1 Territoriality and conflict in an era of globalization

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The world of the early twenty-first century displays both persistent attachments to territory and violent conflict over those territorial stakes. Even as interstate conflict has declined, many costly internal conflicts have taken on a territorial dimension. The persistence of territoriality and the conflict that it inspires run counter to one popular view of the consequences of growing globalization: capital, goods, and populations display increased mobility, and their detachment from territory should reduce the importance of conventional territorial boundaries. Globalization has produced changes in territoriality and the functions of borders, but it has eliminated neither. We do not live in a “borderless world” or one that has seen the “end of geography” (Ohmae 1990; O’Brien 1992). Conflict over territory continues in an increasingly integrated world.

Spanning the social sciences, the authors in this volume present converging investigations into the complex causal relations among territoriality, conflict, and globalization. The study of globalization and the persistence of ethnic conflict have stimulated an interest in borders of all kinds, questioning their permanence and defining the consequences when social and cultural identities do not coincide with political boundaries and territorial claims. The contributors display skepticism toward both an unreconstructed view of the sovereign territorial state and the competing claim that globalization has completely transformed the existing territorial regime. The modern territorial state is seen as one historically bounded exemplar of territoriality, rather than the defining expression of territorial rule. Scrutiny of the concept of territoriality leads to a more contingent and mutable formulation of unit variation rather than the conventional, static view of territoriality within international relations – a “Westphalian” system populated by precisely delimited, territorial states (Kahler 2002).

At the same time, changing territoriality is not equated with deterritorialization in an era of globalization. Early arguments claimed that globalization – particularly global economic integration – was eroding or “hollowing out” the role of the nation-state as governance moved to
global and regional international institutions and devolved to sub-national units. In addition, private actors seemed to claim a role in governance that would substitute for, rather than complement, the role of national governments. Subsequent investigation has revealed a modern nation-state that is far from obsolete or absent from national governance. No universal shift in the location of governance has taken place. Rather, national governments, which have remained bounded territorial units, have adapted in order to retain the effectiveness and accountability demanded by their constituents. New forms of governance have emerged in the face of competing demands from the forces of integration and the claims of constituents (Kahler and Lake 2003).

Territoriality as the creation of actors over time, globalization as one of the determinants of territoriality rather than a force for its eradication – these broad viewpoints inform all of the chapters that follow. Disagreement over which actors are most important and how constrained their actions may be will become apparent. To question territoriality and the consequences of globalization would not set this study apart from many others. In three ways, however, it also advances the exploration of territoriality, globalization, and conflict:

1 Although states (and groups) continue to contest territory, often violently, the reasons for particular territorial attachments have remained obscure. Explanations are advanced, here and elsewhere, for a general increase in the importance of territorial stakes, but even in eras when territory appears of declining importance, specific territorial attachments can be mobilized into politics in ways that reinforce conflict. Globalization has in some cases strengthened those attachments and in others diluted them. In the first part of this volume, several models are advanced for the construction and persistence of such attachments. They provide alternative micro-foundations for changes in territoriality.

2 Although major interstate conflict has declined in recent decades, territorial conflicts remain prone to escalation and difficult to resolve. Conflicts within the borders of states often display a territorial dimension that has similar effects on their deadliness and persistence. Territoriality defined as territorial stakes clearly influences conflicts; globalization affects those stakes and may predictably increase or diminish the likelihood of conflict between and within states. Globalization may also have different effects on interstate conflicts and those erupting within the borders of existing states. Explaining the effects of globalization on territorial stakes and, through those stakes, on violent conflict is a central aim of authors in the second part.
Finally, the micropolitics of territorial attachments and territorial stakes contribute to the construction of territorial regimes – territoriality defined as domestic and international institutions. Boundaries are often seen as sources of dispute and symbols of conflict, barriers to movement and frontiers for military defense. As institutions that legitimate territorial claims, however, settled borders also play a central role in conflict reduction. Policy jurisdictions may match territorial borders, or they may bear only a rough relationship to a territorially defined space. Globalization and conflict influence the regime of borders and jurisdictions and its changes over time. An exploration of territorial regimes and their determinants lies at the center of part III.

Controversies surrounding the changing nature of globalization, territoriality, and violent conflict have centered on their definition and their consequences. Each has inspired a rich scholarly and policy literature over the past decade. Causal links among the three have been posited, but their investigation is far from complete. The volume at hand draws on interdisciplinary investigation of these features of the global system in order to better define them, to explore their change over time, and to propose causal relationships among them. Changes in territoriality lie at the core of this research agenda, changes shaped by both globalization and past conflict that in turn increase the probability either of continuing conflict or of its resolution.

Territoriality and globalization defined

Territoriality

For anthropologists and geographers, who view territoriality over long historical spans and across cultural divides, territoriality has two dimensions: delimitation of boundaries and behavior within those boundaries. Robert Sack, for example, defines territoriality as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (1986, 19). Each of these dimensions has demonstrated wide variation over time and across societies.

