

Ch-10 Territory as a Source of Conflict and a Road to Peace

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Diplomats have long seen that territory is a persistent source of conflict, but what has not been known is that once neighbours settle their territorial disputes, they have long periods of peace and prosperity. Territory is a key both to war and to peace.

Intellectual Background:

Territorial issues have often been a focus of diplomatic efforts in the international community. A fairly large body of international law exists dealing with boundary disputes.

Realist theory has consistently seen all issues, including territorial issues as reducible to the issue of power. It is the struggle for power within an anarchic system, not any specific issue that causes war. Territory may be a ~~power~~ motive for war, but it is its role as a source of power that is crucial for realists.

Territory, Peace and Conflict:

Empirical Patterns:-

Territorial disagreements appear to be special kinds of issues in that their presence encourages the use of militarized force.

Territorial disputes are not necessary conditions for war, but only increase the probability of war when they are present.

Huth (1996) and Huth and Allee (2002) classify territorial claims according to type - ethnic, strategic and economic. They find that ethnic and strategic territorial claims are highly conflict prone, in terms of escalation and war.

Is it the case that once a border is mutually accepted that peace can reign?

How can territory have this peaceful and even transformative effects on relations

between neighbours?

→ The reason is that once borders are accepted they can fulfill their role in the modern global system as international institutions.

International institutions that provide a number of mutual benefits, e.g. ^{and direct} economic benefits.

Non-Ethnic Nationalism and self-determination, a way to guard identity.

A dramatic case for how this process occurs in Western Europe. For centuries Western

Europe's borders have been contested and fought over in numerous wars. One of the great lessons for peace research is how this war-torn region becomes a security community in the Deutschman sense.*

Economic integration as a foundation that will spill over to produce political integration and peace.

* For Deutsch a Security Community is one where the states do not believe that war between them is possible.

It is this theoretical approach that was used to guide much of European integration and it is clearly antithetical to realist international relations theory. As such, the ensuing West European peace poses a ^{collaborative} anomaly for the realist paradigm, in that it is a non-realist theory associated with a set of policies that brings about peace in a war-torn region that had been dominated by realist practices of power politics.

With the creation of the European Union and its enlargement, acceptance of borders has become a keystone in its strategy for peace. It predicts that mutually acceptable borders among these states will give rise to long periods of peace between neighbours. This would be expected to be particularly the case in the context of the European Union, which provides an economic and political infrastructure for institutionalizing borders in a fashion that quickly provides benefits.

Globalization, involves not so much a removal of borders, but an acceptance of them and a set of economic agreements that make them more porous and interactive.

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