Rivalry scholars have made good progress on this question, showing that interstate rivalry is a dangerous context, one which typically results in additional and more deadly uses of force. Yet we are still uncertain about *why* rivalry is a dangerous context. Does the militarization of one border dispute lead to new challenges to other land or water borders? Does states' willingness to resort to militarized force create more intractable enemy images and mobilize hawkish leaders and parties domestically? Does the loss of one militarized confrontation increase the chances for more coercive foreign policy strategies in the next bargaining round (Leng 1983)? By focusing on the evolution of issue conflicts from their

⁹ We thank Paul Hensel for sharing this example with us.

diplomatic beginnings to their (sometimes) violent endings, we can get a better grasp on how the issue rivalry context may alter interstate relationships.

A New Conceptualization of Rivalry

We argue that an issue-based rivalry can be delineated along two primary dimensions. The first dimension, *issue rivalry*, captures the number of contested geopolitical issues in an interstate dyadic relationship. The second dimension, *militarized rivalry*, encapsulates the way in which specific issues are handled. Pairs of states that experience multiple geopolitical issue claims at the same point in time are considered to be issue rivals. Pairs of states that experience repeated militarized disputes over a single geopolitical issue are considered to be militarized rivals. One might assume that these dimensions are related, as the literature on territorial disputes certainly suggests that having a border dispute may be an important first step in the process of escalation to militarized disputes and wars.¹⁰

However, this overlooks an important point; the vast majority of geopolitical issue claims are handled solely through diplomatic means. In the Issue Correlates of War dataset for the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe, for example, only 44.3% of territorial claims, 41.4% of maritime claims, and 19.4% of river claims have resulted in even a single militarized dispute over the issue in question (Hensel et al 2008). This pattern is consistent with the data we have created to code issue rivalry in these regions using the ICOW dataset; only 1 in 4 dyadic issue claims experiences two or more militarized disputes over the issue in question (Table 1b). On

¹⁰ Colaresi and Thompson's (2002: 277-278) comparison of the number and types of issues involved in a rivalry context is suggestive of our conceptual distinctions. They find that rivalry contexts are more likely to contain multiple issues and militarized issues than non-rivalry contexts. Yet, for Colaresi and Thompson, issues arise within an established rivalry context, while we argue that issues themselves constitute a rivalry.

the other hand, issue rivalry is much more common; close to 2/3 of dyadic issue claims occur in the context where the dyad in question has at least one other ongoing geopolitical issue claim.¹¹

Table 1a presents examples of issue rivalries and militarized rivalries.¹² Dyads with multiple issues and low levels of militarization include Great Britain and Ireland (e.g. Northern Ireland territorial and maritime claims and maritime delimitation issues in the Irish Sea and northeast Atlantic) and Guyana and the Netherlands (Corentyn territorial and maritime claims). Dyads with a single issue as their point of contention, yet with high levels of militarization, include the United States and Ecuador (tuna fishing rights) and Guatemala and Honduras (border dispute involving R'õ Motagua). Some dyads are both issue rivals and militarized rivals, including Ecuador and Peru (border disputes over Oriente-Mainas and Amazonas-Caquet and a river dispute involving an oil spill) and France and Germany (border disputes over Alsace-Lorraine and Bavarian Palatinate). Other pairs of states (e.g. US-Cuba, Netherlands-France) have a single issue in contention that never becomes militarized, thus they avoid becoming geopolitical issue rivals or militarized rivals.

Issue Rivalry

Issue rivals with multiple issues at stake are more likely to experience militarized disputes and more frequent peaceful negotiations to resolve contested issues in comparison to pairs of states that experience geopolitical issue claims in the issue non-rivalry context. This occurs for two reasons. First, some issues are multi-dimensional, which raises the stakes of winning the issue. Many territorial disputes involve contestation over the resources in offshore

¹¹ We experimented with different thresholds for issue rivalry. There is a big drop off in the number of cases that experience two simultaneous issues versus three issues or more. Thus we opted for a more inclusive measure of issue rivalry, although we find that issue rivalry coded on the basis of three or more issues produces similar results to those reported herein.

¹² We describe the operational rules for these measures in more detail in the next section. The data is coded based on territorial, maritime, and river claims as coded by the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project (Hensel et al 2008).

waters in addition to the issue of who owns the land. For example, the Falklands Island dispute between Great Britain and Argentina involves a disagreement about who owns the island, as well as who has exclusive rights to extract the offshore oil and fishing resources. Nigeria and Cameroon faced a similar situation in their contestation of the Bakassi Peninsula, which was valuable for both territorial and maritime reasons (Mitchell and Hensel 2007). The Rio de la Plata area between Argentina and Uruguay has been the source of contestation over territorial, maritime, and river rights. Our basic assumption is that multi-dimensional issues are likely to involve more salient stakes in general, which will increase the risk of militarization in issue rivalry contexts. This assumption is supported in the empirical work on issue claims, as higher salience levels result in increased risks for militarized disputes (Huth 1996; Hensel 2001; Huth and Allee 2002; Mitchell 2002; Hensel and Mitchell 2005; Hensel et al 2008).

The second reason that multiple issues may promote militarized interaction is that the handling of one issue may lead to further challenges of the status quo on the same issue or other issues. Iceland, for example, claimed a four mile territorial sea limit in 1952, which was challenged by the British government. The two states reached an agreement in 1956 through bilateral negotiations, which was challenged in 1958 when Iceland claimed an even further territorial sea limit of 12 miles. As fishing resources became increasingly scarce in the area, Iceland continued to push its maritime rights, claiming a 50 mile limit in 1972 and a 200 mile limit in 1976. These expanding claims to Iceland's maritime space resulted in increasingly hostile interaction between Britain, West Germany, and Iceland, culminating in the "Cod Wars" in the mid-1970s and intervention by the International Court of Justice to resolve the issue. The United States and Canada have also experienced a plethora of issue claims in their interstate history. Some of these issues, such as maritime claims in the Beaufort Sea, are further

challenges to sovereign rights left over from earlier boundary disputes (e.g. Alaska). Thus while one contentious issue might be resolved at a given point in time, the same issue can be challenged in the future as the situation changes, or the issue might give rise to new problems due to the multidimensional character of many geopolitical issues. By focusing on overlapping geopolitical issues in a dyadic relationship, we are able to identify the thread that connects diplomatic interstate interactions over time.

