How Human Boundaries Become State Borders:

Radical Flanks and Territorial Control in the Modern Era

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Violence and territorial control have always gone hand in hand. States are defined by their monopoly on the legitimate use of force internally, and war has historically been how states and empires expand externally. From the ancient Greeks to the Ottomans and onward, conquering and controlling foreign lands and peoples has been the norm. However, while over 80 percent of interstate conflicts from 1648 to 1945 resulted in territorial redistribution, just 30 percent of such conflicts did so from 1946 to 2000.[1] International territorial disputes continue—there are at least 109 ongoing cases—but they take on different forms as nation-states and the international community attempt to align or "right-size" political and human borders.[2]

To the extent that states like Russia, Armenia, and China have sought to extend their territorial control in recent years, they have largely done so in areas with high concentrations of co-ethnic nationals, such as Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Taiwan, respectively.[3] States have made hundreds of irredentist claims since 1945, including attempts to forcibly annex nineteen different territories with co-ethnics, from Albania in Kosovo to Pakistan in Kashmir.[4] Not coincidentally, some of these areas have higher numbers of co-ethnics due to previous attempts at "demographic engineering," such as "Russianization" in the Caucasus.[5]

An increasing amount of scholarship provides valuable explanations of the dynamics and outcomes of these territorial disputes, but the vast majority focus on states: why do states make territorial claims, initiate conflict, and resolve some disputes, but not others?[6] The literature suggests that states direct changes in territorial control and international borders, and that non-state groups—whether they are local councils, militias, or individual migrants or settlers—are relatively inconsequential. We argue, however, that state behavior is often preceded in time and superseded in importance by the actions of these smaller, less organized groups on the contested ground.

Modern territorial expansion faces three significant constraints: 1) norms of "border fixity" that aim to preserve the status quo; 2) norms of self-determination that seek to

reverse foreign conquest; and 3) the high costs of compelling territorial change, which are especially daunting in light of the decreasing economic benefits of conquest.[7] State-led attempts to expand territory run directly into each of these constraints. By contrast, radical flank groups—non-state organizations with extreme means and ends that are on the ideological and physical front lines of territorial disputes—turn each of these obstacles into advantages.

First, weak non-state groups are better able to quietly alter the facts on the ground in disputed areas. This allows the state to later defend a "status quo" that has shifted in its favor while maintaining plausible deniability due to the flank group's private status. Second, the very presence of co-nationals in disputed territory shifts the framing of a state's actions from offensive conquest of foreigners driven by pure self-interest to defensive irredentism or secession in support of the self-determination of co-ethnics. Third, the presence of flank groups on disputed territory shifts the challenge from one of compelling change in territorial control to deterring it. This is an easier task that decreases reputational costs and shifts the collective action burden to others. Absent a radical flank, state-led action that attempts to achieve similar results is conspicuous, offensive conquest to compel change in the status quo, which inspires legal and military responses and decreases the likelihood of success.

To test these claims about radical flank effects and territorial control, we analyze the mechanisms and impact of the Israeli settlement movement in the West Bank from 1967-present. In addition to being perhaps the most prominent territorial dispute in recent history, this longitudinal case provides rich variation in the prominence of state and flank action and the success of territorial expansion across time and space. Key changes in the composition of the Israeli settlement movement over time—including the rise and fall of two radical flanks, Gush Emunim and the "hilltop youth"—allow us to probe mechanisms of establishing territorial control from the periphery-in, as opposed to the center-out.

Conquest by Movement: How Radical Flanks Help States Expand Territorial Control

Radical flanks operate within social movements, which are collections of mobilized individuals and groups that launch a sustained challenge to achieve a shared strategic goal. Examples include the U.S. civil rights movement and its goal of ending discrimination against African-Americans and the Palestinian national movement and its goal of an independent Palestinian state.[8] To identify radical flanks within social movements, scholars focus on each group's chosen means and acceptable ends. Groups may employ conventional means (running for office), nonviolent direct means (sit-ins, boycotts), or violent means (attacks on government officials).[9] Although all groups generally share the desire for full achievement of the common objective, these same groups differ in whether they will accept minor, modest, or major changes to the status quo. "Radicals" employ forceful means and will only accept maximal ends. "Moderates" employ conventional, nonviolent means and will accept limited ends.

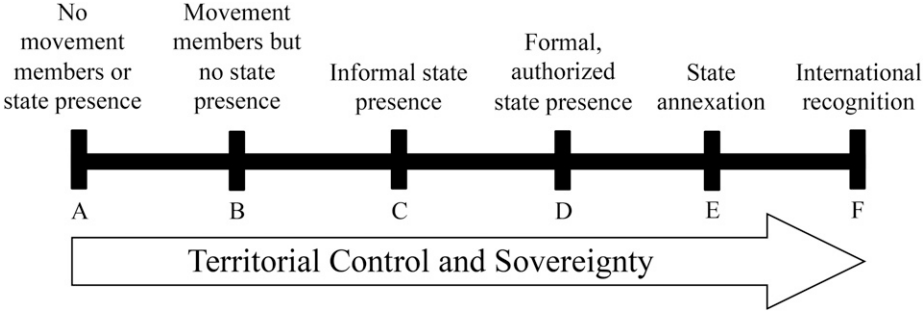
What impact do radical groups have? Haines, McCammon et al., and Anner argue that radical flanks in the civil rights, women's rights, and labor movements, respectively, all had positive impacts by making moderates appear more reasonable and generating political change.[10] On the other hand, Gamson, Chenoweth and Schock conclude that movements without radical flanks have been more politically successful.[11] The lack of consensus on radical flank effects stems from scholars using different definitions and dependent variables.

