

1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

India and Pakistan were long-time colonies of Great Britain. In 1947, British rule ended and the territories of the empire were partitioned into the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan based largely on the religious characteristics of the population in the territories. While most Muslim territories were quickly incorporated into Pakistan, the maharajah of Kashmir, Hari Singh, hesitated instead of joining the new state, even though his territory was 77 percent Muslim. Pakistani forces immediately tried to force the maharajah into accession with guerrilla violence. Singh then appealed to Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India for the British, and he agreed to assist, so long as the Kashmiri territory became part of India. Singh agreed, and Indian forces pushed the Pakistani irregulars from the area (Stein and Arnold 2010). The war that followed lasted into the next year and claimed thousands of lives. Unresolved, the dispute recurred multiple times, resulting in deadly wars between Pakistan and India in 1965 and 1999. They fought a related war in 1971, and China and India actually fought over territory in the area in 1962. The sensitivity of the region is one reason why the floodlights along the border can be seen from space at night, as the photo on the book jacket shows.

Why does it really matter to both India and Pakistan which state Kashmir joined in 1947? The land itself, though breathtakingly beautiful, provides little in the way of resources or raw materials for manufacturing. Its economy has not developed much beyond agriculture and textiles. Although predominantly Muslim, there has not really been large-scale repression of the population by the Hindus to the south. The land itself also provides no overwhelming strategic advantage to any of the states involved. So, then, why is Kashmir important for both leaders and publics?

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These are certainly not idle questions since Kashmir is just one example of many contentious borders in the world. In fact, territorial issues are numerous and usually conflict-prone. Almost every single study that controls for issue type finds that territorial issues lead to international disputes and wars, tend to recur, and are difficult to resolve. Still, though the conflict-proneness of these issues has been well documented, we still do not know much about *why* territorial issues are so different from other types of international issues. We do not know why Kashmir matters so much for India and Pakistan. I wrote this book to begin an answer to this question.

I argue that the characteristics of Kashmir or other disputed territories are often less important than what the issue itself represents. For India or Pakistan, an attack over the issue of Kashmir also becomes a conflict for homeland territories, against a neighboring state, with the goal of territorial occupation. These types of conflicts of course engage the average individual in both states as occupation and fear of land-based conflict supplant other issues of importance in their daily lives. This salience also empowers leaders by creating a favorable environment for the centralization of their power; the populace looks to their leader to provide security for the state. When coupled with the increase in military manpower necessary to defend or conquer these lands, leaders in territorially threatened states become quite powerful domestically and often oversee highly centralized institutions.

The domestic political effects of these issues have important implications for international conflict as well. Since centralization often follows territorial threat, it makes sense that non-democracies are more likely to be associated with conflict. India is actually among the rare exceptions in this regard. Most states are like Pakistan, with regimes that are army-backed and elite-governed variations of non-democratic rule. Indeed, territorial threat and centralized governance most often tend to covary.

The presence of territorial issues in a dyad imposes constraints on the leaders involved. Though powerful domestically, leaders must prosecute the international conflicts that the public now fears, and this encourages dispute recurrence until the issue is resolved. Meanwhile, the leaders of states at territorial peace suffer no such constraints and can choose among those issues which they wish to negotiate or escalate to war. This is also why democracies, at territorial peace, are more likely to find negotiated compromises and win the wars they choose to fight.

1.2 Issues raised in this book

Though I focus on two quite familiar topics in the conflict literature – territorial issues and democracy – I argue that their interconnectedness is far greater than we might initially realize. Developing this argument highlights several key issues in international relations.

This book is first an argument about the importance of territorial issues. As I describe in Chapter 2, as a field we know that territorial issues are related to conflict. Less understood is why. I develop this argument by examining how territorial issues affect public opinion and political bargaining within the state. Note, however, that I do not provide an all-encompassing theory of why states fight over territory. One single explanation probably does not exist. Instead, I focus on the domestic salience of these issues and the opportunities and constraints this provides leaders involved in domestic and international bargaining.

I believe this book presents one of the only attempts to fully develop a “second-image-reversed” explanation of domestic politics that is also then used to re-examine observed patterns of international behavior (see Gourevitch 1978). That advancement is important because it highlights an underlying heterogeneity across dyads that has only occasionally been recognized. Most dyads are not equal, and ignoring this fact imperils both our theories and our empirical tests. If my argument is correct, there is a complicated, interdependent relationship between the international and domestic politics of conflict. It is not recursive in the now popular sense that democracy causes peace and peace causes democracy (Russett and Oneal 2001). Instead, international politics affects the structure of domestic politics, as territorial issues shape individual attitudes and the institutions of the state. This, in turn, also controls the constraints placed upon leaders engaged in international politics.