H1a: Issue rivalry dyads are more likely to experience militarized disputes over contentious issues than issue non-rivalry dyads.

H2a: Issue rivalry dyads are more likely to employ peaceful techniques for resolving contentious issues than issue non-rivalry dyads.¹³

Militarized Rivalry

Pairs of states engaged in contentious issues will not necessarily become rivals in the militarized sense. As noted above, less than half of all territorial, maritime, and river claims in the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, and Middle East have resulted in one or more militarized disputes over the contested issue (Hensel et al 2008). Many states are able to resolve issues peacefully, which could stem from cross-cutting cooperative interactions and dense friendship networks that allow for more successful peaceful negotiations. This could also relate to the characteristics of the claimant states in an issue claim, as jointly democratic and asymmetrically matched adversaries might be better able to strike agreements solely with peaceful foreign policy tools.

As issues become militarized, however, this increases the likelihood that future strategies for resolving the issue will also be militarized. Leng's (1983) classic study on crisis bargaining demonstrated that states often resort to more coercive strategies when losing military contests,

¹³ By peaceful technique, we mean any form of diplomatic interaction to settle an interstate issue. This includes bilateral negotiations and all forms of third party conflict management (good offices, inquiry, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, multilateral negotiations, etc.).

which creates an increasing pattern of escalation over time, with war often reached by the third crisis in a rival dyad. This observation that the probability of dispute onset and escalation changes across the course of a rivalry is shown in other studies as well (Hensel 1994; Diehl and Goertz 2000). Colaresi and Thompson's (2002) analysis of crisis behavior in the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset suggests that states are ten times more likely to experience another crisis after they have experienced three crises in the past. After only two crises, the next crisis is 17 times more likely to escalate to war. A similar pattern is observed in the issue-based literature as well. Hensel et al (2008) find that issues that have been previously militarized are significantly more likely to result in future militarized disputes. Leaders may find coercive tools easier to employ against rival states (Mitchell and Prins 2004) and may even be punished for extending olive branches to rival states (Colaresi 2004). This suggests that the use of force to pursue issue related goals will put dyads at increased risk for militarization in future bargaining situations, especially in comparison to dyads that have never resorted to force to resolve their issue-related goals. Thus even among the set of states with some reasonable opportunity for militarized conflict (e.g. those with issue claims), we can predict variation in militarized conflict propensity based on the history of conflict in the dyad. Furthermore, by connecting a series of militarized disputes to a single contentious issue, we can overcome the "hot hand" problem.

H1b: Militarized rivalry dyads are more likely to experience militarized disputes over contentious issues than issue non-militarized rivalry dyads.

On the other hand, mediators tend to be attracted to the hot spots, with a large percentage of all interstate mediation occurring in the interstate rivalry context. While enduring rivalries constitute only 13% of all rivalry dyads, they experience close to 40% of the total mediation efforts in isolated, proto, and enduring rivalries (Bercovitch and Diehl 1997, 311). Dyads with repeated militarized conflicts are more likely to experience

third party efforts to help diffuse the situation. They will also have more opportunities for bilateral negotiations to settle the issues on their own.

H2b: Militarized rivalry dyads are more likely to employ peaceful techniques for resolving contentious issues than issue non-militarized rivalry dyads.

We anticipate that both forms of rivalry will increase the risks for militarized engagement and the pressure for peaceful settlement. On the other hand, we expect that militarized rivalry will be more dangerous than issue rivalry in the long run, as repeated engagements in a militarized manner have clearly been shown to risk the chances for dispute escalation, such as disputes with fatalities or interstate wars.

H3: Issue rivalry dyads are less likely than militarized rivalry dyads to experience militarized disputes with high levels of violence (e.g. fatalities, wars).

If militarization is the key delineating factor for explaining variation in dyadic conflict risk, this would help us understand more clearly why rivalry is a dangerous interstate bargaining context. If states can manage multiple geopolitical issues peacefully, even if they involve highly salience resources, this would suggest that the key to understanding the process of escalation involves an understanding of why states militarize some issues more than others. As we show later, we believe the manner in which the first geopolitical issues that arise are handled may hold the key to understanding different evolutionary patterns of interstate conflict management.

Measuring Issue Rivalry and Militarized Rivalry

To fully capture the issues at stake in an interstate rivalry, we need a dataset that codes contentious issues between states. Most initial issue datasets focused on territorial claims (Huth 1996; Hensel 2001; Huth and Allee 2002), which is reasonable given the highly salient and escalatory nature of border disputes. Yet to capture multidimensionality in issue relationships, we need information on more than one type of contentious issue. To this end, we employ

version 1.1 of the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project's data on contentious issue claims (Hensel 2001; Mitchell 2002; Hensel et al 2008). The ICOW project identifies contentious issue claims based on explicit evidence of diplomatic contention involving official representatives of two or more states over a particular issue. What is unique about this dataset is that it does not require militarization of the issue in order for an issue claim to be identified. This creates ample variation in the issue and militarized dimensions of rivalry that we discussed earlier.

