Territorial Change and Selection Institutions

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Abstract

States have fought over territory for centuries, and continuing territorial conflicts remain the most intractable conflicts in world politics. Different territories produce different gains for the countries gaining them, and the selection institutions of the state influence what sort of gains their leaders seek. Leaders who answer to a large winning coalition will aim at territorial gains that produce public goods for their supporters, primarily through the strategic value of the territory. Leaders who answer to a small winning coalition will seek valuable territory to increase state resources, and allow them to increase the private benefits they provide to their supporters. This paper finds support for this argument by examining territorial changes over the last two centuries. States whose leaders answer to a small winning coalition are more likely to take large territories with a substantial resident population, while states whose leaders answer to a large winning coalition are more likely to add small territories detached from their homeland.

Keywords

territorial change, winning coalition, selectorate theory, strategic territory

Territory has been a primary source of conflicts of interest in world politics and a primary reason for violent conflict (Vasquez, 1993). Military power is useful for gaining and holding control of territory, making violence and the threat of violence often present in conflicts over territorial control. Territorial gain has been a primary outcome of many interstate wars; sometimes resolving the conflict over the territory and prolonging it in others.

Territory is valuable to states for many reasons. Geography alone can make territory valuable. States have sought to place their borders on geographical features that are easy to defend, such as mountain ranges and major rivers. These defensive advantages can reduce the risk of a sudden attack. Islands can allow the controlling state to project naval and air power to control sea lanes and extend its territorial waters. Areas with valuable natural resources improve a state's economy and government revenue, which historically has been a basis of national power. The population residing on the territory is the primary source of value for that territory. A more productive population produces more revenue for their government. When the resident population is from the same ethnic group as a neighboring state, their co-ethnics in that state may wish to unify under one state. Territories with multiple ethnic groups can then produce conflicts over their control when the different ethnicities are represented in different states, as was common in Eastern Europe during the 20th century. As a state's population and economy are the primary elements of potential power, larger, more populous states are more powerful and so have dominated world politics over time. Two hundred and fifty years ago, European kings fought over territory because the number of people they ruled determined their wealth and power. Wars over territorial control are less common now, but territorial conflict still lies at the heart of some of the most difficult international conflicts in the world today, such as between India and Pakistan over the control of Kashmir.

National leaders operate in the nexus between international and domestic politics. They hold their position through domestic politics and are concerned about international politics in part because what happens internationally affects their supporters in domestic politics. National leaders then view international politics through a lens of domestic politics. They still must be concerned with the success of their strategies internationally, but the values of success and failure are measured largely in their hold on power at home. This paper uses selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, & Morrow, 2003) to assess how domestic politics as assessed by the selection institutions of the state influences how national leaders value territory. Leaders who answer to a large number of supporters are more likely to seek strategically valuable territory, while those who answer to a small set of supporters are more likely to seek economically valuable territory. I present this

argument and test it against the record of territorial changes in the international system over the last two hundred years.

Selectorate Theory

All political systems have ways of removing leaders and selecting their replacement (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). Selectorate theory provides a general explanation of selection processes and how they influence the public policies that leaders adopt. All leaders answer to a *support coalition*, the set of people in the country who keep them in power. For a challenger to come to power, she needs to reduce the current leader's support coalition below a critical threshold, called the size of the *winning coalition* or W, and create a support coalition of her own at least as large as W. The winning coalition gives the minimal number of supporters needed to hold power.

The *selectorate* is the set of people from whom a support coalition can be constructed. They are the politically relevant class of the society, those who have the power to make and break leaders. Individual selectors are assumed to be identical in their attributes, so any of them can replace any other. The size of the selectorate is referred to as S. In order to compare to W, coalition politics in selectorate theory focuses on the size of the support coalition compared to W and S and how leaders and challengers use public policy in their efforts to retain sufficient support to hold power or to bring down the current leader by pulling off enough supporters.

Some examples can clarify these three concepts. In a modern mass democracy, such as the United States or South Korea, the electorate is the selectorate. Ultimately, democratic leaders answer to voters, and they build a support coalition from the voters. Even when a democratic leader is removed through a non-electoral process, such as a vote of no confidence, those who remove and replace the leader do so out of a concern that the leader's support coalition has been reduced to the point where he or she would be likely to lose the next election. The exact size of the winning coalition in a democracy depends on the specific electoral rules of the country, but it ranges between one-quarter and one-half of the electorate. For South Korea, W is somewhere between 8 million and 16 million people, based on the number of voters in the 2012 Presidential election. In democracies, W is a large proportion of the population.

In non-democratic systems, the winning coalition and the selectorate are much smaller. In a traditional monarchy, the aristocracy is the selectorate, but the monarch relies on a small proportion of the aristocracy to maintain himself in power against revolts or other plots against him. Traditional monarchs and tyrants often held court so that they could monitor those who might be plotting against them

(Myerson, 2009). Military dictatorships also limit political power to those in the military, with the officers at the top holding the most power, and other groups they need to run the country, such as industrialists. These systems have small selectorates, and W is a fraction of that selectorate. Assessing the true size of W is difficult in closed political systems, where political competition and coalition formation take place in secret. Further, autocrats typically oversize their support coalition, so that even when we can judge the size of that support coalition, W may be significantly smaller. Additional supporters beyond those needed to hold power create a cushion in case some supporters defect to a challenger.