Methodologically, most examinations of the effects of conflict on regime type have relied exclusively on conflict involvement. The focus has been on whether wars prevent democratization. However, conflict involvement is usually the last stage in a long process. Much state centralization is likely to have occurred in anticipation of conflict involvement, and this is missed with such crude measures. I focus instead on identifying territorial threats to the state, which may include the unanticipated dispute or war. Military personnel increases by neighboring states, territorial claims, and even a past history of territorial conflict, all make the outbreak and recurrence of territorial conflict likely. This is especially true when states have no existing mechanisms to arbitrate or discuss their differences. By incorporating these factors into a more complex description

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of the territorial threat environment for states, I am able to also capture the long-term effects that territorial threats have on the domestic politics of the state.

This book is not intentionally about democracy. I offer no theory of democratization. I offer no theory of democratic stability. Democratization is a rare event, and we have few good models identifying the states likely to transition. As a field we also tend to rely on wealth, the middle class, income inequality, and other economic factors as the best predictors of the occurrence of these regimes (Moore 1966; Przeworski *et al.* 1996; Przeworski 2000; Boix 2003). Instead, I develop a theory of political centralization. I argue that the centralization of institutions, and even of domestic public opinion, depends heavily on the regional threat environment of the state. Domestic political centralization, which most often advantages the leader, is likely to occur as a by-product of the state being targeted by territorial issues. This is true even among democracies, and this theory of territorial threat provides a nice way of linking conflict to regime dynamics that goes well beyond the democracy/non-democracy dichotomy. Regime type may affect how quickly states respond to threats, how informative their signals can be, and how their leaders are held accountable, but territorial conflict controls their foreign policy. The removal of these threats provides the freedom to pursue other interests.

Finally, I believe that the importance of territorial issues should shape how we understand international relations theory more generally. Traditionally, our theories have been guided by a realist paradigm that reifies power at the expense of issues. What states fight over has mattered little compared to variations in their ability to fight. This does not make sense, though, when one considers how different relations between India and Pakistan are from most other dyads across time and across the globe. After all, most leaders are not always trying to conquer their neighbors, and it is important to remember this when trying to explain those rare, conflict-prone exceptions.

The most cogent response to realism – liberalism and the rising focus on democratic peace and cooperation – remains limited in its informative power. Joint democracies have only recently comprised as much as 20 percent of the international system, and the relative number of these dyads has historically been much, much smaller. Democratic theory also provides few answers for why states fight, relying instead on explanations of peace for what are, relatively, a very small number of dyads. This narrowing of focus has made us miss the larger context in which states compete. If democracy is a by-product of territorial peace, a more general theory of conflict can be had, and the wealth of findings associated with democracies is likely to be explained better by democracies' placement amid a larger group of states at territorial peace. I hope this book encourages a productive path away from traditional theories of conflict by

demonstrating that the issues of contention do indeed matter and by making domestic political behavior and institutions more important parts of general international relations theories.

1.3 Plan of the book

The book is divided into three parts. Chapter 2 begins by describing the importance of territorial issues for studies of international conflict and outlines different ways that territorial issues have been identified. My theoretical chapter follows in which I develop the domestic salience of territorial issues, outlining how these threats to the state affect domestic political bargaining. The next two parts of the book test expectations derived from my theory of the effects of territorial threat and peace. The first set of empirical examinations assesses my individual-level and state-level predictions for domestic bargaining. The second set is dedicated to dyadic-level conflicts.

The argument I develop in Chapter 3 is really a theory of state development. Territorial conflicts, past and present, will lead a state to possess a citizenry that is primed for moves toward state centralization, and this process is reinforced by the political bargaining among groups within society. I discuss the mechanics of how political centralization is likely to occur when a state's territory is threatened.

I examine the effects of territorial threat on the individual and the state in the second part of the book. Chapter 4 tests the individual-level expectations of the theory by focusing on individual survey responses to questions of tolerance in 36 different countries. Tolerance of outsiders is one way of measuring the strength of majority group cohesion, and, if my theory is correct, territorial threats should lead to individuals who are intolerant of those who do not conform to majority interests. Chapter 5 then examines how territorial threat affects the development of the military and how that development affects the repressive capacity of the state. My final domestic-level chapter, Chapter 6, focuses on the bargaining climate within the state. I expect territorial threats to lead to stymied oppositions and the long-term decline of institutional checks on executive powers. Indeed, we should witness the rise of centralized states in regions with traditionally high levels of territorial conflict.