The ICOW project codes three types of contentious issues: 1) territorial claims, where one state challenges sovereignty over a specific piece of territory that is claimed or administered by another state, 2) maritime claims, which involve explicit contention between two or more states over the ownership, access to, or usage of a maritime area, and 3) river claims, which involve explicit contention over the usage or ownership of an international river. All three issues are geopolitical in nature, and thus most likely to capture spatial rivalries, given that many territorial, maritime, and river disputes occur between contiguous neighbors. On the other hand, major powers do contend over these issues in colonial and former colonial areas, which allow us to capture some positional rivalries as well. For example, in the Western Hemisphere, our issue-based measures of rivalry identify the US-UK, US-Spain, and US-Russia rivalries, which are also identified by Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (KGD) and Thompson. Only Thompson codes the US-France as a rivalry, while both KGD and Thompson identify the US-Germany dyad as rivals. The cases our measures pick up clearly identify global positional rivalries that also have a spatial dimension. Yet, our issue-based measures identify regional positional rivalries as well as other rivalry measures, as we would expect given the close spatial proximity of regional rivals. Our rivalry measures do not identify many of the positional rivalries identified prior to World War II in Western Europe by KGD or Thompson, suggesting that our issue-based measures of rivalry

may be most useful in the analysis of contemporary (post-World War II) international relations for those interested in global samples, or in developing regions (or at least non-European regions) for the entire period covered by the ICOW data. Those interested strictly in European great power politics would be better served by rivalry measures produced by KGD or Thompson.

To date, ICOW has coded territorial claims in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe (1816-2001), maritime claims in the Western Hemisphere and Europe (1900-2001), and river claims in the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, and the Middle East (1900-2001) (Hensel et al 2008).¹⁴ This places geographical limits on the creation of our new measures for issue rivalries and militarized rivalries. We focus on the two regions where all three issues are fully coded by the ICOW Project: Western Hemisphere and Western Europe. For comparison purposes, we also create a list of enduring and strategic rivalries for these two regions based on the data compilations in Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006) and Thompson (2001).

Our first measure, *issue rivalry*, is coded one if the dyad has two or more unresolved contentious issues ongoing in the same time period, and zero otherwise. For dating purposes, the rivalry begins when the first issue claim begins and ends when the last issue claim ends. If the resolution of one issue occurs more than twenty years before the beginning of the next issue, we do not consider the issues to be linked. For example, Guatemala and Honduras have two distinct territorial claims over R'o Motagua (1899-1933) and Ranguana and Sapodilla (1981-), but they are separated by close to fifty years. An example of an issue rivalry is the one that occurs between the United States and Mexico. The first dyadic issue emerges in 1831 over the ownership of Texas. A series of other border disputes in the 19th century over California and other Baja peninsula areas maintained the issue rivalry. Competition over the Rio Grande and

¹⁴ See the ICOW website at www.icow.org for updates on coverage by issue and region.

Colorado rivers emerged around the beginning of the 20th century. These water disputes, along with competing claims to tuna fishing rights, have sustained the issue rivalry to the present day.

Table 2 provides a detailed listing of all rivalries in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe. Pairs of states that qualify as issue rivalries are listed in the first column. As we can see, the start date for many issue rivalries precedes the start date of enduring rivalries identified by Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006), which is due to their coding rule of the start date as the first militarized dispute in the relationship. Our dating scheme more accurately reflects when the two states first began diplomatically disagreeing over specific issues. Thompson's dating scheme for strategic rivals is closer to our dating scheme, although there are significant disagreements between our datasets as well. There are a total of 66 issue rivalries in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe from 1816-2001.¹⁵

Our second measure, *militarized rivalry*, examines the militarization of specific issues. We code this rivalry measure as one if the two states have experienced two or more militarized disputes over the specific issue at stake, and zero otherwise.¹⁶ The ICOW project conducts additional research on each militarized dispute that occurred between the issue claimants during the course of an issue claim to determine if each MID was related to the territorial, maritime, or river issue under contention. This helps to answer prior criticisms of empirical rivalry measures that do not provide a mechanism for causally relating militarized disputes. Our dating schemes for militarized rivalries employ the issue claim start and end dates from the ICOW project. For example, the United States and Mexico experienced two or more MIDs in the two territorial claims related to Texas (1831-1848) and California/New Mexico (1835-1848). In the Texas

¹⁵ We should note that the maritime and river claim data are not coded by the ICOW project until 1900. This implies that any pre-1900 issue rivalries are those that experience multiple territorial claims.

¹⁶ We use a relatively low threshold because when matching MIDs to issues, the number of recurrent disputes drops dramatically from what one would observe if simply using a dyadic measure of dispute density. Our percentage of dyadic issue claims in militarized rivalry (23%-see Table 1b) gives this coding rule face validity.

territorial claim, the militarized rivalry is coded as beginning in 1831 when the first diplomatic claim to Texas was made by the US and ending in 1848 after the claim was resolved following the Mexican-American war. There are a total of 57 militarized rivalries in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe. Over 30 dyads are characterized by both issue rivalry and militarized rivalry. In these same two regions, Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006) identify 92 rivalries, while Thompson (2001) records 53 rivalries.

Table 2 focuses on rivalry dyads. Table 1b presents information on the rivalry contexts for all issue claims coded by the ICOW Project in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe. For each dyadic territorial, maritime, or river issue, we note the rivalry context within which it occurred. The plurality of issue claims occurs in an issue rivalry setting with no or very limited militarization (40% of total). The next most frequent context is a non-issue rival, low-militarized setting (33%). A mere 4% of issue claims occur in a militarized rivalry setting where a single issue dominates the agenda. On the other hand, 23% of issue claims occur between states with multiple issues at stake and at least one issue with 2 or more MIDs. This accords with much of the work on interstate rivalry, showing that a small percentage of dyads accounts for the most conflictual set of cases.

Table 3 provides simple difference of means comparisons between the rivalry and non-rivalry groups.¹⁷ Table 3A examines issue rivalries, showing higher salience levels in the issue rivalry group compared to the issue non-rivalry group. This supports our argument about multidimensional issues being more salient overall. We also see that issue rivalries experience more bilateral negotiations and non-binding third party settlement attempts, more militarized

¹⁷ The unit of analysis is the ICOW claim dyad-year. For each year of an ongoing issue claim, a case is created for each opposing pair of states involved in the claim. There are a total of 10,041 claim dyad years in version 1.1 of the ICOW dataset (Hensel et al 2008), although we lose some cases by exclusion of Eastern European and Middle Eastern regions.

disputes, and more wars. Issue rivalries tend to arise in situations of power parity and they tend to be initiated more often by non-democratic states. These simple comparisons show that dyads with multiple issues at stake in their history are systematically different than dyads with only one geopolitical issue. Even if we employ a measure of rivalry completely distinct from militarization, there are systematic differences in the rivalry and non-rivalry groups.

