

POLS 318: Theories of IR
Lecture 23 (04.07.2021):
Territorial Disputes - the Motivations

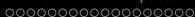
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Overview

- 1 Quick review
- 2 Political consequences
- 3 Motivations for Disputes
- 4 Extra Material



Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- Proximity, interactions and territoriality.
- An issue approach - territory as central issue.
- Issue salience - tangible/intangible values.
- Salient territory and military action.
- Outbidding, regimes and territorial wars.
- Diversionary war - the issue of territory.

Questions?? Email me!

Territorial conflicts

Political ramifications

- Positive effects (rally around the flag).
- "Don't let them die in vein".
- Risks from conflicts - the *culpability* of leaders.

Israel and the Yom Kippur war (October 1973)

- Issue salient → territory.
- Significant risks of reputation costs.
- Israel "won" the war (military perspective).

Political ramifications

Getmansky and Weiss (2020)

- Data: Public opinion and voting record.
- Effects on incumbent support.

Results:

- 1 PM popularity drop by 19% ▶ Popularity
- 2 Support for incumbent party drop by 10%, opposition party gain 10% increase in support.
- 3 Fatalities and support.



Why do we care so much?



Explaining Territorial disputes

Evolutionary approach (Johnson and Toft 2015)

- Die for a territory, why?
- Territoriality - importance of territory (humans and animals).
- Solves the challenges of the environment.
- Survival → maximize "Darwinianatness".
- Proxy to secure access to resources.

Explaining Territorial disputes

Evolutionary approach (Johnson and Toft 2015)

- Behavior → "automatic" physiological and psychological mechanisms.
- Fight for territory - not just politics.
- A rational angle (Fearon 1995) - indivisible good.
- Explanation for war.
- Example: Jerusalem. [▶ AllReligions](#)

Explaining Territorial disputes

Territoriality in Nature

- Territory prevents constant fighting.
- **(1) Value asymmetry:** "residents" vs. "intruders".
- Familiarity and the edge in conflict.
- Links to loss aversion, SQ bias.
- Potential costs → strong attachment to homeland.

Explaining Territorial disputes

Territoriality in Nature

- **(2) Economic defensibility.**
- Spatial distribution of essential goods.
- Resources centered in one place → fight over it.

Evolutionary game theory

- The "hawk - dove" game.
- "Residents" vs. "Intruders".
- Rational prevention of conflict.

Explaining Territorial disputes

Beyond rationality

- Costs, tangible value and probability of victory.
- The "owner" of the land.
- Expectations of behavior.



Explaining Territorial disputes

Historical Ownership (Fang and Li 2020)

- Historical ownership of territory and wars.
- Indivisible land and escalation of conflicts.
- Historical precedents → opportunity and incentives.

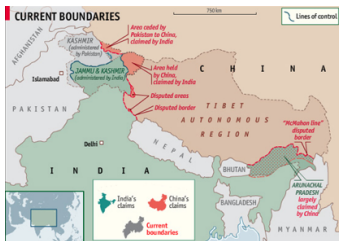
Strength of claim

- Legitimacy - history \gg ethnic ties and resources.
- Legality - property rights.
- Emotional ties.

Historical Ownership claims

Ties to the land

- Disputed territory → indivisible ("zero-sum" outcome).
- Support coercive measures: economic sanctions and military action.
- The power of *nationalism*.
- Loss of land as a threat on national identity.



Historical Ownership and conflict

Public Views (Fang and Li 2020)

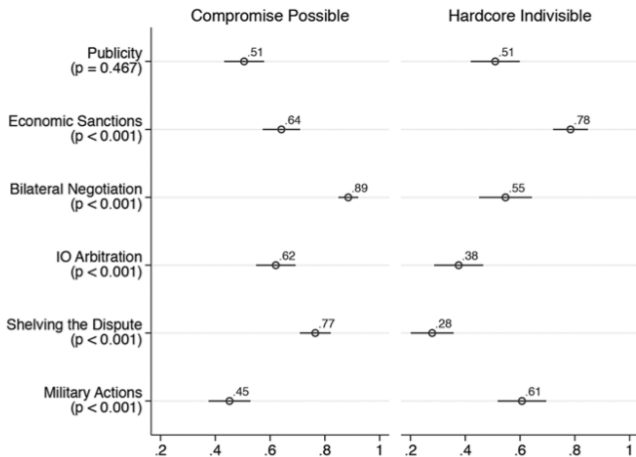
- Method: experiment in China.
- Territory, history and nationalism.

Findings

- High support for "zero-sum" solution.
- Lower support for compromise when historical claim.
 - ▶ Compromise
- No evidence for nationalism effect.