Modern autocracies are often based on a single party which holds power, with the Communist Party in such states being the initial historical example. These autocracies have larger selectorates than traditional monarchies, aristocracies, or military dictatorships; the party and all its members are the selectorate in those countries. The support coalition is the critical elements within the party that keep the specific leader in power. That support coalition is often a small fraction of the party's membership as many may join the party for personal advancement outside of politics. The size of the winning coalition is even smaller, although it is difficult to tell how small a fraction it is. The leader's critical supporters may reach down into the depths of the party from patronage relations between the higher levels of the party and local cadres. In all cases, the selectorate in one-party states is larger than in other forms of autocracy. We think that the size of the winning coalition is likely to be larger, but those figures cannot be estimated easily, as they can for democracies. To provide an idea of the relative sizes of the selection institutions across autocracies, about one million people benefited from Saddam Hussein's personalist dictatorship out of a population of 22 million Iraqis, the aristocracy of Louis XIV's France is estimated at 3-7% of the population, and there are about 80 million members of the Chinese Communist Party out of a population of 1.2 billion Chinese. In all cases, both the selectorate and the winning coalition are much smaller than in modern, mass democracies.

National leaders use public policy and state resources to hold the loyalty of their support coalition. They become vulnerable if sufficient members of their support coalition defect to a challenger and reduce their support coalition below W, the size of the winning coalition. Broadly speaking, leaders can create two types of benefits for their supporters. *Private benefits* are targetable to individuals, allowing the leader to direct these benefits solely to his or her supporters. The Byzantine Empire took this form of benefit to its clearest extreme as the Emperor once a year would summon the provincial governors to Constantinople, the capital, and reward each with a large sum of money directly from the Emperor's hands in a public ceremony. Military revolts were common in the Empire, with the governors able

to use their provincial armies to support or oppose a rebellion by another. These payments both helped the Emperor hold the loyalty of the governors and allowed him to monitor their allegiance to him. *Public goods* benefit all in society; they are produced by the state, and no one can be excluded from them. The leader's support coalition benefits from the public goods produced by the leader just as all in society are, including those outside the selectorate. These public goods can cover a wide range of the public goods familiar to political scientists. This dichotomy between private benefits and public goods is clearer in theory than in practice. Most government programs and policies create a mixture of private benefits and public goods, with the exact mix depending on the program or policy in question.

The fundamental result of selectorate theory is that *as the size of the winning coalition increases, leaders will shift the efforts away from the production of private benefits and towards the production of public goods*. This result is a price effect; the size of the winning coalition—the minimal number of supporters whose loyalty the leader must hold—is the price of providing private benefits to supporters. As that price rises, leaders will shift their policies and efforts towards producing public goods that benefit all in society, simply because it is a more efficient way to reward supporters. Larger *W*s correlate with a higher provision of a wide range of public goods and a lower provision of private benefits (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Morrow, Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson, & Smith, 2009).

There are two important qualifications to this general result. First, all political systems produce both private benefits and public goods. The need to satisfy a larger winning coalition inclines leaders towards producing more public goods and fewer private benefits; it does not force the mix of goods provided. Second, leaders who answer to small winning coalitions have the freedom to use state resources as they choose. The private benefits they provide hold the loyalty of their supporters and leave them with substantial resources which they can use at their discretion. Some autocrats use those discretionary resources to carry out projects of self-aggrandizement and self-glorification. Others are the true benevolent despots, who use their discretion to improve and advance their societies. The variation in state policies is greater across autocracies than it is across democracies. Democratic politicians compete over who can do the best job of providing public goods. This competitive pressure forces them to do so or lose office. Autocrats, on the other hand, can use public policy to advance their societies once they have secured their position by rewarding supporters. This pattern shows up in the economic growth of countries, where there are autocracies that perform very well and others that are a disaster, while economic growth in democracies avoids disaster but does not achieve the highest growth rates found in a few, lucky autocracies (Clark, Poast, Flores, & Kaufman, N.d.).

In systems with small winning coalitions, the size of the selectorate also influences public policy. Because leaders in such systems rely on private benefits to hold the loyalty of their supporters, those supporters worry about whether they will be excluded from those benefits if they support a challenger. As the selectorate increases, the pool of candidates from which a support coalition can be constructed increases with it. A member of the current support coalition who is considering defecting to a challenger has to wonder whether that challenger will continue to provide the private benefits she is accustomed to receiving from the current leader. The larger the selectorate, the more other candidates are available for the challenger to use in his support coalition after coming to power. Consequently, supporters become more loyal to the leader as the selectorate expands while the winning coalition remains the same. The risk of exclusion from the next support coalition increases as the number of candidates for that new support coalition increases. Supporters become more loyal because they fear they will be excluded from private benefits if a challenger comes to power. In turn, the leader then needs to provide less private benefits to hold their loyalty. In systems with small winning coalitions, where leaders retain power by providing private benefits to their supporters, larger selectorates mean more loyal supporters who receive fewer benefits, giving the leader more discretion over state resources.