Table 3B presents similar data for militarized rivalries. The peaceful and militarized negotiation patterns are even more distinctive in this group, with militarized rivalry pushing states more frequently into militarized disputes, wars, and peaceful negotiations. We see a similar pattern of parity more often in the rivalry dyads and the presence of autocratic challengers. These descriptive statistics provide initial support to hypotheses 1a/b and 2a/b; pairs of states in issue rivalries or militarized rivalries are more likely to employ militarized and peaceful foreign policy tools to resolve the issues under contention. The context of rivalry produces a distinct environment of interstate interaction.

Multivariate Empirical Analyses

To compare our measures of issue rivalry and militarized rivalry to pre-existing measures of interstate rivalry, we replicate an empirical model of contentious issues estimated by Hensel et al (2008), which employs the ICOW dataset for all available regions in the 1816-2001 period. The unit of analysis is the dyadic issue claim year, which as noted above, produces over 10,000 total cases. Our sample sizes are reduced slightly due to the omission of some regions with incomplete coding across all three ICOW issues (Eastern Europe and the Middle East). We use

the same measures as employed by Hensel et al (2008) for the independent variables.¹⁸ One important difference is the omission of the issue salience variable, which is strongly correlated with our measure of issue rivalry.¹⁹ Four dependent variables are employed: 1) militarized dispute onset (Table 4), 2) fatal militarized dispute onset (Table 5), 3) war onset (Table 6), and 4) the use of one or more peaceful settlement techniques (bilateral negotiations or third party efforts) in a given year (Table 7).

Hypotheses 1a and 1b are evaluated in Table 4. In Model 1, issue rivalry is positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that dyads with multiple issues in contention are more likely to experience militarization of any single issue. Model 2 shows that militarized rivalry also has a positive and significant ($p < .01$) effect on dispute onset. Both of these findings show that geopolitical issues in the rivalry context are more dangerous than issues that occur in a non-rivalry context. The Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (Model 3) and Thompson (Model 4) rivalry measures also have a positive and statistically significant effect on dispute onset. In Table 8, we compare the substantive effects of these different types of rivalry. The Klein, Goertz, and Diehl measure captures the entirety of the dyadic militarized relationship, thus it is not too surprising that this has the largest substantive effect (648% increase in MID probability for rivals). The

¹⁸ We include dummy variables for maritime and river issues with territorial issues as the omitted category. Recent claim activity in the past ten years is captured with two measures that weight previous MIDs and peaceful settlement attempts. Attempts in the prior year are weighted 1.0, with a 10% decline in each year moving backward in time. Democratic dyad equals one if both states score six or higher on the Polity IV democracy scale. Parity is measured using the Correlates of War (COW) project's Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) score for each state, taking the proportion of the dyad's total capabilities held by the strongest side.

¹⁹ When we include issue salience, the issue rivalry measure becomes insignificant in the MID onset model. The inclusion of issue salience does not alter the reported results for militarized rivalry. This correlation makes sense given that many issue rivalries arise due to multidimensional issues that often involve important territories and resources. Using the dyadic version of the ICOW data, we predicted whether the issue was in the context of an issue rivalry or a militarized rivalry based on the maximum salience value across the life of the issue claim. Issue salience has no significant effect on issue rivalry, but is positive and significant for predicting militarized rivalry. This accords with the argument of Hensel et al (2008) and others that highly salient issues involving important resources and strategic locations are more likely to become militarized repeatedly.

militarized rivalry variable also has a sizable effect on MID onset. If the issue at stake is characterized by two or more MIDs, the probability of another MID rises by 337%.

We also estimated the effects of issue rivalry and militarized rivalry jointly by including dummy variables for the possible rivalry categories in Table 1b with non-rivalry as the omitted category. We find that issue rivalry alone has no statistically effect on MID onset, while militarized rivalry alone significantly increases the risk of MIDs. Dyads that experience geopolitical issue claims in both rivalry contexts are also significantly more likely to experience further militarized disputes.²⁰

Hypotheses 2a and 2b are evaluated in Table 7. All four rivalry measures have a positive and statistically significant effect on the use of peaceful negotiation techniques, such as bilateral negotiations, mediation, and arbitration. This concurs with previous findings in the conflict management literature, showing that more activity takes place in the conflict hot spots. Table 8 shows the substantive effects of each rivalry measure on peaceful settlements attempts, with no significant differences in the size of the effects across the four measures. When estimating the dummy variables for each rivalry context separately (not shown), we find that peaceful settlement attempts are significantly more likely in all issue rivalry contexts (with or without militarized rivalry), but insignificant in the militarized only rivalry category. This suggests that if a single geopolitical issue categorizes a dyadic relationship and that issue becomes militarized, it will become much harder for the contending sides to find a peaceful solution to the issue.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that militarized rivalries would be more at risk for escalation to high levels of violence than issue rivalries. Issue rivalries have more opportunities for conflict, but because they are measured independently of militarized conflict, we include many cases of rivalry that are settled peacefully. Militarized rivals, on the other hand, are more likely to follow

²⁰ These results are available from the authors.

the dangerous path articulated by crisis bargaining and rivalry scholars, as recurrent conflict breeds further conflict and raises the likelihood of conflict escalation. We can evaluate this hypothesis by looking at the effect on rivalry on the onset of MIDs with fatalities or the onset of interstate war. In Tables 5 and 6, we can see that issue rivalry (Model 1) has no significant effect on the onset of either type of dispute. Militarized rivalry (Model 2), however, significantly raises the risk for militarized disputes with fatalities (increase of 219%) and escalation to war (increase of 224%). The Klein, Goertz, and Diehl and Thompson rivalry measures also increase the risk of violent disputes, which is to be expected given prior findings in the rivalry literature.²¹