Historical Ownership in China

Effects on policy solutions



Territorial Issues

Spatial Proximity (Tanaka 2016)

- Public views of territorial disputes.
- Spatial distance → incentives for compromise.
- Variations in proximity to territory at stake.
- Public opinion changes.

Territorial Issues

Spatial Proximity (Tanaka 2016)

- Ties to the territory and proximity.
- Close → costs of conflict.
- Favor compromise.
- Distant → importance and ties to territory.
- Oppose compromise.
- Security threat → no effect for proximity.

Territorial Issues

Spatial Proximity (Tanaka 2016)

- Test: Japan contested islands (Korea and China).
- compromise (with monetary compensation) or dispute.

Results

- Greater opposition to compromise.
- Compromise and reputation costs → strong opposition.
- Economic benefits → support compromise for close proximity.

Territorial Issues

Motivations for disputes

- Tangible value - resources, strategic advantage.
- Intangible value - history, ideology, biology.
- Rational view → costs of control vs. concessions
- Outside effect - credible commitment to agreement.
- Ideology and identity → collective identity and homeland.
- Ethnicity or religiosity and strong bonds with land.
- Costs → less powerful than control over land.

Territorial Issues

Tangible and intangible values (Manekin et al. 2019)

- Context - the West bank and Israeli citizens views.
- Explore the foundations of territorial disputes.
- Survey experiments (2014-2017)

TABLE 1 *Experimental Design: Example*

	Policy A	Policy B
Territory	Israel will significantly strengthen its territorial control in the West Bank	Israel will withdraw from the territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem
Security	Rocket and terrorist attacks will decrease significantly	Rocket and terrorist attacks will remain unchanged
Economy	Israel's economy will be severely harmed	Israel's economy will grow significantly
Budget	The security, education, and health budgets will remain in their present form	The security budget will decrease, and the education and health budgets will increase

Tangible and intangible values (Manekin et al. 2019)

budgets:

(Baseline = The security, education, and health budgets will remain unchanged)

The security budget will decrease and the health and education budgets will increase

The security budget will increase and the health and education budgets will decrease

economy:

(Baseline = The economy will remain unchanged)

Israel's economy will be severely harmed

Israel's economy will grow significantly

security:

(Baseline = Rocket and terrorist attacks will remain unchanged)

Rocket and terrorist attacks will decrease significantly

Rocket and terrorist attacks will increase significantly

territory:

(Baseline = Israel will significantly strengthen its territorial control in the West Bank)

Israel will withdraw from the territories of the West Bank, but not from East Jerusalem

Israel will withdraw from the territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

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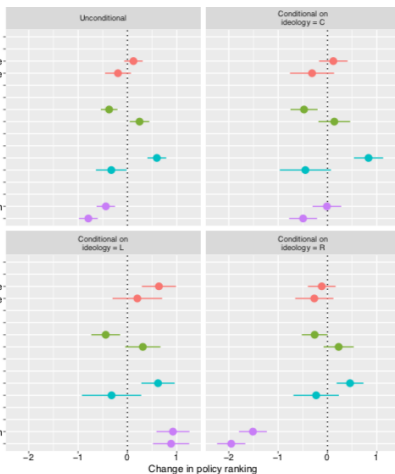
Rocket and terrorist attacks will increase significantly

territory:

(Baseline = Israel will significantly strengthen its territorial control in the West Bank)

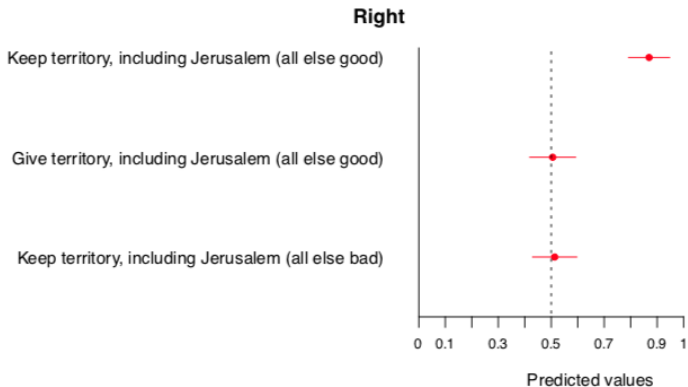
Israel will withdraw from the territories of the West Bank, but not from East Jerusalem

Israel will withdraw from the territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem



