

THE LOGIC OF DECISIONS IN MILITARIZED DISPUTES:
THE EFFECT OF REGIME, POWER, ARMS CONTROL, AND AIRPOWER ON DECISION-
MAKING IN MILITARIZED DISPUTES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the causal relationship among pre and intradispute information and decision-makers' decisions determining evolution of militarized disputes. The identified causal factors are interconnected with one another throughout several decision-making stages of militarized disputes. As pre-dispute information, ex ante external and domestic contexts, expected outcomes, and the role of intergovernmental institutions affect decisions to initiate and to escalate disputes. Likewise, as updated information, ex post coercion by airpower affects the decisions to determine dispute duration. Empirical models test the effects of ex ante contexts, the probability of victory derived from expected outcomes, arms control agreements, and the use of airpower coercion on decision-making process of militarized disputes. The results reveal that (1) ex ante contexts, relative power and regime, can become a useful predictor of dispute outcome, (2) the probability of victory based on ex ante contexts exponentially increases the likelihood of initiation, (3) pre-dispute arms control agreements can reduce the incentive to escalate violence, and (4) the use of airpower coercion, as an ex post choice, is a significant determinant of dispute duration. These findings show that decisions to terminate, to initiate, and to escalate militarized disputes can be linked to one another. This also implies that pre-dispute information can guide the intradispute decisions and decision-makings are interconnected from the initiation to the termination of militarized disputes.