These findings are important because they help address a debate in the rivalry literature about the importance of militarization for defining a rivalry relationship. Some authors, such as Diehl and Goertz, have focused on militarized disputes because they see the use of coercive foreign policy strategies as essential for the conceptualization of what constitutes rivalry. Thompson's measure of strategic rivalry also tends to identify dyads with militarized histories, especially in the spatial rivalry context. The crossing of the militarized threshold is significant when states are managing issues such as territorial, maritime, and river claims. In our dataset, when pairs of states are both issue rivals and militarized rivals, we find that they militarize the first contentious issue in the relationship 76% of the time. The remaining 24% of disputes have occurred by the second contested issue. This suggests that the resort to force early in a competitive interstate relationship pushes each side to adopt a rival or enemy image of the other side, which in turn makes further justification of the use of force easier to sell to the domestic audience. Losing states in early militarized confrontations also learn the lessons of increasing

²¹ When estimating the rivalry contexts with dummy variables, we get similar findings for militarized disputes with fatalities, but weaker results for wars. If dyads are in both rivalry contexts or the militarized only rivalry context, they are at significantly higher risk for experiencing MIDs with fatalities. None of these variables predicts to war, which most likely reflects the small number of war cases in each cell.

coercive tactics, which can result in a pattern of increasing hostility and escalation over time. This pattern of behavior, especially as it is driven by territorial disputes, supports the steps to war model's assertion that the manner in which salient issues are managed is important for understanding how issue relationships evolve over time (Vasquez 1993; Senese and Vasquez 2003, 2008).

Our results also show that issues that are more salient or important to both sides are more likely to evolve into militarized rivalries. If there are important resources in the contested territory, river, or maritime zone, states are more likely to adopt coercive tactics to pursue their issue-related goals. This in turn generates additional risks in the bargaining environment, as states that experience two MIDs over a geopolitical issue have a significantly higher risk of future MIDs in comparison to states with few or no disputes. The context of militarized rivalry also increases the risk of more violent disputes that can escalate to levels involving significant fatalities. In the future, we hope to explore more carefully the precise sequencing of events over time. Is the salience of the first issue important for leading states down a path to militarized rivalry? Why do some pairs of states militarize their first geopolitical issue while others can resolve these situations peacefully? Does the occurrence of multiple issue claims of the same type (e.g. border disputes) increase states' risks for issue rivalries? Future analyses will use the newly generated rivalry measures described in this paper to address these interesting questions.

Conclusion

In this paper, we sought to demonstrate the importance of issues in conceptualizing and measuring interstate rivalry. On the conceptual level, we have built on the prevailing view that states engage in rivalry over some underlying contentious issue. This led us to develop a new

conceptualization of rivalry that contains two dimensions: the number of issues and the level of militarization. This conceptual approach resulted in two new operational measures of rivalry: issue rivalry and militarized rivalry. These new measures of rivalry help us to resolve many of the existing critiques of the literature. First, we are able to more accurately date the initiation of a rivalry by examining the onset of a contentious issue. Second, contentious issues provide the “glue” that holds a rivalry together, allowing for the primary geopolitical issues at stake to evolve over time within a dyad. Together, the initiation and linkage functions of issues help to resolve the “hot hand” critique by providing an endogenous explanation for rivalry formation and duration. In militarized rivalries, this means that we can date a rivalry to the formation of a contentious issue before the onset of the first MID. Third, we can more accurately date the termination of a rivalry by looking at when and how contentious issues are resolved. As a result, our new conceptual and operational measures provide a complete account of the initiation, duration, and termination of rivalries. Finally, we can compare differences between rivalries that become militarized and those that do not, rather than assume militarization constitutes a rivalry.

If, as we argue, our operational measures provide a more accurate dating schema for rivalries, then future research should look at rivalry duration models more carefully. For example, we can reexamine Bennett’s (1996: 177; 1997: 251) findings that highly salient issues (border or homeland territory) increase the duration of a rivalry. We might also reexamine Goertz and Diehl’s (1995) analyses of the effects of political shocks on rivalry duration, as well as initiation and termination. The dynamics of rivalries more generally, including whether they fit a “volcano model” or lock into a “basic rivalry level” early in the relationship can also be examined (Diehl, 1998).

We can also look at linkages across time and issues to see how the overall rivalry context influences the way in which particular issues are settled. As we have demonstrated in this paper, the way in which the first issue is handled in a militarized rivalry is particularly crucial to this process. While our findings are currently limited to the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe, the ICOW Project is in the process of coding data for other regions, which will eventually help us to overcome our regional data limitations.

This additional data would allow a comparison of the effects of issue rivals versus militarized rivals on state building (Thies, 2005; Thies, 2007). It might also provide a useful distinction between rivals that could form the basis for a zone of negative peace and those that would form the basis of a zone of war (Thies, 2008). We should also investigate the reasons why some issue rivals become militarized rivals in the first place. The conceptual distinction and operational measures we provide are really the only approach that allows an investigation of the militarization of rivalries.

In sum, we believe the new conceptual and operational definitions of rivalry outlined in this paper offer a new way to think about and observe rivalries. They open the door to reexamination of many existing findings in the literature and prompt new questions for future research.