Although comparisons of "radical" means and ends are essential, a group's position on the "flank" is just as important for defining and identifying radical flanks and even more important for understanding their dynamics and effects. "Flank" means "side" or "edge," and in this case refers to actors on the periphery of a given movement. Groups are "radical" relative to "moderates" based on their more extreme means and ends, and they are on the "flank" relative to those in the "center" based on their smaller size and position outside of government. The center thus includes more powerful individuals and groups—including those inside of the government—that share the general goal of the movement but differ in acceptable ends, desired means, and material strength. A lack of clarity as to who counts as a flank leads to differing scholarly assessments of their effects.

Second, the benefits of radical flanks change depending on whether a movement is trying to gain support and set the agenda, change a government's laws, or gain control of territory. The last, which is the focus of this study, represents a particular lacuna in the field. Most studies of radical flanks analyze social movements that struggle against a state for internal, non-territorial ends, while most studies of territorial conquest focus on state actors and overlook both the theory and reality of social movements and radical flanks.[12]

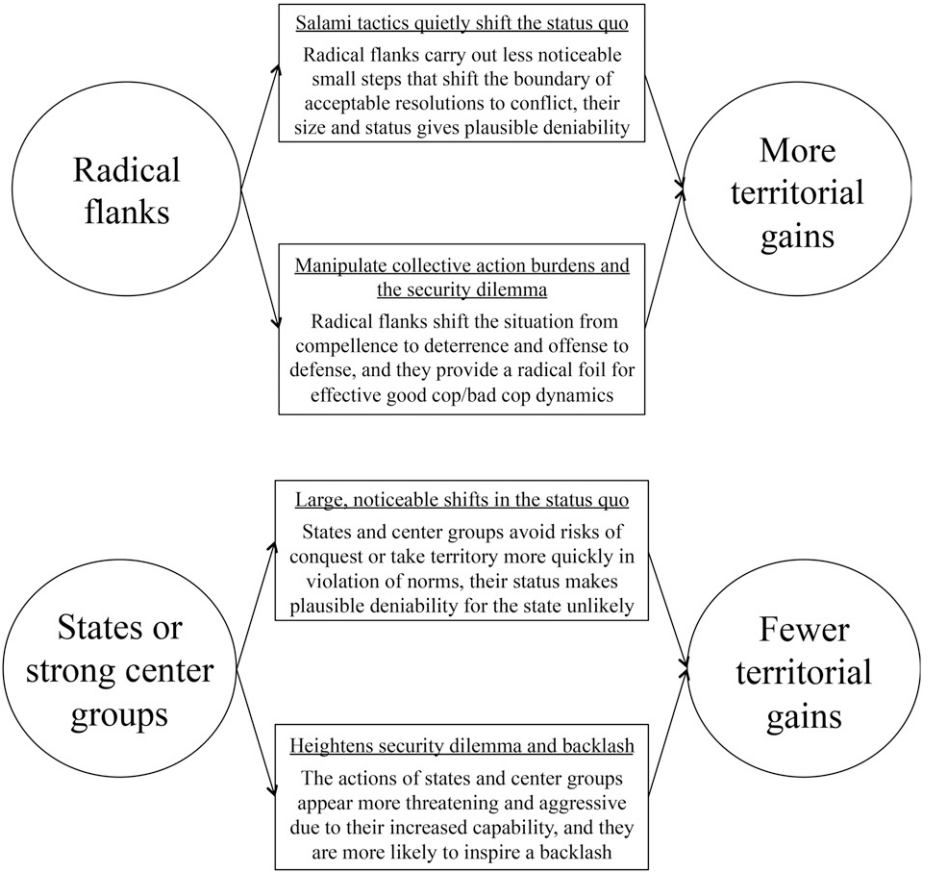
Linking the two subfields generates a helpful spectrum for understanding variation in territorial control and movement success (see Figure 1). A movement with no members or state presence in the territory (A) has totally failed, whereas one in which there is international recognition of the movement members' presence and the sovereignty of its supportive state (F) has achieved total success. As the movement moves right from A to F, each step represents a greater degree of success. Simply

Figure 1 A Spectrum of Territorial Movement Control and Success



having movement members living in the territory is valuable for political, religious, and/or economic reasons (B). The informal or authorized presence of the movement's supportive state provides protection and moves it closer to sovereignty (C and D), which occurs when the state formally annexes the territory (E) and the international community recognizes its claim (F). Radical flanks are ideologically and physically positioned to further this process, while states or center groups acting alone are more likely to conservatively avoid attempts at expansion. When they try, they are more likely to skip steps (e.g., from A to D) and escalate the situation in a counterproductive manner by making noticeable changes in the status quo that risk reversal, as detailed in Figure 2. As Dan Altman notes, 32 percent of such state-led land grabs sparked international wars, and the states in nearly half of all 112 land grabs from 1918–2016 did not hold the territory at the end of the dispute.[13]

Figure 2 The Impact of Radical Flanks, Center Groups, and States on Territorial Gains



(Quietly) Changing Facts on the Ground: Salami Tactics and Status Quo Bias The relative weakness of radical flanks means they are more risk-acceptant than larger, risk-averse groups in the center that have more to lose in terms of their office, wealth, and status. In a version of Staniland's "collusion" or "tacit coexistence," a risk-acceptant radical flank is more likely to take helpful but unseemly actions that the risk-averse movement center or state cannot or will not take, even though the center and state may be willing to look the other way or authorize them post-hoc.[14] As Prospect Theory suggests, radical flanks can generate success by shifting the reference point that determines what counts as a "gain" or "loss" in smaller, less perceptible ways.[15]

Radical flanks can break up difficult decisions into a number of smaller steps that are less clear and controversial, making changes harder to recognize and lessening the action required by the movement or government. These "salami tactics" unburden the movement center and state of having to take the initiative and assume the associated risks, while the flank's size and status make it less noticeable and more easily discarded if necessary.[16] Similar dynamics emerge when states leverage smaller insurgent forces to make demographic and territorial shifts on the ground, as with the Janjaweed militia in Sudan and pro-Russian rebel groups in Ukraine. However, as Huth demonstrates, when states directly change the status quo, escalation by territorial rivals is more likely.[17]