Territory as Producing Private Benefits and Public Goods

Selection institutions affect the external aims of the state by inclining leaders toward producing public goods or private benefits. Territorial gain, as an aim of the state, does not directly map onto these goods. Some territorial gains produce public goods, while others increase the ability of the leader to provide private benefits to his supporters. To show the effects of selection institutions on territorial aims and change, we need to think clearly about types of territorial change and how they help leaders produce private benefits and public goods (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, ch. 9; Morrow, Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson, & Smith, 2006).

Security of citizens and their property is the fundamental public good in international politics produced by governments for their citizens. All governments seek to keep their people and property secure against threats from outside the country. Historically, the protection of territory from outside predation from invasion or raiding was a primary reason for the consolidation of state power, even if only to preserve the people and their wealth for the leader to prey upon. Modern governments seek to protect their citizens at home and abroad from attack. When a state can guard its borders and so protect its people from external threats, the resulting

security extends to all within its borders, making it a public good. Indeed, national defense is often used as the example of a public good in economics.

How can territorial change increase the security of the people of a state? It depends on what territory is gained. Strategic territory, that which conveys military advantages during wartime, increases the ability of a state to win wars, which in turn helps to secure its people through defense and deterrence of them. Great Britain, for example, sought to secure the keys to its empire: Gibraltar, Suez, the Cape of Good Hope, and Singapore, to name four. These territories had little intrinsic value in terms of the resident population or their ability to produce valuable goods. But their strategic position allowed the British Navy to dominate the seas and so secure commerce on the oceans, particularly the commerce of the merchant elite that played a large role in British politics even before universal suffrage. Similarly, the United States has kept territories outside its territory when it has significant military bases on them, such as Guam. Strategic territorial acquisition can enhance the ability of the leader to produce the public good of personal and national security.

The wealth of a territory can be converted into private benefits for the leader's supporters. Loot was the primary motivation for cross-border raids through much of history. Armies have plundered and extorted to reward their soldiers, and their officers, who were supporters of the leader, often got wealthy off of these ill-gotten gains. The most recent example was the plunder of Kuwait by Iraq during the six months that Iraq controlled the country before the Gulf War in 1991. When plunder is systematic, conquest can produce substantial rewards for followers. Colonial territory was valuable to the European powers during the 19th century because governments could allocate the benefits of economic activity in those territories to supporters of the government even if the colony in question was a net drain on the treasury, as many colonies were. The Congo Free State was the extreme example of this; it was the private property of King Leopold II and run to maximize the revenue he could extract from it at the great expense of the local population (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, pp. 208-213).

Adding valuable territory increases state resources through taxation of the resident population and revenue collection from economic activity on the territory. The value of the territory is the economic activity on the territory, so it increases with the size and productivity of the resident population. The ability of the government to extract a portion of that activity for state resources also affects the attraction of adding valuable territory.

How the leader uses the added resources from gaining control of valuable territory depends on the selection institutions of the state. Leaders who answer to a small winning coalition will use those added resources to increase private benefits to their supporters. This addition makes their hold on power stronger. A challenger

can also promise more as state resources increase, but the risk of exclusion creates doubts among supporters that she courts that they will continue to receive those benefits should she come to power. Better to stay with the current leader. A leader who answers to a small winning coalition benefits in a second way from increased state resources. He is a residual claimant; he can use any remaining resources as he chooses. These pet projects could benefit society generally or just erect magnificent edifices to his glory. Leaders who answer to a large winning coalition benefit less from increasing state resources through territorial expansion. Political competition in such systems is a competition over competence in producing public goods, rather than the purchase of loyalty through private benefits. Greater state resources allow the leader to expand public goods, but the challenger can also promise the same increase, leading to no advantage to the current leader. Further, the residual claim for a leader who answers to a large winning coalition is smaller because he must commit a larger proportion of state resources to retaining power than does a leader who answers to a small winning coalition. Consequently, expansion into territory that increases state resources is more attractive to leaders in small W systems than those in large W systems.

There is an important qualification in the tendency of large-W leaders away from expansion into territory that increases state resources. When the state has a long-term rival with greater potential power, taking territory which produces resources from the latter can shift the balance of power between the two and increase the national security of the former. When a country is weaker than its rival, taking economically valuable territory increases its ability to generate military power and reduces that of its rival. This shift in military capabilities can increase national security, a public good.

In addition to national and personal security and increasing state resources, foreign policy can advance other public goods and private benefits. Policies which benefit particular supporters produce private benefits, such as trade protection does for the owners and workers of industries receiving the protection. Territorial gain could do so if the leader allocates the benefits of state control to particular supporters, with colonial concessions as an example. This effect depends on how access to territory is allocated. The westward expansion of the United States across North America added vast amounts of sparsely populated territory. Through the Homestead Act of 1862, U.S. citizens could claim and own tracts of this land if they agreed to live on it and farm it. Because this benefit was open to all U.S. citizens, it produced a public good rather than a private benefit. Ideological aims of foreign policy operate like public goods because no one in society can be excluded from their benefits if realized. The incorporation of territory occupied by co-ethnics into the state acts as a public good as an aim of foreign policy. France's claim over

Alsace-Lorraine during the times that those provinces were incorporated into Germany is an example of such a territorial public good. No French citizen could be excluded from the nationalist benefit of regaining those provinces, even if some citizens did not value that benefit highly.