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Table 1a: Rivalry Dimensions

	Number of Militarized Disputes	
Number of Issues	Low	High
Low	No Rivalry Ex: US-Cuba; Netherlands-France	Militarized Rivalry Ex: US-Ecuador; Guatemala-Honduras
High	Issue Rivalry Ex: UK-Ireland; Guyana-Netherlands	Issue & Militarized Rivalry Ex: Ecuador-Peru; France-Germany

Table 1b: Rivalry Dimensions Applied to the ICOW Data

Frequency Row % Column %	Number of Militarized Disputes		
Number of Issues	0-1	2 or more	Total
1	113 89.7% 45%	13 10.3% 14.3%	126 (36.8%)
2 or more	138 63.9% 55%	78 36.1% 85.7%	216 (63.2%)
Total	251 (73.4%)	91 (26.6%)	342

$X^2 = 27.1$ ($p < .0001$)

Table 2: List of Issue and Militarized Rivalries
Western Hemisphere and Western Europe

<u>Rivalries</u> ²²	<u>Issue</u> ²³	<u>Militarized</u> ²⁴	<u>KGD</u> ²⁵	<u>Thompson</u> ²⁶
<i>Western Hemisphere</i>				
United States-Canada	1914-	1914-1999	1974-1997	
United States-Cuba			<i>1912-1934</i>	<i>1959-</i>
			<i>1959-1996</i>	
United States-Haiti	1859-		1869-1915	
United States-Dominican Republic			<i>1900-1917</i>	
United States-Mexico	1831-2001	1831-1848	1836-1893	1821-1848
		1835-1848	1911-1920	
United States-Honduras	1899-1972			
United States-Nicaragua	1900-1928		1909-1926	
	1965-		1982-1988	
United States-Panama	1923-1995			
United States-Colombia	1890-1972			
United States-Ecuador		1952-	1952-1981	
United States-Peru		1947-	1955-1992	
United States-Chile				<i>1884-1891</i>
United States-United Kingdom	1816-1935	1872-1903	1837-1861	1816-1904
			1902-1903	
United States-France				1830-1871
United States-Spain	1816-1821		1816-1825	1816-1819
			1850-1898	

²² Rivalries in bold are those that experience one or more militarized disputes over the contested issues.

²³ An issue rivalry exists if the dyad experienced two or more territorial, maritime, or river claims simultaneously. The rivalry starts when the first issue claim begins and ends when the last issue claim is resolved.

²⁴ A militarized rivalry exists if the dyad experienced two or more MIDS over a specific issue. The rivalry begins when the issue claim begins and ends when the issue claim is resolved.

²⁵ KGD indicates the years of rivalry coded by Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006). Years in italics indicate that an ICOW issue claim is coded for this dyad, but it does not meet the criteria for two or more ongoing issue claims or two or more MIDS over a single issue.

²⁶ The years listed are those Thompson (2001) identifies as strategic rivals. Years in italics indicate that an ICOW issue claim is coded for this dyad, but it does not meet the criteria for two or more ongoing issue claims or two or more MIDS over a single issue.

<u>Rivalries</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Militarized</u>	<u>KGD</u>	<u>Thompson</u>
United States-Germany			1915-1918 1939-1945	1889-1918 1939-1945
United States-Russia	1900-	1900-	1918-1920 1946-2000	1945-1989
Canada-France		1971-		
Canada-Denmark	1971-			
Canada-Russia			1999-2000	
Haiti-Dominican Republic	1894-1935		1986-1994	1845-1893
Haiti-United Kingdom			1883-1887	
Haiti-Germany			1872-1911	
Trinidad & Tobago-Venezuela		1962-	1996-1999	
Mexico-Guatemala				<i>1840-1882</i>
Belize-Guatemala	1981-	1981-	1993-2001	1981-1993
Belize-Honduras	1981-			
Guatemala-Honduras		1899-1933		1840-1930
Guatemala-El Salvador			<i>1876-1906</i>	<i>1840-1930</i>
Guatemala-Nicaragua				1840-1907
Guatemala-United Kingdom	1868-1981	1868-1981	1972-1977	
Honduras-El Salvador	1899-	1899-1992	1969-1993	1840-1992
Honduras-Nicaragua	1900-	1912-1961 1912- 1999-	1907-1929 1957-2001	1895-1962 1980-1987
Honduras-Colombia	1982-1986			
Honduras-United Kingdom	1981-1981			
El Salvador-Nicaragua			1907-1909	
Nicaragua-Costa Rica			<i>1948-1957</i> <i>1977-1998</i>	<i>1840-1858</i> <i>1948-1992</i>
Nicaragua-Colombia	1900-1930 1979-	1979-	1994-2001	1979-1992
Costa Rica-Panama				<i>1921-1944</i>
Colombia-Venezuela	1951-	1951- 1955-	1982-2001	1831-

<u>Rivalries</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Militarized</u>	<u>KGD</u>	<u>Thompson</u>
Colombia-Ecuador			<i>1857-1863</i>	<i>1831-1919</i>
Colombia-Peru	1839-1935	1839-1922 1932-1935	1899-1934	1824-1935
Colombia-United Kingdom			<i>1836-1857</i>	
Colombia-Italy			1885-1898	
Venezuela-Guyana	1966-	1966-	1966-1999	1966-
Venezuela-United Kingdom	1841-1966	1841-1899	1881-1903	
Venezuela-Netherlands	1850-1866	1854-1866	1849-1869	
Guyana-Suriname	1975-	1975-	1976-2000	
Guyana-Netherlands	1966-1975			
Ecuador-Peru	1854-1998	1854-1945 1947-1998	1891-1955 1977-1998	1830-1998
Ecuador-Brazil	1854-1922			
Peru-Bolivia	1848-1936	1848-1912		1825-1932
Peru-Chile	1879-1929	1879-1884 1884-1929	1852-1921 1976-1977	1832-1929
Peru-Spain		1864-1866	1859-1866	
Brazil-Paraguay	1846-1929	1846-1874	1850-1870	1862-1870
Brazil-Argentina	1972-1998		1872-1875	1817-1985
Brazil-United Kingdom	1826-1926	1838-1926	1838-1863	
Brazil-France		1826-1900		
Bolivia-Paraguay		1878-1938	1886-1938	1887-1938
Bolivia-Chile	1848-	1848-1884 1884-	1857-1884	1836-
Paraguay-Argentina	1941-1983			1862-1870
Chile-Argentina	1841-1998	1841-1903 1904-1985 1900-1985	1873-1909 1952-1984	1843-1991
Chile-United Kingdom		1940-		
Chile-Spain			1862-1866	
Argentina-Uruguay	1882-1973	1882-1973 1900-1973		

