

Understanding territorial withdrawal

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Résumé ou extrait : "Territorial withdrawal is an enduring research and policy problem that manifests in a wide range of conflicts. From Israel to the US and many more in the global north and south alike, numerous states have faced the dilemmas that accompany occupation and exit. Though vast gulfs of time and space separate each case, a key commonality is that occupation and exit are two diverse and complex phenomena. The diverse range of inputs that precipitate the decision to withdraw are manifold and span a state's internal and external political interactions. Peter Stirk, for instance, argues that in military occupations: 'the distinctions between the international and the domestic, between war and peace [...] become fluid and uncertain'."

"From Ukraine to Afghanistan and beyond, occupations and exit dilemmas permeate contemporary geopolitics. However, the existing literature on territorial conflict rarely scrutinizes a pivotal, related question: what makes a state withdraw from an occupied territory, or entrench itself within it? In Understanding Territorial Withdrawal, Rob Geist Pinfold addresses this research gap. He focuses primarily on Israel, a unique but important milieu that offers pertinent lessons for other states facing similar policy problems. As Pinfold demonstrates, occupiers choose to either perpetuate or abandon an occupation because of three factors: their relations with the occupied, interactions with third parties, and the occupier's domestic politics. He argues that each withdrawal is the culmination of a gradual process of

policy re-assessment. Critically, it is a combination of local violence and international pressure that causes popular and elite opinion within the occupier to endorse an exit, rather than perpetuate the status quo. To affirm this pattern, Pinfold constructs a generalizable framework for understanding territorial withdrawal. He then applies this framework to multiple case studies, which include: Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula between 1974-1982; its "unilateral" withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000; and its "unilateral disengagement" from the Gaza Strip in 2005, as well as Israel's non-withdrawals from the West Bank and Golan Heights. Overall, *Understanding Territorial Withdrawal* delineates commonalities that manifested in each exit yet were absent in the cases of occupation without exit. A powerful analysis of a central concern for the study of international security, territorial conflict, and the Arab-Israel conflict alike, this book provides a critical intervention that identifies why occupiers either retain, or leave, occupied territory." -- Publisher's description

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