Radical flanks can shift not only the boundary between "radicals" and "moderates" within their own movement, but also what are considered radical and acceptable resolutions to the issue(s) at hand. The settlement of Americans in parts of the Oregon Territory in the nineteenth century helped achieve "discovery" (the first Christians to move there) and "acts of possession" (such as planting flags and building homes), which were crucial to the U.S. winning subsequent disputes with Britain over sovereign control of the land based on the "status quo."[18] This has become even more important as international actors increasingly intervene "impartially" to keep the peace based on the "existing" situation. Because maintenance of the status quo is now the dominant norm, changing facts on the ground in a piecemeal fashion (from A to B to C to D to E) is the clearest path to success. No changes on the ground mean no gains; changes by the state or movement center that are large and rapid (e.g., from A to D) are more likely to draw attention and be reversed as "departures from the status quo." Furthermore, territory is not unitary, and so the flank can keep pushing the human boundaries of its movement, flipping new areas from A to B while areas entered earlier go from B to C or D to E.

The Best Offense is a Good Defense: Outflanking the Enemy, Manipulating the Security Dilemma To the extent that other actors seek to reverse these territorial changes in the status quo, radical flanks can shift a movement's strategy from compellence to deterrence—a classic winning move in coercion—and so shift collective action problems from themselves to their opponents. A movement that has to dissuade

its own government, its enemies, or the international community from taking back small gains made by radical flanks is in a far stronger position than a movement that must try to compel any of those actors to actively give them that which they do not possess. By making the required action forgiveness rather than permission, a movement is more likely to be successful as territorial supporters and enemies alike are more able to "concede" without losing face.

To the extent intervention occurs, the weakness of a radical flank can also be turned into a strength for a movement via manipulation of the security dilemma—what might be called an "insecurity dilemma."[19] For example, a movement center or supportive government may be unwilling to formally declare its intentions and conquer a given piece of territory; however, either may feel obligated to defend members of its movement if they are threatened, thus resulting in offensive conquest for defensive reasons.

In the 1870s, a radical flank of settlers moved into the Black Hills of South Dakota despite clear recognition that they were in Sioux territory. This forced the U.S. government's hand—though it would not remove the settlers by force, it felt compelled to defend them from increasing conflict with the Native Americans. The subsequent Great Sioux War resulted in the annexation of the Black Hills by the U.S.[20] This was the (successful) strategy of the Kosovo Liberation Army—a radical flank of President Ibrahim Rugova's moderate center—which initiated violence in the late 1990s that led to supportive intervention from the international community. Ironically, the "moral hazard" of such intervention helps further explain why flank groups are willing to place themselves in such "risky" situations in the first place.[21] In any case, defensive war is easier to sell to domestic and international publics. The ability of radical flanks to shift the frame of who is the aggressor on a small scale can lead to significant territorial changes on a large scale.

There is thus a "ratcheting effect" for the steps in Figure 1. The presence of movement members makes the presence of the state more likely, but neither the state nor the movement members are as likely to be moved out of the territory once present due both to normative and coercive constraints. As difficult as it may be to move from A to B to C to D to E to F, it is even more challenging to move in the other direction. Lustick's concept of ideological and political thresholds to expansion in the metropole is thus complemented by our concept of human and territorial thresholds on the frontier, which radical flanks help movements to pass.[22] If the government, the movement's enemies, or the international community do ultimately reverse the gains made by a radical flank, the flank itself loses face while the moderate center or state maintains plausible deniability, and may even be perceived more favorably—as "moderate" in comparison.

Case Selection and Methodology: The Israeli Settlement Movement

The Israeli settlement movement provides an excellent first test of our theory of radical flanks and territorial control. The modern Zionist movement was founded at the close of

the nineteenth century, when a small but growing number of Jews around the world sought a state of their own to escape persecution and preserve their culture. Although the Zionist movement has social and cultural components, much of its focus has been on acquiring territory to create and administer a Jewish state. Israel gained its independence amidst a major war in 1948, and further expanded in 1967 when it occupied the West Bank (as well as other regions).[23] Though Israel has not annexed most of the West Bank, today some 400,000 of its citizens live in settlements there beyond the 1949 armistice line ("Green Line"), while another 200,000 live in the broader Jerusalem area, which Israel annexed as part of its capital.

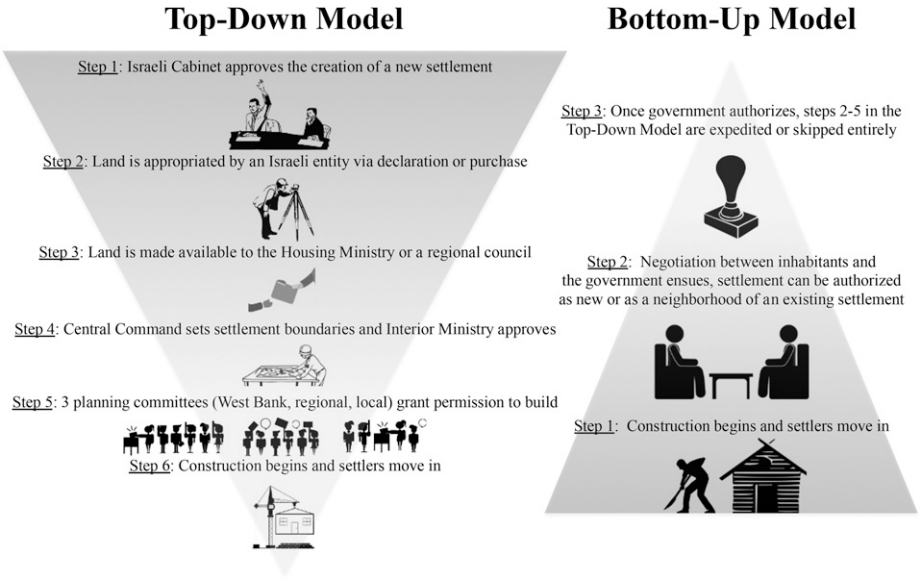
Our dependent variable is the quantity and quality of Israeli control of territory in the West Bank across time and space. We are interested in the extent to which that control is due to the actions of the flank, as opposed to the movement center and the state. Therefore, in addition to our original dataset of "price-tag" attacks by the hilltop youth since 2008—committed to exacting a "price" for settlement withdrawal—we also coded new variables for an existing dataset of 229 settlements and outposts from 1967-present, including whether they were built using a flank-led, bottom-up approach or a state-led, top-down approach. We thus compare the quantity and quality of territorial control across settlements initiated by the flank with those initiated by the state.