<u>Rivalries</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Militarized</u>	<u>KGD</u>	<u>Thompson</u>
Argentina-United Kingdom	1841-	1841- 1940- 1966-	1842-1846 1976-1983	1965-
Argentina-France			1842-1846	
Argentina-Bosnia			2000-2000	
Argentina-Russia		1967-1986		
<i>Western Europe</i>				
United Kingdom-Ireland	1922-1998			
United Kingdom-Netherlands	1816-1966			
United Kingdom-France			1888-1898	1816-1904
United Kingdom-Spain		1816-		
United Kingdom-Germany			1887-1921 1938-1945	1896-1918 1934-1945
United Kingdom-Italy			1927-1943	1934-1943
United Kingdom-Russia			1849-1861 1876-1923 1939-1999	1816-1956
United Kingdom-Norway	1911-1975			
United Kingdom-Denmark	1958-1984			
United Kingdom-Iceland	1952-1976	1958-1961		
Ireland-Spain		1984-		
Netherlands-Belgium	1830-1839 1918-1959	1918-1920		
Netherlands-West Germany	1955-1971			
Belgium-Germany	1841-1940		1914-1940	
France-Switzerland	1816-1862			
France-Spain	1917-			
France-Germany	1849-1935	1870-1871	1830-1940	1816-1955
France-Austria Hungary			1840-1859 1925-1940	

<u>Rivalries</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Militarized</u>	<u>KGD</u>	<u>Thompson</u>
France-Italy	1927-1986		1860-1866	1881-1940
France-Russia			1833-1856	1816-1894
			1918-1920	
			1948-1961	
France-Iceland	1953-1961			
Spain-Portugal	1928-			
Spain-Italy			1927-1940	
Bavaria-Baden	1816-1840			
Germany-Saxony			<i>1864-1866</i>	
West Germany-East Germany	1955-1972	1958-1972	1961-1971	1949-1973
West Germany-Russia			1961-1980	
West Germany-Denmark	1966-1982			
West Germany-Iceland	1958-1975			
Germany-Poland				1918-1939
Germany-Russia			<i>1914-1920</i>	<i>1890-1945</i>
			1936-1945	
			1911-1918	
Germany-Norway			1919-1920	1918-1939
Poland-Russia	1991-2001	1992-1995	1938-1939	
			1993-1997	
Austria Hungary-France				1816-1918
Austria-Prussia				<i>1816-1870</i>
Austria Hungary-Italy	1848-1919	1848-1866	1848-1877	1848-1918
			1904-1918	
Austria Hungary-Papal States			1847-1849	
Austria-Russia				1816-1918
Italy-Russia			1918-1920	1936-1943
Russia-Finland	1918-1947	1941-1944		
Russia-Sweden	1851-1856		1952-1964	
			1981-1992	

<u>Rivalries</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Militarized</u>	<u>KGD</u>	<u>Thompson</u>
Russia-Norway			1956-2001	
Norway-Denmark		1958-1997		
Norway-Iceland	1979-			
Denmark-Iceland	1958-1997			

Table 3: Comparison of Rivalry and Non-Rivalry Groups

A. Issue Rivalry, 2 or more Ongoing Contentious Issues

	No Rivalry	Issue Rivalry (2 or more issues)	t-statistic
Average issue salience (0-12)	6.184	6.475	-5.660 (p<.001)**
# of bilateral negotiations (0-5)	0.104	0.123	-2.275 (p<.05)*
# of non-binding 3 rd party (0-5)	0.039	0.048	-1.713 (p<.05)*
# of binding 3 rd party (0-2)	0.007	0.007	.155 (p=0.562)
# of peaceful attempts (0-7)	0.150	0.177	-2.670 (p<.05)*
# of MIDs (0-2)	0.026	0.034	-2.091 (p<.05)*
# of wars (0-1)	0.002	0.003	-0.846 (p=.199)
Challenger/Target CINC (0-7602)	58.90	23.05	6.621 (p<.001)**
% in parity (< 3/1 ratio)	24%	30%	
Challenger's Democ-Autoc (-10 to 10)	2.233	1.211	7.673 (p<.001)**
Target's Democ-Autoc (-10 to 10)	1.528	4.253	-20.10 (p<.001)**
MTOP treaties (0-11)	2.469	2.893	-6.466 (p<.001)**

B. Militarized Rivalry, 2 or more MIDs over a Specific Issue

	No Rivalry	Militarized Rivalry (2 or more MIDs)	t-statistic
Average issue salience (0-12)	5.905	7.444	-29.58 (p<.001)**
# of bilateral negotiations (0-5)	0.099	0.15	-6.315 (p<.001)**
# of non-binding 3 rd party (0-5)	0.033	0.072	-6.631 (p<.001)**
# of binding 3 rd party (0-2)	0.006	0.008	-1.217 (p=0.112)
# of peaceful attempts (0-7)	0.139	0.233	-8.695 (p<.001)**
# of MIDs (0-2)	0.010	0.080	-17.652 (p<.001)**
# of wars (0-1)	0.001	0.006	-3.938 (p<.001)**
Challenger/Target CINC (0-7602)	47.54	10.48	6.501 (p<.001)**
% in parity (< 3/1 ratio)	23%	39%	
Challenger's Democ-Autoc (-10 to 10)	1.963	0.511	9.483 (p<.001)**
Target's Democ-Autoc (-10 to 10)	3.173	3.405	-1.605 (p=.054)
MTOP treaties (0-11)	2.819	2.541	4.039 (p<.001)**

Table 4: Effect of Issue Rivalry and Militarized Rivalry on Militarized Dispute Onset