In modern political science, sociology, and international relations, territoriality has been defined more narrowly in terms of spatially defined political rule. Recent explorations of territoriality have questioned the axiomatic hold that the modern state has had in defining territorial rule, however. This new look at unit variation has unearthed the territorial
and non-territorial rivals of the modern territorial state and emphasizes the contingent nature of the eventual success and expansion of this particular territorial template. Hendrik Spruyt and Charles Tilly, for example, emphasize the importance of city-leagues and city-states in late medieval Europe, rivals to the territorial state that enjoyed considerable success before falling to its greater military power and institutional advantages (Tilly 1990; Spruyt 1994). Andreas Osiander (2001) challenges the claim of a sharp Westphalian break that separates the modern state system from earlier conceptions of sovereignty and territoriality.

Even this narrower definition contains three dimensions of variation. First, individuals and groups can be distinguished by their territorial attachment and detachment: their identification with a particular territory and the precision and intensity of that identification. As Terrence Lyons describes, certain groups of migrants, particularly economic migrants, demonstrate little identification with their previous homeland. Diasporic communities, however, display a close affinity with a homeland that may often be more mythical than real, but one that has significant behavioral implications nonetheless (Lyons, this volume).

Territorial attachment is in turn a major determinant of the stakes that actors, particularly political elites, discern in territory. For those pre-occupied with the role of territorial claims in violent conflict among or within units, this second dimension of territoriality is central: territory may be more or less important (as compared to other objectives) as a stake in bargaining among key actors. Over time, governments and groups have awarded greater or lesser value to land in their disputes.

Conflicting territorial claims may involve stakes of two types. Tangible territorial stakes include varying degrees of control over land and sea, as well as over the resources and populations that are part of those spatial claims. More puzzling and difficult to explain, however, are the symbolic stakes that are often invested in territorial conflicts. At the level of the polity, these stakes are often determined by the prior (and constructed) territorial attachments of groups. As a result, territories that are devoid of resources or substantial, ethnically related populations may still become the site of violent disputes. Unraveling the sources of territorial attachment will help to explain the symbolic stakes that lie at the heart of many territorial conflicts.

Finally, challenges to a timeless Westphalian order that are based on an awareness of the fluidity of territoriality require the introduction of territorial regime as a third dimension of changes in territoriality. Territorial regime narrows the concept of territoriality by reducing both the actors and the behaviors of interest. A territorial regime governs the
spatial exercise of authority by political elites or governments. As defined earlier, such a regime is constituted by the norms, institutions, and practices associated with territorial governance. Its two principal constituents are border delimitation and jurisdictional congruence. Border delimitation captures the means by which political units separate themselves from other units, means that can be characterized by more or less precision and permanence. Jurisdictional congruence measures the degree to which exclusive political authority across policy domains coincides with those boundaries.

These dimensions of territorial regimes have displayed considerable variation over time. For example, Friedrich Kratochwil (1986) contrasts border delimitation practices and jurisdictional authority among pastoral or nomadic peoples with the institutions of ancient empires and the contemporary states system. The introduction of fixed property among the Mongols – a different and more permanent sort of control over territory – led to a decline in their mobility, which had been a major strategic asset deployed against the Chinese empire, and to the institution of new and more permanent hierarchical relations with their sedentary neighbors (Kratochwil 1986, 21). Michael Saltman (2002) has described a similar transition among the Kipsigi, a formerly pastoral people in Kenya. The dimensions of territoriality have also differed across regions as well as among different types of units. Amitav Acharya describes the pre-colonial interstate system in Southeast Asia as “loosely organised states existing side-by-side without clearly defined territorial limits” (Acharya 2000, 21).4 In pre-colonial Africa, an abundance of land coupled with relatively low population meant that authority faded rapidly from the center to the ill-defined edges of the polity (Herbst 2000). The Westphalian image of precisely delimited borders and exclusive, congruent jurisdictions within those borders has been an exception rather than a norm even within western Europe, as Peter Sahlins (1989) demonstrates in the case of the Pyrenees border between France and Spain. Although this border was one of the first to be agreed in early modern Europe, it was initially defined in jurisdictional terms – the rule of the two sovereigns over particular subjects – rather than as strictly territorial rule. Those jurisdictions continued to overlap for some time.

Globalization

Globalization is a term laden with political freight and theoretical ambiguity. For some, globalization encompasses a host of changes in international politics that can be traced to radically reduced costs of
international transportation and communications. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, for example, define globalization as an increase in globalism, which is described as “networks of interdependence at multi-continental distances” (Keohane and Nye 2000, 2). Defined in such a way, globalization becomes so all-encompassing that its usefulness for explanation is reduced. Given its scope, endogeneity seems to be defined into the concept, and tracing the direction of causality becomes very difficult.