We will consider radical flanks to be more effective the more territory they move one or more steps along the spectrum in Figure 1, including the more they contribute to a larger number and broader geographical spread of settlements (A to B), an increased presence of the Israeli state (B to C), and a greater acceptance of Israeli territorial control of the West Bank as legal and permanent by the Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans (C to D to E to F). By the same token, if the vast majority of these shifts were—or could have been—carried out by the state and movement center alone, then we will conclude that flank behavior is not a significant factor in driving the expansion of Israeli territorial control. This disaggregated assessment and micro-level data allow for clearer process-tracing of causal mechanisms and more reliable assessments of flank effects, given the greater number and causal proximity of observable implications that can be explained by a single theory.

How Radical Flanks Drove the Success of the Israeli Settlement Movement

Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Settlement in the West Bank The impact of radical flanks on the Israeli settlement movement is first apparent in the two distinct approaches to settlement creation. As detailed in Figure 3, the Top-Down Model is initiated and led by the Israeli state and its various institutions, as the cabinet, housing ministry, military, and planning committees all must sign off before construction begins. These settlements are therefore authorized by the Israeli state before their first inhabitant moves in (i.e., steps C and D in Figure 1 precede B), and they generally require no action by a radical flank group. In the Bottom-Up Model, construction and inhabitance (B) by radical flank members precede state presence and authorization (C and D).

Figure 3 Top-Down and Bottom-Up Models of Israeli Settlement



After Israel captured the West Bank in the Six Day War of 1967, the government began to plan for the establishment of settlements in the territory for security and, later, economic reasons. Ma'ale Adumim was one of the major Top-Down settlements. An internal government memo explained:

> Nothing about the planning and development of this new city was random, or a result of arbitrary "fait accompli" that only later received official authorization. The opposite is true: every phase was a result of professional preparation that was accompanied by a clear direction and detailed regulatory control.[24]

The settlement originated in an August 13, 1974 decision by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to develop an industrial zone for Jerusalem, which had to be approved by a cabinet committee.[25] In April 1975, the military commander in the region appropriated 30 km^2 for the industrial zone and a settlement. The government then selected some 200 families that would settle there. The Ministry of Housing developed infrastructure on the ground, and on December 4, 1975, the first settlers entered their houses. After Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon proposed in January 1977 to build a city on the site to support Jerusalem's eastern flank, the settlement increased in size, to the point that it has nearly 40,000 inhabitants today.[26] Although the settlement was created successfully, it took many years to be established and faced significant backlash. Both the Ford and Carter administrations leveled significant criticisms that the Israeli government had a

difficult time deflecting, since it had planned and built the settlement from the ground up, or, more precisely, from the top down.

The initial radical flank in the West Bank was the national-religious Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful). They were a flank of the Labor and early Likud governments in the center, who had more limited expansionist goals.[27] Gush Emunim believed that Israel's 1967 capture of the West Bank was a miracle that should be followed by a mass return of Jews to the area (which they called by its biblical name of "Judea and Samaria"). The subsequent founders of the "relatively small" and risk-acceptant Gush flank followed a bottom-up strategy of settlement that relied on the swift and quiet establishment of "facts on the ground" that turned the government's model on its head.[28]

Two future leaders of Gush Emunim, Hanan Porat and Rabbi Levinger, created settlements at Kfar Etzion and Kiryat Arba in 1967 and 1968, respectively. After being told by the government that "this is not the right time," they threatened and then carried out plans for settlement without approval.[29] Levinger petitioned the government to hold a Passover Seder in a Hebron hotel for one night, after which he and his group announced they were staying to establish a settlement in the town. An Israeli government that had been unwilling to give them permission to initiate such a project subsequently proved unwilling to remove them. The government first ordered the military to protect the settlers without assuming formal responsibility for them, and then later authorized the neighboring settlement of Kiryat Arba. The preparation of Porat's group to follow the Bottom-Up Model pressured the government to authorize construction and the settlement of Kfar Etzion. Levinger explained that these salami tactics were intentional: "This was our strategy: not to bang our heads against the wall but rather the opposite, to drag out the action so in the end it would be accepted when the moment was propitious. . . . They simply got used to the facts on the ground."[30]

Flank vs. State: Settlement by the Numbers Ma'ale Adumim was one of the first of what would become 106 Top-Down settlements, making it clear that with or without a radical flank, settlements would have been authorized and established by the Israeli government in the West Bank. However, their number, size, and spread would have been far smaller—and Israeli territorial control would have been far weaker—without the establishment of 123 Bottom-Up settlements by radical flanks from 1967 to the present (see Table 1).

Any Bottom-Up settlement represents territory that Israel would not otherwise control, so it is therefore both significant and surprising that there have been a larger number of Bottom-Up settlements created by flanks than Top-Down settlements established by the government. Both the quantity and the location of these settlements confirm their departure from state policy and reveal their significance for control of the West Bank.