In summary, leaders who answer to small winning coalitions are more likely to seek territory that increases state revenues, while those who answer to large winning coalitions are more likely to seek strategic territory. These are tendencies, not iron-clad rules. All leaders produce a mix of public goods and private benefits through their policies. Some small-*W* leaders may seek strategic territory with little material value, and some who answer to a large *W* may seek to expand state resources. We expect these patterns to happen on average, not in every single case.

Measuring the Winning Coalition and Selectorate

To assess whether changes in the control of territory support these conclusions from selectorate theory, we will examine the Territorial Change data set collected by the Correlates of War (henceforth COW) project (Tir, Schafer, Diehl, & Goertz, 1998). I will discuss that data set when presenting the results in order to examine the correspondence between the expectations of selectorate theory and the ways that data set records territorial changes. Before then, I will explain the measures of the sizes of *W* and *S* used to produce the statistical results (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). These measures are designed to allow comparisons across the roughly two hundred year period covered by the COW data sets. The measures use the components of the Polity IV data set (Marshall & Jaggers, 2007) to assess who may attempt to lead each state, how wide the set of people who participate in that process are, and how competitive the process is. These measures are broad-gauge and allow us to make comparisons across time and space. They predict a wide range of public policies across time and space that produce public goods and private benefits (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Morrow et al., 2009).

The measure of *W*, the size of the winning coalition, combines four indicators of coalition size to produce a five-point ordered scale. From Arthur Banks' data (1996), one point is recorded if the regime type is not military or military/civilian (REGTYPE ≠ 2 or 3). The other three indicators come from Polity 4. When the competitiveness of executive recruitment is not hereditary or conducted through rigged, unopposed elections, another point is awarded (XRCOMP > 1). When the openness of executive recruitment is more open than heredity, another point is scored (XROPEN > 2). Another point is scored if the competitiveness of participation has "relatively stable and enduring political groups which regularly compete

for political influence at the national level (PARCOMP = 5)." *W* is the sum of these four indicators, which is then normalized between 0 and 1, so that the five levels are 0, .25, .5, .75, and 1. The scale is ordinal but not a ratio scale because the differences between levels are not the same. I will refer to any system with $W \geq .75$ as a large winning coalition system, and those with $W \leq .5$ as small winning coalition systems (see Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, pp. 133-143 for a detailed discussion of these measures).

The measure of *S*, the size of the selectorate, is based on the selectiveness of the members of the country's legislature found in Polity. If there is no legislature, S = 0 (LEGSELEC = 0). If the legislature is chosen by heredity, ascription, or appointed by the leader, S = .5 (LEGSELEC = 1). If the legislature is selected directly or indirectly by popular election, S = 1 (LEGSELEC = 2). Like *W*, the measure of *S* is normalized and ordinal, not ratio.

The Patterns of Territorial Change

The Correlates of War (henceforth COW) project has collected data on territorial changes for members of the interstate system from 1816 to 2008. The Territorial Change dataset (Tir et al., 1998) tracks gains and losses of territory by nation-states. Territory above the Arctic Circle and south of the Antarctic Circle are excluded as are territorial changes between political units that are not members of the interstate system as coded by COW. They collected information on the gaining state, the losing state, the territory that changed hands, and the year and month (if known) when the change occurred. Key characteristics of the territory—its area in square kilometers, its population when known, and whether the whole or a part of the territory was transferred—as well as the territory's relationship to the gaining state—whether the territory was part of its homeland or dependent and whether the territory was contiguous using the standard definition of either sharing a common border or a water separation of 150 statute miles or less—was recorded. The process of change was coded as one of conquest, annexation, cession, secession, unification, or a mandate granted by the League of Nations or United Nations. Whether military conflict between the organized forces of both sides occurred connected to the transfer was also coded. Similar information was collected on the relationship of the territory to the state losing it.

The argument above concerns territorial acquisition and how selection institutions influence what type of territory states will seek to add. The Territorial Change data set seeks to track each transfer of territory separately even when multiple territories are transferred to the same country through the same process. For the

purposes of testing the arguments from selectorate theory concerning territorial change, I have consolidated territorial changes where one state acquires multiple territories through the same process at around the same time. For instance, the Territorial Change data set separates Israel's territorial gains from the Six Day War in 1967 into three observations, one for the gain of the Gaza Strip and Sinai from Egypt, one for the gain of the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and a third for the conquest of the Golan Heights from Syria. It does so because it tracks which country lost control of each of these territories. I consolidate all three into one observation by adding the population and area gained as all three occurred from the same event. The appendix to this paper lists all of these consolidations of multiple observations into one with a brief explanation of each.