The final part of the book is split into three chapters. Chapter 7 provides tests of the theory using a data set of contiguous dyads. I expect that many of the arguments associated with a peace between democracies really results from the establishment of peace among neighbors. Territorial conflicts lead to centralization and recurrent conflict, while the removal of these threats is

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associated with liberalization and democracy. States free from territorial threat should find that any conflicts that do arise will be more easily negotiated and less likely to provoke escalation. I explore this expectation in Chapter 8. The final empirical chapter, Chapter 9, then examines my argument that territorial threats place constraints on state leaders. Leaders involved in territorial conflicts with neighbors should be unlikely to involve their states abroad. Those conflicts that do merit escalation by the leader of a state at territorial peace will be more easily won, though, since the leader is able to select conflicts favorable to the state's conflict-fighting interests and abilities. Together, Chapters 7, 8, and 9 present a consistent theory of international conflict based on territorial peace that also subsumes many established empirical relationships associated with democracies.

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PART I

International borders

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2

Territorial issues and international conflict

2.1 Introduction

Territorial issues are incredibly conflict-prone. These difficult-to-resolve issues account for more disputes and wars, at a higher rate of escalation, than any other type of issue. This conclusion is well documented, and I describe the empirical basis for the claim very early in this chapter. However, the purpose of this chapter actually rests with developing the ways in which previous studies have treated the domestic political implications of territorial conflict. As I describe, almost all explanations of conflict rely on the salience of territorial issues to generate a domestic political environment that makes international conflict initiation likely. Relying mostly on the strong empirical connection between territory and war, studies search for the factor that makes the land valuable to the conflict-initiating state. An association of ethnic lands, resources, or strategic territory, with territorial conflict, also offers proof of the domestic political argument. There is little development, if any, of how territorial issues actually structure the domestic political bargaining within the state.

There are two exceptions to this pattern. First, the Steps-to-War explanation, offered by Vasquez (1993, 2009), finds the relationship between territorial conflicts and domestic politics to be somewhat recursive. Territorial conflicts affect the composition of the leadership by promoting the ascendance of hard-liners, and these leadership changes make war more likely. A second exception concerns the growing number of studies that examine the ability of democratic institutions to mollify territorial conflict. Granting again the potential salience of these issues for the public at large, the goal of these studies is to determine how exactly democratic institutions influence leaders to avoid direct confrontation over these issues (Huth and Allee 2002; Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003).

I actually believe these three types of studies can be understood as part of a broader argument on the effects of territorial issues. For example, the

recursive effects of territorial conflicts are probably much greater than even Vasquez (1993, 2009) imagined. Indeed, state centralization, the size of the electorate, and the rise of authoritarianism are all likely consequences for states targeted by dangerous territorial issues. Of course, if this is the case, if territorial conflict leads to non-democracy, then studies that focus solely on democratic institutions will also only be examining a highly selected sample of dispute cases. Conflicts involving democracies will be easier to resolve and will lack the power to truly challenge domestic institutions. This argument then returns to the original attempts to associate different types of territory with variations in conflict-proneness. Rather than focusing on the attributes of the land, however, I argue that the public will be most concerned with the conflict that has a high probability of directly affecting them. Individuals living in fear of conflict will turn to their leaders for security, allowing the state more and more power in the process, which also encourages more centralized institutions.

I begin this argument in the next section. After establishing first the connection between territorial issues, disputes, and wars, and the theories that have been used to explain these findings, I then outline the Steps-to-War explanation of territorial conflict. I argue that many of the policies associated with this explanation of conflict also provide insight into what makes domestic centralization likely. The next section then describes the studies that select on democracy and how this selection mechanism may hint at more fundamental variations in the types of issues that confront state leaders. Finally, I close with a discussion of the data sets that have been used by all of these studies to identify those states involved in conflict over territorial issues. This last section is important because, from it, I develop an argument for measuring those conflicts that will most affect the lives of individual citizens. These are the salient territorial issues.

2.2 Territorial issues, disputes, and wars

The literature on territorial issues originally began as an outgrowth of the many studies that linked contiguity to conflict. States that border each other are much more likely to fight each other. Bremer (1992) provides some of the most compelling evidence on this, demonstrating that contiguity is the single most important predictor of war-proneness in a dyad; in his analysis, contiguous states were 35 times more likely to experience war than non-contiguous states between the years 1816 and 1965. Though the strength of the relationship is powerful, does this finding really have any substantive import? Contiguity is a constant for neighboring states, and war varies, so contiguity cannot be a cause of war on its own. Contiguity could merely be a proxy for the distance