After the 1967 War, the Israeli government did not plan to settle and control all of the West Bank, mostly due to the challenges of ruling over (or accepting as citizens) more than a million Palestinians. The few ministers who wanted full

Table 1 A Comparison of Bottom-Up and Top-Down Settlements

	Bottom-Up (Flank)	Top-Down (State)
Total Number of Settlements	123	106
First in How Many West Bank Districts?	7	3
Percentage on Private Palestinian Land	48%	27%
Average Distance from Green Line	14.0 km	10.7 km
Total Size of Territory	59.29 km^2	102.81 km^2

annexation could not prevail over the strong majority who did not. However, a majority did want to establish Israeli control in some areas for security reasons (as presented in the Allon Plan), especially the sparsely populated Jordan Valley and territory close to the Green Line. These areas became the site for early Top-Down settlements, and the army quickly removed settlers who tried to live near Palestinian population centers deep in the West Bank. These actions "underlined that the Allon Plan was de facto policy."[31]

Nothing represented the pre-1967 status quo better than the Green Line, which remains the baseline for international law and Israeli-Palestinians negotiations. Bottom-Up settlements are located 31 percent further away from the Green Line (and deeper into the West Bank) than Top-Down settlements, 14.0 versus 10.7 kilometers, respectively. The Israeli government also expressed a preference to avoid appropriating private Palestinian land due to the legal and political ramifications.[32] Again, the contrast is stark, as 48 percent of the territory of Bottom-Up settlements is private Palestinian land, as compared to 27 percent for Top-Down settlements. The West Bank is not (and was not) an uninhabited region of equally contiguous and sensitive territory, and the data suggest that flanks pulled the settlement movement and Israeli state into more distant, sensitive areas than they otherwise would have ventured.

As one settler from Gush Emunim explained, "The government has defined 'districts' (where Jews may not settle)"; the group set out to change that, and they succeeded.[33] Bottom-Up settlements were the first to be built in seven out of ten Palestinian districts in the West Bank: Bethlehem (Kfar Etzion), Hebron (Park Hotel and Kiryat Arba), Ramallah (Ofra), Tulkarem (Kedumim), Nablus (Elon Moreh), Qalqilya (Karnei Shomron), and Salfit (Ariel).[34] These settlements not only established initial control in areas the Israeli government had excluded from its plans, but they also led the way for subsequent Top-Down settlements in these districts in the future, such as Alon Shvut in Bethlehem, Ma'ale Shomron in Tulkarem, and Itamar in Nablus. In fact, the Israeli government subsequently built Top-Down settlements in every district in the years after Bottom-Up settlements had been established. This suggests that settlements are not established independently of each other and that a significant portion of the 106 Top-Down settlements and the 102.81 km^2 of territory they control today can be credited to flank activity as well, which pushed the boundaries of the Israeli state's presence.

In fact, few of the 106 were "pure" Top-Down settlements. A number were like Ma'ale Adumim, where a group of settlers lobbied for over four years to create the settlement, established an unauthorized outpost on the location, and found themselves (but not their trailers) removed by the Israeli government just before the settlement was approved and built from the "top down."[35] Even more (forty-six total) were Nahal settlements established officially as military outposts before transitioning to civilian settlements. However, even Allon himself claimed that these were "settlements disguised as an army," in that their original motivation and ultimate destiny was the former, although their initial phase as the latter allowed them to circumvent challenges of speed, visibility, and bureaucracy, just like Bottom-Up outposts.[36] Radical flanks therefore contributed to Top-Down settlements by breaking new ground and establishing precedent, bringing pressure to bear for approval, and helping to illuminate effective work-arounds. Still, their largest contribution was the establishment of 123 Bottom-Up settlements that exist to this day.

Gush Emunim built nearly all of the Bottom-Up settlements before the 1990s. They used salami tactics that quietly shifted the status quo, such as in Ofra where the settlers "kept the existence of the camp secret, for fear that publicizing it could lead to the failure of the idea."[37] By the time their presence was discovered by the government, they had transferred collective action burdens onto their opponents—requiring the state to remove them instead of requiring them to get the state's permission to move in. In the case of the Ofra settlers, the local governor "received a renewed instruction [from the Israeli government] not to help them—but not to hinder them either."[38] In other words, the state lacked the desire or ability to establish a Top-Down settlement, but it also lacked the desire or ability to remove a Bottom-Up settlement once it was there. Once there, they were Jewish Israeli citizens that the government felt a duty to protect. Defense Minister Peres thus said for the Ofra settlers: "So let them stay there, but allow them to bring a generator. If, God forbid, they are attacked and something happened to them, there will be an outcry in this country that 'ten Jews were abandoned,' give them a minimum of security."[39] And so, by establishing facts on the ground and creating an insecurity dilemma, the flank members found themselves and their settlement protected by the very state that could not or would not establish one on its own, increasing the movement's control of territory in the process.

Having a radical flank of assertive settlers—there were no settlers in the Knesset until 1981, one from 1981–1984, and then none again from 1984–1988—also allowed Israel to better justify settlement of the land under internal and international law. A common interpretation of international law prohibits Israel from the creation of permanent settlements of its citizens in the West Bank based on section 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention.[40] However, if private citizens (i.e., flank members with no government affiliation) are engaged in this activity, Israel can argue that the international response to the settlements should account for the property rights of the settlers.[41] In terms of internal laws, Israel has seized a great deal of land in the West Bank under legal constructs, including the 1858 Ottoman Law that requires cultivation to maintain private ownership. Having Israeli settlers on the ground to cultivate (or

hinder cultivation by Palestinians) thus allows the state to control more land than it otherwise would. Under U.S. pressure, the Israeli government sometimes evicted settlers despite their extreme protests, but this made the center appear more reasonable in the process, while other settlements were authorized as *faits accomplis*.