I compare the types of territorial gain for states with small winning coalitions to the territories acquired by states whose leaders answer to large winning coalitions. I do not examine data about opportunities for territorial change, which would be useful for judging whether territorial conflict is receding in world politics over time. For other analyses that test whether and when states pursue territorial aims in disputes, see Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, pp. 427-432), Morrow et al. (2006), and Morrow (2013). If the arguments of selectorate theory about the value of territorial gain for national leaders are correct, then leaders who answer to small winning coalitions are more likely to acquire valuable territory than those who answer to large winning coalitions, which the reverse is true for strategic territory of little value. These patterns are tendencies; they are not iron-clad rules. All national leaders produce a mix of private benefits and public goods, so sometimes leaders who answer to a large winning coalition will seek to add valuable territory while those who answer to a small winning coalition add strategic territory. Because increasing the size of the winning coalition inclines policy away from the provision of private benefits and toward that of public goods, we expect that leaders with small winning coalitions are more likely to gain valuable territory and less likely to add strategic territory.

The Territorial Change data does not provide direct measures of the value of the territory gain. It does not provide figures for the revenue generated by territorial gains nor for their strategic value. Instead, we will infer their value using the size of the territory, its population when available, and whether it is part of the gaining country's homeland or is dependent territory. The added population should be more valuable to the gaining state as it increases compared to the state's population before the territorial gain. Adding 10,000,000 to the population of South Korea increases the revenue of the state more than the same gain would to the population of the United States. To judge the size of the population residing on the added territory to the population, I compare it to the population of the gaining state in the

year before the acquisition; this data is taken from the total population figure in the Composite Capabilities data collected by COW (Singer, Bremer, & Stuckey, 1972; Singer, 1987). The figures for area and populations have long tails; a few large acquisitions have much higher values than typical cases. To reduce this spread, I take the natural logarithm of many measures. I explain each of these measures when I discuss the results generated by them.

What are the patterns in territorial changes over the last two centuries? Figure 1 shows the spread of values of the area of homeland territory gained divided by small and large sizes of winning coalitions. Leaders who answer to a small winning coalition add larger tracts of land to their homeland than those who answer to a large winning coalition. For those unfamiliar with box plots, the line in the center of each box gives the median value of the area gained. The boxes show the range of values that fall between the 25th and 75th percentiles of each, and so give the spread of the central half of the values of each. The whiskers at the top and bottom show the extreme values of each. The mean of the area of homeland territory gained by leaders who answer to a small winning coalition is greater than that gained by leaders who answer to a large winning coalition, and the difference is statistically significant at the .002 level. This pattern does not hold across all territorial gains, that is, including gains detached from homeland territory, such as colonial acquisitions. Given the historical expansion of the colonial empires of Britain and France during the 19th century—two systems whose leaders answered to large winning coalitions, it is not surprising that there is no meaningful difference in the willingness of states whose leaders answer to small and large winning coalitions to add substantial tracts of land.

This pattern does not hold for the population residing in gains in homeland territory. Figure 2 shows the spread of values of the natural logarithm of the popu-
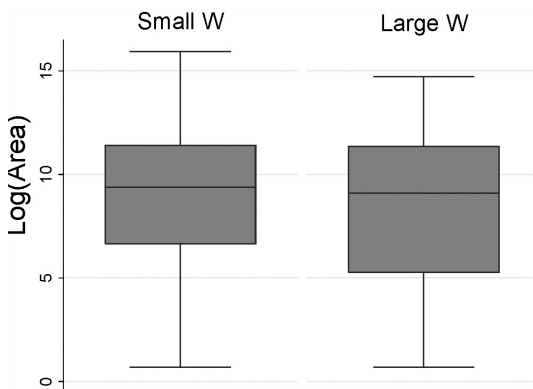

Figure 1
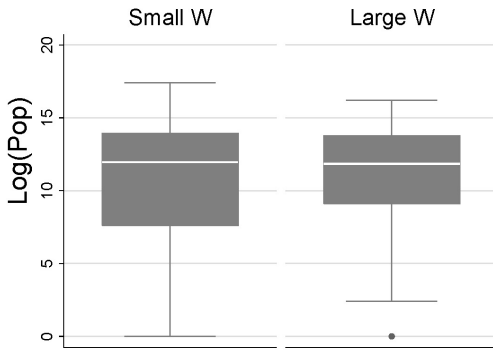Natural Logarithm of Area of Homeland Territory Gained by Size of Winning Coalition

Figure 2
Natural Logarithm of Area of Population Gained by Size of Winning Coalition

lation in the territory added for gains in homeland territory. The means are very close, and the difference is not statistically significant. The results do not change if we include all territorial gains.

These patterns describe the full range of territorial changes; most of which do not increase state resources or the security of its citizens greatly. Increases in homeland territory do not typically increase the population of the state by much. The median value of the population gain produced by an increase in homeland territory is under .6 percent. The distribution of population gains, however, has a long tail on the upside as the mean population gain is about 10 percent. Rather than look at the entire distribution of territorial gains to see if states with small winning coalitions seek to increase the resources of the state while those with a large winning coalition aim to control strategic territory, we need to look at the extreme changes that have large effects on both aims, not the typical territorial changes that have little effect. Only the large changes in territory produce the effects predicted by selectorate theory.