Tangible values for contested territory

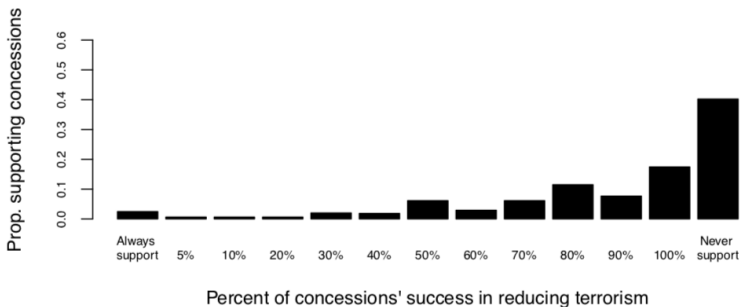
Salient Issue ▶ OtherVoters



Territorial Issues

Costs, risks and concessions

Terrorism risk (right-wing voters)

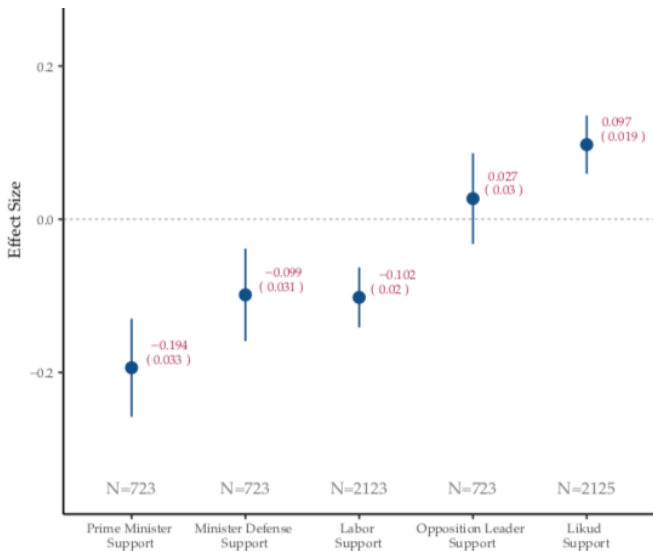


Recommended readings

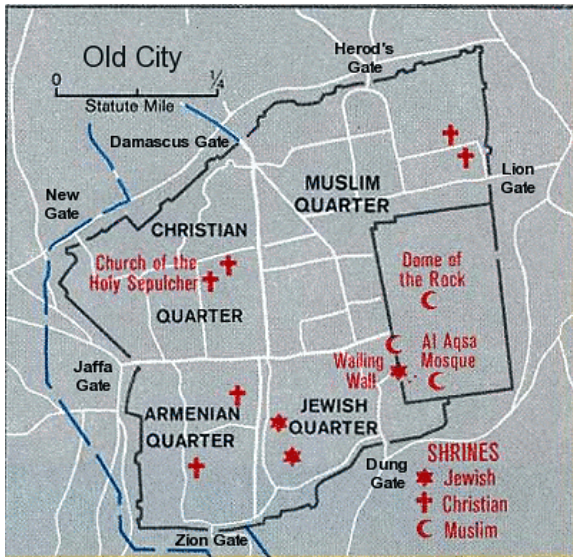
More studies on territorial disputes:

- 1 Abramson, Scott F., and David B. Carter. (2016). "The historical origins of territorial disputes." *American Political Science Review* 110, 4, 675-698.
- 2 Justwan, Florian, and Sarah Fisher. (2020). "Social Trust and Public Opinion about Territorial Disputes: Evidence from a Survey in India." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 5, 4, 617-633.
- 3 Igarashi, Akira. (2018). "Territorial Conflicts and Japanese Attitudes Towards East Asian Countries: Natural Experiments with Foreigners' Landings on Disputed Islands." *Political Psychology* 39, 4, 977-992.

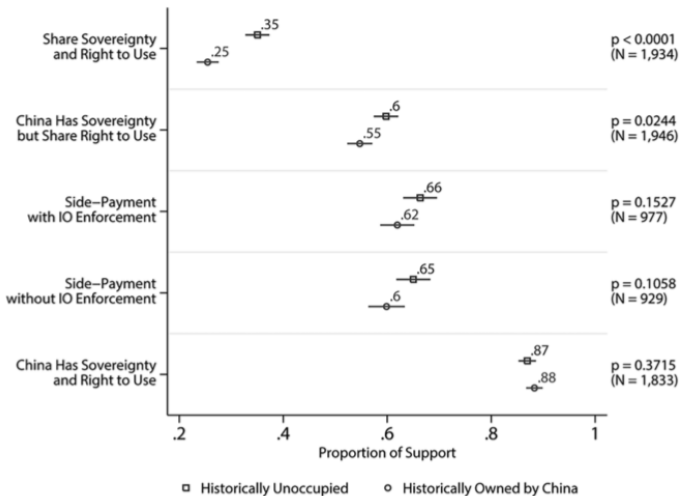
Territorial Wars and public opinion



Indivisible Territory



Historical Ownership and Compromise



Tangible values for contested territory