A New Radical Flank: The Hilltop Youth, Outposts, and the Future of the West Bank

New Roles, Familiar Outcome: The Rise of the Hilltop Youth Many movement supporters were concerned that the Israeli government's 1992 pledge not to build new settlements—reinforced in various forms to this day—and the subsequent Oslo Accords might spell the end of Israeli territorial expansion in the West Bank. As for Gush Emunim, the former flank could no longer lead the way, as its members transitioned into government positions—there were ten or more settlers in the Knesset nearly every year after 1999. As our theory suggests, their new positions in the movement center meant they "added a maturity and skepticism to [their] early spontaneity and messianic craze," and they decided to "stop the fight for every hill," and work from the top down.[42]

Just as the old radical flank disappeared, a new one emerged among the national-religious settlers: the hilltop youth. As predicted by our theory, this group of loosely organized, young Israeli settlers were risk-acceptant in their behavior, which included the bottom-up creation of new, unauthorized settlements called "outposts" and the instigation of new patterns of violence in the West Bank designed to protect them, called "price-tag." These actions not only placed Israelis in territory where they were previously absent (A to B), but they also moved previously settled territory closer to annexation by the Israeli state and acceptance by the Palestinians and United States alike (C to D to E to F).

Leading with the Flank: Human Borders, Deterrence, and Small Steps to Success The saying that "it is easier to get forgiveness than permission" evokes the most significant contribution the hilltop youth make: shifting the movement's situation from compellence to deterrence. This is especially effective given the corresponding split within both Israeli and American public opinion concerning new versus existing settlements. A majority of Israelis do not want to build settlements outside of the existing settlement blocs in the West Bank, but majorities or pluralities of Israelis do not support the destruction of outposts.[43] The establishment of outposts thus helps shift the choice from whether to build to whether to destroy, and whether to live with the facts on the ground and protect Jews where they live or to remove Jews from their homes. This is the "insecurity dilemma" personified. In one 2001 poll that found that 54 percent of Israeli respondents supported the removal of settlements, 68 percent of respondents (including a majority of left-wing voters) agreed that the state was not doing enough to protect the settlers.[44]

The same goes for the one state that can pressure Israel: a plurality of Americans do not support evacuating settlements or pressuring Israel to do so, but a plurality do support stopping Israel from building more.[45] Therefore, new settlements are far less likely to get built by the government than existing ones are to be maintained, meaning that the flank's ability to blur the distinction through bottom-up tactics increases the probability that the movement will control more territory.

The hilltop youth have also changed the game by introducing a tactic called "price-tag," whereby they burn Palestinian mosques and destroy property to send a message that they will impose a high "price" when their outposts are threatened. Analysis of our original dataset of hundreds of price-tag attacks from 2008–2016 reveals how the hilltop youth employ radical means such as violence, vandalism, and arson to maintain and expand the flank's territorial reach. Over those eight years, we found that price-tag attacks happen twice as often after a settlement withdrawal by the Israeli government.[46] Content analysis shows us that some of the most common themes written in the ubiquitous spray paint at the site of attacks reference particular outposts (often those recently demolished or evacuated) and particular people (often settlers recently killed). Indeed, hilltop youth consider the "natural response" to a killed settler to be a new outpost, often named after the dead, such as Ramat *Gilad* and *Malachi* Ha'Shalom. A fifth of the nearly 100 outposts are named after settlers killed by Palestinians in the West Bank and/or placed near the spot where the deaths occurred. These outposts are generally constructed quickly when nationalistic feeling is at its peak and it is difficult to remove them, thus buying precious time to establish new, personalized facts on the ground.

Just as outposts change the game from having to compel construction to deter destruction, price-tag attacks against Palestinians change the game from an internal Israeli struggle to one against the external Palestinian enemy. In the latter, the IDF's historic mission to protect Jews inevitably chain-gangs them onto the side of the settlers.[47] A handbook that serves the hilltop youth activists, titled "The Practical Plan to Save the Outposts and Hills in the Land of Israel," says price-tag attacks "force the army to decide which side it is on."[48] The hilltop youth can utilize their greater willingness to provoke and risk conflict to deter repression and generate concessions from an Israeli government at pains to avoid settler deaths, internal dissension within the IDF, and the sparking of a third intifada.

Conquest by Flank: The Establishment of the Migron Outpost Migron epitomizes the mechanisms of conquest by flank. Until 1997, its Palestinian owners cultivated the site. In 1999, a group of settlers tried to create an outpost there, claiming that they were engaged in archeological digs, but the government removed them. After a request for an ambulance station on the hill was rejected in 1999, the leader of the neighboring settlement requested to construct a cell tower on the site in 2001. His request was granted by the military amidst the second intifada.[49]

The military commander in the region later suggested that the cell tower was a dummy, a "dressed up pole" that served no communication-related purpose, although

some local settlers petitioned for the removal of the pole, pointing to the health hazard it posed.[50] Nonetheless, prodded by the flank over time, the military built a fence to protect the cell tower, placed a guard on location, connected the cell tower to the electricity of the guard's shed, and then built an electric substation near the cell tower (which allows extension of electricity to other users without need for further authorization).[51] The settlers paved a dirt road leading to the cell tower that was hidden from the main road, so the military commander of the region was unaware of it. In 2002, the settlers established the outpost by bringing five mobile homes to the location. The military commander rushed to the location, aware that there was no authorization for such an act. The settlers that were in the process of arranging the mobile homes blocked his access and verbally attacked him. Upon radioing his superiors, the commander was told that there was no authorization for the mobile homes, but also no authorization to remove them.[52] The flank had thus flipped the status quo and the collective action burden from themselves to those who would have to remove them.