What constitutes a territorial gain that could increase state resources substantially, enough to tempt a leader who answers to a small winning coalition? The territorial change data does not include information on the production or taxes produced by the region that changed hands, and we also lack information on state budgets from which we could assess the increase in state revenue caused by the change. Nor do we have systematic information on natural resources in the territory and whether they were economically profitable at the time of the gain. Instead, I examine the combination of area and population in several ways. The most valuable territories will be large with a substantial population residing on them, one that the new government can tax. I will judge a gain to be large if it exceeds the mean by one standard deviation. Because the distribution of gain in population is skewed left, the number of territorial changes to the homeland considered large is

less than ten percent, with the exact percentage depending on the precise measure of the value of the territory.

The strongest results are found by measuring the value of the territory as the sum of the natural logarithm of its area and of its population, which is equivalent to the logarithm of their product. Judging a large gain as one standard deviation above the mean of this measure, Figure 3 shows the relative rates of valuable territorial gains of homeland territory by the size of the winning coalition. Using this measure, valuable gains are rare; only six percent (15 out of 268 gains of homeland territory) qualify as a valuable gain. States with small winning coalitions add valuable territory more often when they expand—just under nine percent of their gains are valuable, while states with large winning coalitions almost never add valuable territory—about one percent of their gains are valuable by this measure. This difference is statistically significant at the .005 level.

Other measures of the value of territory do not produce results as strong as this one. Population density should be correlated with more productive populations because population density increases with economic development. The same population on a smaller area should be more productive. A second measure of the value of a territory multiplies the population by its density to capture both the number of people and their density, and hence productivity, on the territory. As with other measures, I take its natural logarithm to reduce its spread and consider observations above the mean plus one standard deviation to be a valuable gain. Figure 4 shows the rate of such valuable gains by the size of the winning coalition. Although states with small winning coalitions add valuable territory as a greater proportion of their territorial gains than those with large winning coalitions, this difference is not statistically significant at any commonly recognized level.
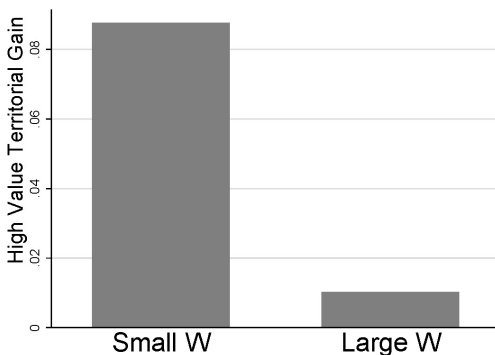

Figure 3

Frequency of Valuable Territorial Gain by Size of Winning Coalition

Value of the territory measured by the natural logarithm of A (area) times B (population gained), with a high value gain being at least one standard deviation greater than the mean.
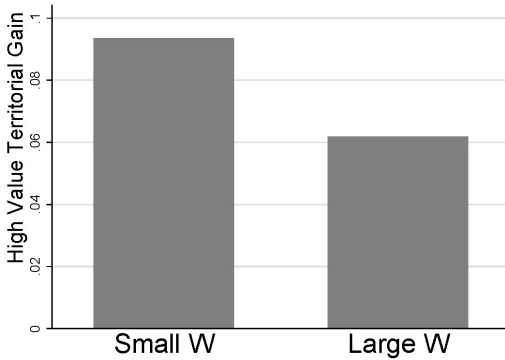
Figure 4

Frequency of Large Population Gain by Size of Winning Coalition

Value of the territory measured by the natural logarithm of B (population gained) times C (population density), with a high value gain being at least one standard deviation greater than the mean.

Colonial acquisitions pose a challenge to the argument that states whose leaders answer to a large winning coalition are less likely to seek valuable territory than leaders who answer to a small winning coalition. The European states that built their colonial empires in Africa and Asia in the second half of the 19th century were often democracies, particularly Great Britain and France. Judging significant colonial gains as those which qualify as an addition of dependent territory whose product of population gained times area added exceeds the mean by one standard (the same as Figure 3), there are only six such acquisitions by states with large winning coalitions. Of these six, only one takes place after the country in question has universal adult suffrage, which substantially expands the size of the winning coalition; the acquisition of Okinawa by the United States after World War II—a gain motivated by strategic military bases rather than value of the territory. Colonial expansion ended before universal adult suffrage expanded the size of the winning coalition in these democracies.

The differences are most clear when the conditions to judge whether a territorial gain is valuable are stringent. If we relax the threshold from the mean plus one standard deviation to just above the mean, even the differences reported in Figure 3 disappear. The number of gains in valuable territory by states with large winning coalitions rises from one to forty-one. But selectorate theory does not predict that leaders who answer to a large winning coalition will never add valuable territory; it contends that those leaders seek to produce public goods through their foreign policy. Consequently, they can seek change on valuable territory when the object of that change is increasing state security, reducing the power of a rival, or advancing an ideological goal such as regaining previously taken homeland territory or

incorporating co-ethnics into their state. Table 1 lists the thirteen additional cases of territorial expansion by states with the largest winning coalitions (W = 1) and identifies how each could have produced public goods for the population of the gaining state. As can be seen from Table 1, inclusion of co-ethnics is the common motivation for states with large winning coalitions to add valuable territory. Among the cases of high value territorial gains by states with large winning coalitions (W = .75), there are instances of gain to increase national security, such as Israel's gains in the Six Day War, efforts to reduce a rival, such as the gains of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia from Hungary after their war in 1920 (although the third ally, Romania, gained the most territory and people from Hungary and had a small winning coalition), and recoveries of homeland territory, such as France's reacquisition of Alsace-Lorraine after World War I. Still, there are examples of expansion for the economic value of the territory; in particular, Chile's gains in the Atacama Desert from Bolivia and Peru after the War of the Pacific, which contained valuable phosphate deposits which continue to be mined today.