For the purposes of exploring its consequences for territoriality and military conflict, globalization will be more narrowly defined as economic integration at the global level, a reduction in the barriers to economic exchange and factor mobility that creates one economic space from many. Economic globalization, which is central to most contemporary debates about globalization’s reach and its consequences, is driven by both the technological changes noted above and the political choices of governments. Although measured through economic indices, it is not a purely technological or economic process. Trade-based measures are often deployed to estimate levels of globalization, but a definition of economic globalization should include investment and migration as well. Contemporary economic integration is driven by capital market integration and foreign direct investment by multinational corporations as much as by the opening of markets to trade in goods and services. Cross-border migration may also have important political implications, as the diasporas described by Terrence Lyons demonstrate. Finally, globalization, even when defined as economic integration, may vary over time. The pre-1914 era of globalization, despite high levels of economic integration, differed from contemporary globalization in both economic constituents and territorial outcomes. That variation is noted by several of the authors when assessing the significance of globalization for changes in territoriality.

Explaining territorial attachments

Territorial attachments are often identified as contributors to conflict within and between states. Systematic analysis of interstate territorial conflict points to the importance of symbolic attachments to territory: the intrinsic value of territory (in terms of its economic or demographic significance) cannot account for a substantial share of disputes and violent conflict over territory (Diehl 1999a, x–xi). Domestic political dynamics drive territorial conflict as much as the strategic value of the territory in dispute, and those political dynamics are often rooted in the

The lack of coincidence between homeland attachments and countries of residence also lies at the heart of many ethnonational disputes within existing states, disputes that may also have a strong international dimension. Homelands may match perfectly the boundaries that delimit a particular state, but that outcome is relatively rare. The homeland may be external to the state of residence of an individual or group (as in the case of diasporas). It may also be only a portion of an existing state, as in the case of many secessionist movements. Or, as in irredentist movements, a homeland may span the territory of more than one state. In any of these cases, homeland selection may point toward conflict between states or between groups and their states of residence (Barrington et al. 2003, 292–94). In conflicts between governments and ethnonational groups, Monica Toft (2003) has discovered that populations concentrated territorially and lacking any other homeland are more likely to turn to violence to achieve their ends in the face of state resistance to greater autonomy.

Given the underlying importance of territorial attachments in many conflicts and growing evidence that the homeland “is a perception, susceptible to change over time” (Toft 2003, 313), a model that explains the creation, maintenance, and demise of territorial attachments would also contribute to an explanation for many territorial conflicts. Four such models are presented in the first part of this volume. Hein Goemans argues that the homeland originates in the classical setting of insecurity familiar to students of international politics. The need for collective defense offers powerful incentives for a clear principle that will allow identification of membership in the group. Territoriality has often provided that core principle, offering advantages of coordination both to followers – who can more easily monitor their leader(s) – and to the elite who can more reliably count on the support of the population in common defense (Goemans, this volume, 31).

As Goemans describes, these rationalist assumptions help to explain the emergence and survival of a group norm for defense of the homeland, but the choice of a particular homeland requires further explanation through a set of focal principles that are deployed to identify the contours of the homeland, focal principles that change over time. Peter Sahlins (1989), for example, describes how the focal principle of “natural” frontiers, defined by mountain ranges or rivers, became more accepted in the boundary delimitation of early modern Europe, often displacing historical (and mythical) claims. Although these focal
principles often appeared to disguise simple strategic interests, they also took on a life of their own in the professional work of geographers, cartographers, and diplomats. In his account of colonial boundary surveys in British Guiana, D. Graham Burnett describes the ways in which different focal principles could conflict: finding a boundary that referred to historical occupation, followed natural features of the landscape, offered visibility, and allowed access to surveyors fixing its position was often impossible. The selection of one focal principle rather than another could produce persistent border disputes, such as those that Guyana inherited from its colonial ruler (Burnett 2000, 209–10).

Joel Robbins (chapter 3) presents a case of territorial detachment in his account of the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea, a group who, under the influence of cultural (religious) and economic globalization, reject their existing territorial domain in favor of alternative identities. The homeland in this case is not a reservoir of positive emotional attachment, but a persistent barrier to religious and economic aspirations. Robbins recreates at the local level a parallel to the territorial reconstitution traced by others at the national and international levels. Two competing versions of globalization’s effects on such local territorial attachments emerge: on the one hand, globalization may provoke an identity backlash that deepens symbolic territorial attachments at the local level; on the other, globalization, in this case defined more broadly than economic globalization, may provide a menu of new identities, competitors that undermine or usurp older symbolic attachments to territory. The Urapmin were hardly participants in the global economy; as Robbins points out, globalization was more an aspiration than a reality. Territorial detachment owed more to an imported transnational religious identity, Pentecostal Christianity, which provided a symbolic alternative to deities rooted in their locale. Religion in this case eroded attachment to a local homeland, in striking contrast to the “geopiety” described by David Newman in Israel.