Nonetheless, the fight was not over. The military administration launched fifty-six investigations against illegal construction in the outpost, and in 2004 the police launched a criminal investigation against a municipal official that assisted in developing the outpost.[53] In 2006, the Palestinian landowners petitioned the Supreme Court (alongside an Israeli NGO) to remove the outpost from their property. The legal process was long and arduous. Initially, the government admitted that the outpost was on private Palestinian land and committed to remove it "within a few months."[54] Supporters in the movement center at the Ministry of Housing—who could not and/or would not create the outpost themselves—had nonetheless spent millions of NIS to develop it. Seeking to avoid conflict, the government agreed with the settlers that the outpost would be dismantled, but that the government would build and sanction a new section of a nearby settlement, Adam, to which the outpost's residents would relocate.[55]

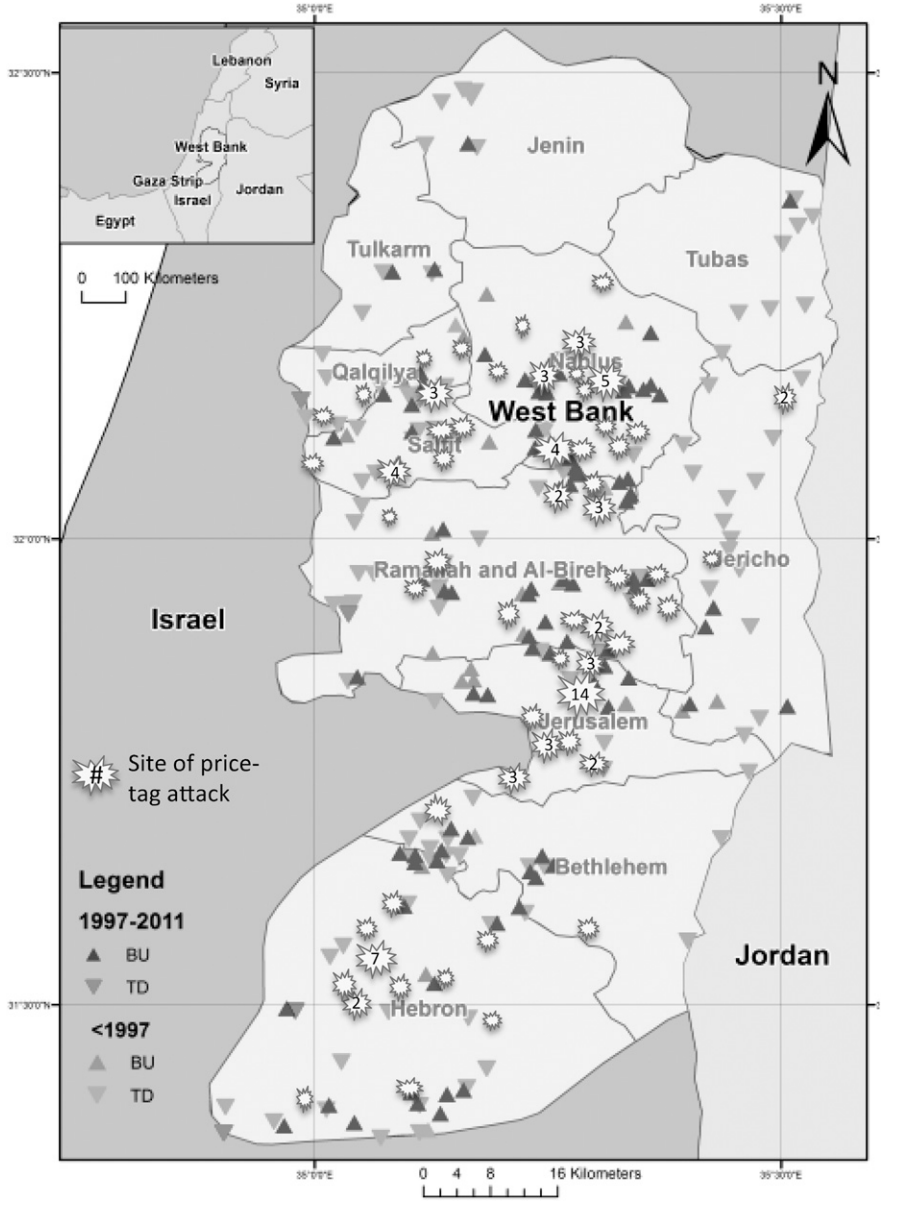
By 2010, however, the new neighborhood still was not developed. In the meantime, Migron expanded, and its residents petitioned the court against the demolition, suggesting that some of its land was purchased from Palestinians. The matter was again brought to the Court, which decided in August 2011 to demolish the outpost.[56] This was followed by numerous price-tag attacks with graffiti referencing Migron, including attacks that targeted the local IDF headquarters and Palestinian villages.[57] Even after the court decision, it took the state over a year before it finally vacated the outpost on September 2, 2012. Prior to the removal, the government agreed that all outpost residents would be relocated to a new neighborhood in the settlement of Kohav Yaacov, just two kilometers away.[58] In effect, this led to the potential creation of a new, sanctioned settlement called Givat Ha'Yekev. Using salami tactics and manipulation of the status quo, the flank had increased the movement's territorial control from A to B (installment of mobile homes over ten years) to C (military protection and investment), and, with a small territorial shift, to D (a new permanent settlement). As for Migron itself, on the day of the evacuation founder Itai Harel said, "We will come back here. We believe in our heart that this story will end with two settlements."[59] The cell tower is still there.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: The Flank's Impact on Authorization and Recognition The story of Migron is not unique. From 1997–2011, ninety-three settlements were built in the West Bank, ninety of which were Bottom-Up outposts (see Figure 4). As of 2011, those ninety outposts controlled 12 km^2 and were built 10.9 km beyond the Green Line on average, as opposed to only 1 km^2 of territory in the three Top-Down settlements that were built less than 1 km from the Green Line. Before 2017, at least one-third of these outposts were on the path to post-hoc authorization by the government or had already received it.[60] In early 2017, all outposts were de-facto authorized when the Israeli Knesset approved a law that retroactively legalized all Jewish construction on private Palestinian land.[61] Although the law might still be struck down by the Supreme Court, it demonstrates how the flank was able to secure public and political recognition in areas that the state initially did not want to settle.[62]

Establishing outposts thus moves territory from A to B, and pressure via the presence of Israelis and price-tag moves some of that territory from B to C to D. Figure 4 shows how most price-tag attacks occur in close proximity to outposts. By putting up such a strong, visible resistance in the outposts, the hilltop youth also have a significant impact on other settlements and settlers, making them more acceptable and accepted by comparison to their human and territorial flank (D to E to F). The hilltop youth see themselves serving that exact purpose, with one noting, "The things we do up here make them feel calm and safe … we create a new border for them, a human border."[63] The outposts thus become the border for settlements, which are themselves the border for Israel. A plurality of Israelis inside the Green Line agree that "West Bank settlers are the shield of the state," and the hilltop youth see themselves as the shield of the settlers, a fact made plain by a banner hanging in the outpost of Migron that reads, "Migron—a defensive shield for settlement."