States whose leaders answer to large winning coalitions should be more interested in acquiring strategic territory that increases national security, the preeminent public good of foreign policy. The Territorial Change dataset does not directly code for such value, so again I judge it from the size and population of the territory

Gaining State	Year	Acquisition	Improved Security?	Reduced a Rival?	Returned Homeland Territory?	Incorporated Co-ethnics?
United States	1845	Texas				x
	1846	Oregon Territory				x
	1848	Mexican Cession		x		x
Greece	1881	Gains from Turkey		x		x
	1913	Gains from Turkey and Bulgaria				x
	1913	Annexation of Crete				x
Denmark	1920	Plebiscite on Schleswig-Holstein				x
Colombia	1935	Gains from Peru				
France	1947	Acquisition of Saar		x		
Canada	1948	Annexation of Newfoundland			x	x
West Germany	1957	Acquisition of Saar			x	x
Malaysia	1963	Acquisition of Sabah from UK				x
Japan	1972	Return of Okinawa			x	

Table 1
List of Public Goods Motivations for Acquisitions of Valuable Territory for Large-W States

gained. Any gain of less than 500 square kilometers with less than 10,000 people is judged to be a strategic gain;[1] the acquisition of Wake Island by the United States in 1898 is an example of such a strategic gain. Additionally, gains less than 500 square kilometers where the population was missing data is also judged to be a strategic gain. This coding rule does include small acquisitions of territory, such as those gained through the clarification of a shared boundary, but such adjustments reduce the chance of future conflict over that border. It also includes islands, which can increase the territorial waters of the gaining country.

Figure 5 compares the rates of acquisition of strategic territory for large and small winning coalition systems. States with large winning coalitions are more likely to add strategic territory than those with small winning coalitions, and the difference is statistically significant at the .02 level. The pattern of results does not depend on the threshold of size of territory acquired; alternative codings that judged strategic gains to be less than 100, 1,000, or 2,000 square kilometers produced results similar to those reported in Figure 5.

The relationship between the size of the winning coalition and strategic territorial gain becomes stronger if we do not consider gains of homeland territory to be strategic. Figure 6 compares the frequency of gains of strategic dependent territory by the size of the winning coalition. States whose leaders answer to a large winning coalition add such territory as a larger percentage of their territorial gains
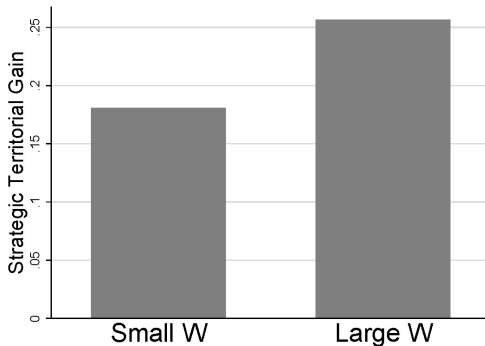

Figure 5

Frequency of Gain of Strategic Territory by Size of the Winning Coalition

Strategic value of the territory judged as those of less than 500 square kilometers with less than 10,000 people or missing data for the population.

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1 The distribution of area gained has a large spike below 100 square kilometers and is relatively flat above that level. I test whether the coding of 500 square kilometers as the threshold between strategic and non-strategic territorial gains matters by also conducting analysis where the threshold in the coding is 100 square kilometers, 1,000 square kilometers, and 2,000 square kilometers.
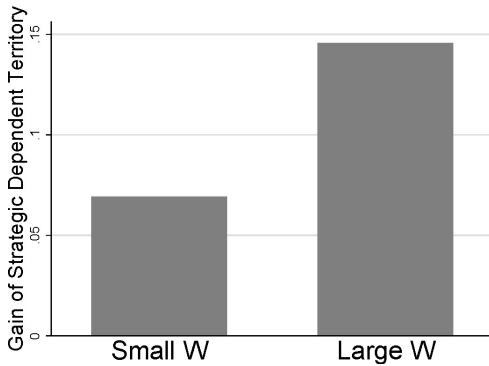
Figure 6

Frequency of Gain of Dependent Strategic Territory by Size of the Winning Coalition

Strategic value of the territory judged as those of less than 500 square kilometers with less than 10,000 people or missing data for the population. Dependent territory from Territorial Change dataset.

than do those who answer to a small winning coalition. This difference is statistically significant at the .003 level. Again, the pattern of results does not depend on the threshold of size of territory acquired; alternative codings that judged strategic gains to be less than 100, 1000, or 2000 square kilometers produced results similar to those reported in Figure 6.