Newman (chapter 4) traces reterritorialization and the development of territorial attachments at the local level. Like other authors in this volume, he rejects a simple trajectory from globalization to a borderless world, particularly when invisible borders are constructed every day at the local level. For many ethnoterritorial conflicts, the creation of territorial facts on the (local) ground has been a central instrument in creating new landscapes and new territorial realities. As Newman argues, borders as dynamic institutions incorporate a “‘bottom up’ process of change, . . . which emanates from the daily functional patterns of the ordinary people living in the borderland region, as much as the
traditional ‘top down’ approach which focuses solely on the role of institutional actors, notably – but not only – governments” (Newman, this volume, 102–3).

Territorial expressions of conflict, through such processes as residential segregation and differential distribution of resources, are part of the micro-level means for reshaping territory that may later be reflected at the more familiar level of national borders and conflicts. As Peter Sahlins (1989) describes in the case of neighboring Catalan villages that faced each other across the French–Spanish border, local politics could embroil national governments and call on national claims to promote local ends, just as national governments could at times mobilize local populations in their own strategies on the frontier. At the Finnish–Soviet border, Anssi Paasi contrasts the attitudes of national elites toward the border – a stance of fear and “otherness” – with the younger generations who live near the border and have been “completely socialized” to its existence. For them, the border is “part of the routine of everyday activities and part of the security that springs from the routinization of action” (1996, 268–69). The potential conflict between local territorial compartmentalization or compromise and national strategies may also undermine efforts at conflict resolution.

A final set of actors may be strengthened by globalization and in turn reinforce the high symbolic stakes and politically significant attachments associated with territory: diasporas. Although diaspora is a contested concept, attachment to a homeland outside the state of residence is a key factor separating diasporic communities from other migrants: “‘the old country’ – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions.” That homeland is defined territorially, often more precisely and emotionally by diasporas than by homeland residents themselves. Terrence Lyons (chapter 5) examines those attachments and their determinants in the case of conflict-generated diaspora groups. He also traces the attitudes of diasporas toward territorial politics in the homeland. Diasporas may provide an important external constituency with intense preferences regarding territorial conflict, one with resources to back up their political attitudes. Diasporas also share a particular relationship to globalization. Although the conflict-generated diasporas described by Lyons were not created by globalization, contemporary globalization has provided both avenues for retaining intensive communication with the former homeland and, occasionally, the economic incentives to maintain those links. Paradoxically, globalization allows diasporic communities to reinforce starkly territorial definitions of the homeland and to heighten the territorial stakes in both internal and interstate conflicts.
Territorial stakes, globalization, and conflict

Territory remains a potent source of conflict between states, one that has persisted into the current era of globalization. Even if proximity is controlled, territorial stakes remain important in many militarized disputes and wars. Territorial disputes are more likely to escalate: militarized disputes over territory are much more likely to involve a militarized response by the target state and are more likely to escalate to full-scale war. Territorial conflicts – both interstate and intrastate – are more likely to be protracted and difficult to settle. The tangible stakes associated with territorial disputes (strategic location, economic value, and shared ethnic groups) clearly explain some of the active territorial claims between states, but far from all.

For conflicts internal to states as well as those between states, the ability to mobilize political support over a territorial conflict derives from the salience of such conflicts, which, in turn, is often based on symbolic attachments and appeals. Such mobilization often makes territory – an eminently divisible stake – an intractable issue by creating effective indivisibility. Goemans, for example, argues that attachment to a particular focal principle in defining the homeland may produce bargaining failures. If territorial concession calls into question the underlying focal principle that defines the territory that should be defended, the intrinsic value of territory could fail to predict its perceived implications for group survival.

The direct effect of globalization on violent conflict has most often been investigated through dyadic measures of economic interdependence. Most research points to a positive relationship between interdependence and peace, although skeptical voices remain. Here the principal concern is globalization’s effects on territoriality – defined as the territorial regime or the salience of territorial stakes – and whether those changes in territoriality have discernable effects on territorial disputes and the militarized conflicts that may follow from them. If globalization, through either changes in territorial regimes or a reduction in intrinsic or symbolic territorial stakes, lowers the frequency of territorial disputes between states or groups, its contribution to a reduction in violent conflict could be substantial. Such effects could also be used to reshape strategies for the resolution of such disputes.

David Lake and Angela O’Mahony (chapter 6) connect changing territorial stakes and interstate conflict through the variable of changing state size. State size in the international system demonstrates a clear and significant pattern of increase in the nineteenth century and decrease in the twentieth century. For Lake and O’Mahony, increasing state size is