

On Dangerous Ground

As a rule, countries consider clearly defined international borders to be paramount for their survival and prosperity. Most borders gain definition peacefully and, once they do, these definitions stick (i.e., the border remains settled). The failure to define borders, however, produces protracted, geopolitical, militarized competitions (or rivalries) between neighboring countries. Rider and Owsiak model this failure as a particular type of bargaining problem – namely, bargaining over territory that affects the distribution of power between neighboring states significantly – that undermines efforts to resolve border disagreements peacefully. Countries must then overcome this bargaining problem or risk falling into a protracted rivalry, which then needs to be addressed with more resources. The authors develop a theory of how borders settle. They then explore the consequences of the failure to settle, theoretically connecting it to the onset of rivalries. This leads to the process that helps rivals overcome the bargaining problem, resolve their border disagreement, and terminate their rivalry.

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On Dangerous Ground

A Theory of Bargaining, Border Settlement, and Rivalry

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Dedicated with love to my spouse, Jill, and children, Alex and Sam.

Toby J. Rider

To Ash, Paula, Andrew, and Doris. You know what you did.

Andrew P. Owsiak

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Preface

A project like this undergoes a transformation as it develops. It began as a series of articles about the relationship between border settlement and interstate rivalries – a relationship that we thought existed, and for which we had a solid theoretical explanation. Those articles, published in the *Journal of Politics* (2013) and the *Journal of Peace Research* (2015), however, did not grant us the space we needed to tell a full story. They covered why unsettled borders lead to rivalry onset, as well as how settling borders alters the rivalry relationship. Yet they left a crucial question unanswered: how do rivals reach border settlement in the first place?

We intended a third article to answer this final question, but presentations of it in draft form generated deserved criticism. Our audience wanted to know how border settlement happened generally (not merely in rivalries), what conceptual foundations underlay our argument, and how any third article would fit into a coherent whole with our previous work. At that point, we realized the necessity of a book, not only to insert the piece of the story missing thus far but also to develop further the pieces that existed in published form and to tie them together into the larger story we were telling.

As with any new project, early momentum energized us, and the Peace Science Society (International) generously supported a workshop for our book in 2015 at its annual meeting, held that year at the University of Mississippi. Glenn Palmer and Jeff Carter proved instrumental in orchestrating that workshop for us, and we therefore owe them our gratitude. Numerous individuals – including K. Chad Clay, Michael Colaresi, Paul Hensel, Marc Hutchison, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Scott Wolford – read an early draft of the manuscript at that time and provided us with crucial feedback and (re)direction. The project greatly improved, and adopted a new structure, in the aftermath of our collective conversation. In the years that followed, we then called on Scott Wolford and Chad Clay repeatedly for still further advice. Each of the

colleagues listed here donated significant time and effort to improve our work. We cannot thank them enough, and hasten to acknowledge that we accept responsibility for any shortcomings that remain.

Our gratitude extends beyond this initial group to five additional groups as well. First, research assistants contributed significantly to the data underlying our analyses. In 2011, we set out to gather data on the process by which neighboring states settle(d) their borders, including the various conflict management tools they employ(ed). This task proved challenging, laborious, and larger than we initially expected. Thus, between 2011 and 2017, myriad graduate and undergraduate students contributed to data collection, archiving, cleaning, and analysis. Doug Atkinson, Allison Cuttner, Patrick Howell, Josh Jackson, Cody Knapp, and John Willingham provided the in-depth research that allowed us to compile the initial dataset. We owe a special thanks to Josh Jackson, however, who supervised a team of graduate and undergraduate research assistants at the University of Georgia in 2017 to check the accuracy of the full dataset. This research team included Cheikh Faye, Caroline Gustavson, George McCall, Lucas Nussbaumer, Christian Pedraza, and Garrett Shrader. Without the combined assistance of these individuals, we would – no doubt – still be searching for, reading, writing, and coding myriad historical narratives. An introduction to the dataset appears in *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2018), co-authored by Andrew P. Owsiak, Allison Cuttner, and Brent Buck.

Second, our universities – Texas Tech University and the University of Georgia – supplied funding that allowed us not only to present our work to colleagues at academic conferences but also to hold writing retreats. The latter may seem odd, but proved especially valuable. With family obligations, teaching schedules, and university service commitments competing for our attention (including during the summer!), the chance to meet in person for days at a time gave us bursts of momentum that would otherwise not have been possible. We also found it more efficient to work simultaneously at the same physical location (when possible) to resolve concerns that arose, even though technology allows for virtual meetings. We hope other universities will recognize and support scholars similarly, particularly young ones.

A series of locations comprise the third group. Our writing road show did not prove terribly exciting, but we spent many hours writing at the Cartel Coffee Lab (Tempe, Arizona), the Franklin House Cafe (Athens, Georgia), Starbucks (various), the Tempe Mission Palms (Tempe, Arizona), and Walker's Pub (Athens, Georgia). The fourth group emerged as we moved the project toward its final form and across various procedural checkpoints. Paul Diehl, Sara Mitchell, Cas Mudde, John Vasquez, and Scott Wolford offered us valuable insight into the book publication process, sharing their collective experience with us. That made navigating the process less opaque, which helped tremendously. We also thank our editors at Cambridge University Press, Robert Dreesen and Sara Doskow, who showed confidence in the project and guided it through the publication process. Finally, we owe Jill and Ash a special thanks.

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At multiple times, we each announced that we would – well, asked if we could – disappear for a few days to advance the project. The most notable occasions involved a week in June 2018 (Tempe, Arizona) and roughly another week in February 2019 (Athens, Georgia). Our absence often made more work for them, but they kindly adapted and supported us.

One final note: to stave off the questions of curious readers – and ensure they focus on the book’s content, as opposed to peculiar details – we note that a coin flip determined author order on this project.