In summary, the patterns of territorial gains reflect how selection institutions induce leaders to pursue territorial gain for material benefit or public goods. The effects of selection institutions on territorial change are most pronounced at the extremes of large gains of valuable territory and small gains of strategically important territory. Most territorial changes do not fall into either group, and selection institutions do not influence which leaders pursue such gains. Small winning coalitions induce leaders to seek substantial gains to state resources, and such states are more likely to make such gains. Large winning coalitions induce leaders to ensure national security, and such states are more likely to realize small gains of strategic territory. Selection institutions, and domestic politics more generally, do not force leaders to act in particular ways; they shape their foreign policy judgments and incline them in what territorial gains they seek.

Conclusion

Territory has been a source of recurring conflict in world politics, but domestic institutions influence what sort of territory states seek in their conflicts. The COW Territorial Change data set allows for rough tests of the implications of selectorate

theory for the types of territorial change. Unfortunately, that data was not collected with the direct purpose of testing selectorate theory, and so I have had to rely on the crude measures of the strategic or material value of the territory that changed hands used in this paper. There is room to improve the measures of material and strategic value and so improve the tests. Material value resides primarily in the people residing on the territory and what they produce. Measures of their product would improve the accuracy of the measure of material value, as would indirect measures of the added state revenue after the gain, such as change in government revenues. Although one often thinks of natural resources as being the primary value of a territory, this is only true for sparsely populated areas with little production from that population. Measures of the strategic value of territory could include whether the gaining state established military bases on the new territory. Better measures of the public goods produced through territorial gain could focus on cross-border populations and ideological aims such as liberation of captive nations. There is an opportunity for important data collection here on the characteristics of territory that has changed hands.

Territory is receding as a source of international conflict. Zacher (2001) contends that a norm of territorial integrity—that borders should not be changed by force—has grown over time since its initial statement in the UN Charter. While I believe this is part of the story of the decline of territorial conflict, international norms are undergirded by incentives that lead actors to comply with them (Morrow, 2014). Domestic politics induces national leaders to create and then comply with international norms. The growth of territorial integrity and its relative success depend in part on the spread of democracy since the end of the Second World War. Democracies promulgated the norm of territorial integrity because they sought to remedy the conflicts that had brought war to Europe over the centuries. Democratic leaders then found it easier to live under that norm than leaders of other systems. International norms, including territorial integrity, rest on a foundation of domestic politics.

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Appendix

Changes Made to Territorial Change Dataset

Observations were combined when all of the acquisitions occurred from one event by the acquiring state. They must have the same year of acquisition.

1. 47 and 48 combined (British acquisition of Singapore and Malaya)
2. 125 and 126 combined (Turkish gains at end of Crimean War)
3. 144 through 148 combined (Italian unification of 1860)
4. 163 and 164 combined (Prussia's gains from Denmark in 1864)
5. 171 through 175 combined (unification of North German Confederation under Prussia in 1866)
6. 182 through 194 combined (consolidation of North German Confederation in 1867)
7. 206 through 209 combined (creation of German Empire by including southern German states and annexation of Alsace-Lorraine)
8. 235 through 237 combined (Austria-Hungary gains from Ottoman Empire in Balkans)
9. 266 and 267 combined (British gains in South Africa)
10. 275 and 277 combined (British gains in South Africa)
11. 286 and 287 combined (German acquisition of Pacific islands)
12. 285 and 288 combined (German acquisitions in East Africa)
13. 296 and 297 combined (British acquisitions in South Pacific)
14. 304, 306, 308, and 309 combined (British expansion in Malaya)
15. 321 and 325 combined (British expansion in Kenya)
16. 355, 357, and 358 combined (British expansion in West Africa)
17. 367 through 370 combined (U.S. gains from Spanish-American War)
18. 371 and 373 combined (British concessions in China)
19. 388 and 389 combined (German acquisitions of Pacific islands)
20. 397 and 398 combined (British gains at end of Boer War)
21. 407, 408, and 410 combined (British concessions to France in West Africa)
22. 413 through 416 combined (Japan's gains from Russo-Japanese War)
23. 439 and 440 combined (Italian gains from Italo-Turkish War)
24. 442 and 443 combined (Serbian gains from Second Balkan War)
25. 445 through 447 combined (Greek gains from Second Balkan War, earlier gains from First Balkan War not included)
26. 474 and 475 combined (British Mandates in West Africa from Germany after World War I)
27. 478 and 479 combined (French Mandates in West Africa from Germany after World War I)
28. 484 and 485 combined (creation of Poland from Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1919)
29. 489 and 490 combined (Italian gains after World War I)
30. 491 and 492 combined (Yugoslav gains from Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria after World War I)
31. 498 through 500 combined (British Mandates in the Middle East)
32. 513 through 516 combined (Soviet Union reincorporating territories at the end of the Rus-

    sian Civil War in 1920)

33.   562 and 564 combined (Japanese gains in Manchuria and China from 1931-1933 war)

34.   585 through 587 combined (Soviet annexation of Baltic states)

35.   597 through 599 combined (Soviet gains in Eastern Europe at end of World War II)

36.   601 and 602 combined (China regains its territory from Japan at end of World War II)

37.   731 through 733 combined (Malaysia acquires territories outside Malaya)

38.   748 through 750 combined (Israeli conquests in Six Day War)