One could argue that the status of the West Bank has not changed: Israel did not annex it, and no country officially recognizes it as Israeli territory. However, this only reveals the necessity of a disaggregated understanding of territorial control, as tracking the offers from all sides amidst negotiations reveals significant shifts in acceptance of Israeli territorial control over time. The parties came closest to a deal in 2000, the basis of which were the Clinton Parameters, under which Israel would have annexed numerous settlements containing 80 percent of the settler population. A 2004 letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon went further in this commitment, stating, "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers [settlements], it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [the Green Line]."[64] The Bush letter may reflect the practical difficulties of moving large settlements, but it also demonstrated how the flank affected international acceptance of the settlement project. Bush provided the letter in response to a request from Sharon "for U.S. help and support" as he faced opposition from radical settlers and others for his plan to remove all Israeli settlements from Gaza and the northern West-Bank.[65]

Figure 4 Expansion of Outposts and Price-Tag Attacks by the Hilltop Youth, 1997–2016



Note: The light gray triangles represent settlements constructed before 1997

Documents from the Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit from 1999–2010 reveal a similar trend. PLO negotiator Saeb Erekat explained to the Israelis in 2008 that "we are offering you the biggest Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] in history." Under that offer, 70 to 80 percent of the settlers would have remained in West Bank settlements to be annexed by Israel, with recent outposts removed.[66] Ironically, many of the Palestinian critics of Erekat and the "peace process" base their preferred goal of a "one-state solution" on a similar premise: Israel has near total control of the West Bank, and Palestinians should push for a single sovereign state with equality for all citizens. The fact that the two Palestinian approaches with the most support in the West Bank both implicitly or explicitly grant the unalterable fact of significant Israeli territorial control further confirms the major successes of the settler flank, as the state border continues to shift towards the ever-advancing human border.

Conclusion

Territorial disputes are defined and determined by the "status quo." Since 1945, the international community has significantly slowed changes in state borders. Winning control of new territory increasingly requires quietly shifting the facts on the ground to avoid reversals, thus moving from compellence to deterrence and employing as tools the norms of maintaining the territorial status quo, self-defense and self-determination, rather than facing them as obstacles. For territorial disputes, possession is often nine-tenths of the law, as well as nine-tenths of the goal. Ironically, the smallest and most extreme non-state actors—radical flanks positioned on the ideological and territorial front lines—are able to alter control in ways that states cannot. We therefore argue that a periphery-in approach can complement existing center-out frameworks to provide the most comprehensive and powerful analysis of the dynamics and outcomes of territorial change in the recent past, present, and future.

These dynamics have broad implications for some of the most important trends in the world today, as well as for the scholars who analyze them. While interstate war may have waned since the end of World War II, civil wars involving non-state actors have been on the rise. Many of these are ethnic conflicts, with a third driven by shifts in human borders as "sons of the soil" face off with recent migrants from other ethnic groups over territorial control.[67] The Israeli settlement movement is far from unique; 40 percent of conflicts in the Middle East since 1945 have involved the strategic uprooting of civilians.[68] Indeed, the ongoing civil conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen have yielded massive demographic changes, with tens of millions of civilians becoming refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the past five years. Radical groups like ISIS are often responsible for generating these massive flows with strategies of "demographic engineering" that aim to create homogenous territories of supporters (or at least intimidated non-enemies) that are less likely to challenge their authority.[69] Our analysis suggests that as much as international actors may want refugees and IDPs to return to their homes inside stable state borders, the significant shifts in territorial

control may become sanctioned as the new status quo. Indeed, there is growing international support for such action, whether in the form of greater autonomy or new borders for competing ethnic groups.[70]

Even when states take the lead in attempts to control territory, they follow a similar approach. To quell unrest and bind Tibet and Xinjiang to the homeland, China does not just send in its army, it sends in its Han Chinese civilians to settle there in attempts at Sinification. In areas without inhabitants, China's approach is to slowly, "naturally" alter the facts on the ground, as with the creation of new islands as *faits accomplis* in the South China Sea. Indeed, such "land grabs" have become an ever more prominent feature of international disputes because of their clear advantages over conventional conquest.[71] Even when there are international protests and rulings to the contrary, China and others bank on the fact that by moving from compellence to deterrence and shifting the collective action burden to those who would remove settlers, they are more likely to achieve a permanent shift in territorial control.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the hilltop youth and their violent struggle to establish, defend, and expand outposts in the West Bank are changing the final status issues that must ultimately be resolved: settlements, borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and security. Outposts are the new form of settlements; they set new borders in part to help hold onto Israeli-controlled areas like Jerusalem and Hebron; these new borders shrink territory available for the return of refugees and may create new ones, and price-tag attacks help maintain these outposts while presenting security threats to Palestinians and Israelis. The growing number of observers who say "the two-state solution is dead" say so because of the spread of settlements. Those who reply that "the one-state solution is impossible" say so because of the violent relationship between Israelis and Palestinians that price-tag reflects and generates.

The hilltop youth, outposts, and price-tag are the linchpin to analyzing, managing, or resolving this conflict, regardless of one's desired outcome. The key to preventing violent escalations and securing lasting agreements between Palestinians and Israelis is not to bring together their respective political leaders for yet another summit, but rather to monitor and shape the micro-level dynamics on the ground. Outposts become settlements become borders. The political and scholarly framework for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based around a "status quo" that is constantly being redefined. Understanding how and why the "status quo" is being redefined—and under what conditions the relevant dynamics will change—is the key to predicting and affecting the trajectory of territorial conflicts in the West Bank and beyond.

NOTES

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