Dependent Variable: MID Onset in Issue Claim Dyad Year

Variable	Model 1: Issue Rivalry	Model 2: Militarized Rivalry	Model 3: KGD Rivalry	Model 4: Thompson Rivalry
Rivalry	0.30 (0.15)**	1.52 (0.15)***	2.08 (0.15)***	0.62 (0.16)***
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Maritime Issue	0.08 (0.15)	0.23 (0.14)	-0.00 (0.15)	0.16 (0.15)
River Issue	-0.75 (0.47)	-0.35 (0.46)	-0.42 (0.47)	-0.59 (0.47)
Recent MIDs	0.89 (0.08)***	0.72 (0.08)***	0.55 (0.08)***	0.87 (0.09)***
Recent Peaceful Attempts	0.25 (0.05)***	0.17 (0.05)***	0.25 (0.05)***	0.22 (0.05)***
Democratic Dyad	-0.36 (0.18)**	-0.23 (0.17)	-0.18 (0.17)	-0.26 (0.18)
Parity	0.56 (0.14)***	0.33 (0.13)**	0.23 (0.14)*	0.29 (0.16)*
Constant	-4.28 (0.14)***	-4.75 (0.13)***	-4.86 (0.15)***	-4.26 (0.11)***
Sample Size	9361	9619	9361	9361

Entries are coefficients followed by robust standard errors; * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 5: Effect of Issue Rivalry and Militarized Rivalry on Fatal Militarized Dispute Onset

Dependent Variable: MID Onset with Fatalities in Issue Claim Dyad Year

Variable	Model 1: Issue Rivalry	Model 2: Militarized Rivalry	Model 3: KGD Rivalry	Model 4: Thompson Rivalry
Rivalry	0.18 (0.32)	1.15 (0.34)***	1.86 (0.36)***	1.56 (0.39)***
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Maritime Issue	-1.22 (0.57)**	-0.79 (0.43)*	-1.32 (0.56)**	-1.00 (0.56)*
River Issue	---	---	---	---
Recent MIDs	0.67 (0.14)***	0.60 (0.15)***	0.41 (0.15)***	0.60 (0.14)***
Recent Peaceful Attempts	0.19 (0.12)	0.10 (0.11)	0.14 (0.12)	0.14 (0.12)
Democratic Dyad	-1.18 (0.68)*	-0.74 (0.54)	-1.06 (0.65)*	-1.04 (0.71)
Parity	0.54 (0.32)*	0.30 (0.31)	0.23 (0.32)	-0.19 (0.33)
Constant	-5.49 (0.30)***	-5.85 (0.26)***	-6.02 (0.30)***	-5.93 (0.29)***
Sample Size	8920	9178	8920	8920

Entries are coefficients followed by robust standard errors; * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 6: Effect of Issue Rivalry and Militarized Rivalry on War Onset

Dependent Variable: War Onset in Issue Claim Dyad Year

Variable	Model 1: Issue Rivalry	Model 2: Militarized Rivalry	Model 3: KGD Rivalry	Model 4: Thompson Rivalry
Rivalry	0.27 (0.47)	1.14 (0.46)**	2.02 (0.51)***	1.60 (0.51)***
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Maritime Issue	-1.90 (1.08)*	-1.97 (1.08)*	-2.01 (1.06)*	-1.71 (1.09)
River Issue	---	---	---	---
Recent MIDs	0.32 (0.26)	0.13 (0.28)	-0.01 (0.31)	0.22 (0.27)
Recent Peaceful Attempts	0.35 (0.14)**	0.32 (0.14)**	0.31 (0.15)**	0.30 (0.15)**
Democratic Dyad	-1.70 (1.14)	-1.66 (1.14)	-1.53 (1.06)	-1.63 (1.18)
Parity	0.07 (0.50)	0.00 (0.50)	-0.25 (0.47)	-0.65 (0.48)
Constant	-5.97 (0.42)***	-6.27 (0.35)***	-6.50 (0.38)***	-6.35 (0.39)***
Sample Size	8920	9178	8920	8920

Entries are coefficients followed by robust standard errors; * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 7: Effect of Issue Rivalry and Militarized Rivalry on Peaceful Settlement Attempts

Dependent Variable: One or More Peaceful Settlement Attempts in Issue Claim Dyad Year

Variable	Model 1: Issue Rivalry	Model 2: Militarized Rivalry	Model 3: KGD Rivalry	Model 4: Thompson Rivalry
Rivalry	0.20 (0.07)***	0.13 (0.07)*	0.35 (0.08)***	0.38 (0.09)***
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Maritime Issue	-0.40 (0.08)***	-0.21 (0.08)***	-0.42 (0.08)***	-0.37 (0.08)***
River Issue	0.61 (0.13)***	0.69 (0.13)***	0.68 (0.13)***	0.71 (0.13)***
Recent MIDs	0.42 (0.07)***	0.34 (0.06)***	0.33 (0.07)***	0.39 (0.07)***
Recent Peaceful Attempts	0.50 (0.03)***	0.51 (0.03)***	0.50 (0.03)***	0.49 (0.04)***
Democratic Dyad	0.33 (0.08)***	0.24 (0.08)***	0.35 (0.08)***	0.40 (0.08)***
Parity	0.36 (0.07)***	0.36 (0.07)***	0.32 (0.07)***	0.19 (0.08)**
Constant	-2.58 (0.07)***	-2.46 (0.05)***	-2.51 (0.06)***	-2.54 (0.06)***
Sample Size	9361	9619	9361	9361

Entries are coefficients followed by robust standard errors; * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 8: Substantive Effects of Rivalry

	Predicted Probabilities (generated with Clarify)			
	<u>MID Onset</u>	<u>Fatal MID Onset</u>	<u>War Onset</u>	<u>Peaceful Settlement Attempt(s)</u>
<u>Issue Rivalry</u>				
No	0.0169	0.0049	0.0033	0.0897
Yes	0.0228	0.0054	0.0038	0.1074
<u>Militarized Rivalry</u>				
No	0.0103	0.0031	0.0021	0.0998
Yes	0.0450	0.0099	0.0068	0.1118
<u>KGD Rivalry</u>				
No	0.0091	0.0027	0.0017	0.0943
Yes	0.0681	0.0175	0.0128	0.1285
<u>Thompson Rivalry</u>				
No	0.0171	0.0029	0.0020	0.0924
Yes	0.0315	0.0140	0.0098	0.1290