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Statebuilding in the Periphery: Why States Colonize and Why They Stop

David A. Lake* (D)

Department of Political Science, University of California, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0521, USA *Corresponding author: Email: dlake@ucsd.edu

Abstract

How do states secure and maintain political authority over territory? In Settling for Less: Why States Colonize and Why They Stop, Lachlan McNamee explores one common mechanism for building authority, namely settler colonialism, that should be of interest to scholars beyond those interested in colonialism per se. Building a novel theory, he explains when settler colonialism is employed by states and, importantly, why it typically becomes obsolete with economic development. Using new data, he surveys paired cases of Indonesian settlement in New Guinea and Australia's failed attempt in Papua New Guinea, as well as two periods of Chinese settlement in Xinjiang. One underdeveloped dimension of this otherwise outstanding book is the strategic choices of the indigenes. A second dimension is the alternatives to settler colonialism, including direct and indirect rule through indigenous proxies. While McNamee pushes the research frontier outwards, exerting and consolidating state authority over peripheries remain a challenge. To the extent settler colonialism "works," that is, migrants from a majority group move into and dominate the periphery so as to attach the region more firmly to the national-state, the indigenous community is not only displaced and exploited in the moment but it is economically and politically undermined for the future. The indigenes are not credibly protected against future exploitation but, at the extreme, are eliminated in genocidal wars.

Keywords: statebuilding; colonialism; decolonization; New Guinea; Papua New Guinea; Xinjiang.

How do states secure and maintain political authority over territory? We know that in many regions, states exercise authority unevenly. Imagine a map depicting the political topography of a state. Instead of mountains and valleys, such a map would show "darker" areas where state authority is consolidated and "lighter" areas where state authority is nearly absent, and many shadings in-between. In some states, lighter shades would predominate, especially around their peripheries. In so-called failed states, color might show only around the capital. If we broaden the map, we would also see states exercising authority over "foreign" territories either formally in empires, at least historically, and informally through international hierarchies. Indeed, what is foreign is itself a product of complex authority relationships and claims. This too would be exercised unevenly, with some regions and territories clearly under the authority of some metropole, and others

David A. Lake is the Gerri-Ann and Gary E. Jacobs Professor of Social Sciences and Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego. Recent books include *The Statebuilder's Dilemma*: On the Limits of External Intervention (2016) and Indirect Rule: The Making of U.S. International Hierarchy (2024).

¹ Melissa M. Lee and Nan Zhang, "Legibility and the Informational Foundations of State Capacity," *Journal of Politics* 79, no. 1 (2017): 118–32; Melissa Lee, *Crippling Leviathan: How Foreign Subversion Weakens the State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

² David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

not. Here too, the map would reveal many shadings, reflecting this variegated reality.

While the fact of uneven political authority is not really in dispute, how exactly metropoles establish and sustain that authority remains an open question. In *Settling for Less*, Lachlan McNamee develops at length one common mechanism for building authority, namely settler colonialism.³ Derived from the Latin *colon*, colonialism is a practice as old as recorded human history. Blowing apart the distinction between external and internal colonialism, McNamee shows the same logic exists in a practice associated with imperialism as well as statebuilding. Building a novel theory, he explains when and where settler colonialism is employed by states and, importantly, why it typically becomes obsolete with economic development. McNamee gives us a brilliant analysis of a particular political mechanism for exerting authority that should be of interest to scholars beyond those interested in colonialism per se. This review summarizes the volume and suggests directions for future research, which include both examining the agency of indigenous communities more fully and placing settler colonialism in the context of other strategies for asserting political authority over territory.

Settling for Less

McNamee asks big questions, constructs an original and provocative theory, unearths previously unused, indeed, unknown data, and compiles persuasive evidence to support his hypotheses. Originally a dissertation, *Settling for Less* is an extraordinary first book of the sort to which authors aspire. The work is empirically driven, nuanced, and attentive to detail and succeeds without falling prey to the restrictions often imposed on research today by the single-minded pursuit of causal identification. While exploiting one natural experiment (explained later on), the empirics rely mostly on simply descriptive graphs of trends over time, backed up but not dependent on straightforward regressions on observational data. This might be "old style" research, but it is convincing and, more important, allows McNamee to paint on a big canvas and make a large contribution to our understanding of politics.

McNamee understands settler colonialism not as an inevitable quest for dominance nor as a form of capitalist exploitation of peoples and resources but as a complex bargaining game between settlers, home governments, and indigenous peoples. For McNamee, imperialism is a general strategy of asserting authority over territory and a foreign people, and settler colonialism is a specific form with a distinct logic. Settlers want access to land and resources and will move from their "home" to a new area—typically in the periphery—only when there are attractive economic opportunities at the site. Home governments want to secure and consolidate authority over areas they claim at the lowest possible cost. Indigenes want autonomy and perhaps independence, though they lack agency in much of the book (a point I develop in the next section). Given these interests, colonialism can be driven by either settlers or the state. When newly "open" areas promise rich farms or exploitable resources, settler-led colonialism arises in which the state either is a passive actor or actually attempts to restrain settlers so as to

³ Lachlan McNamee, Settling for Less: Why States Colonize and Why They Stop (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023).

limit conflict with indigenes, who are threatened with displacement from these same areas. Alternatively, when states are concerned about securing a peripheral area, especially if that area is also coveted by a competitor, state-led colonialism is likely. When necessary, states provide incentives for settlers to relocate, though these incentives and the possibility of conflict with indigenes raise the cost and thereby limit colonialism.

These costs and benefits combine in one of McNamee's most striking claims that colonialism is a waning phenomenon. As countries develop, potential settlers are drawn not to undeveloped peripheries with cheap land but towards economic opportunities in the urban or industrial core. Settler-led colonialism was possible through the early twentieth century, he argues, but as economies developed it became less and less attractive to move to peripheral compared with urban areas. It is hard to keep kids on the farm, wherever that might be. States that want to attract settlers to outlying areas, in turn, must provide greater and greater incentives, eventually making even state-led colonialism unprofitable. Reversing Lenin, McNamee argues that decolonization—not imperialism—is the highest form of capitalism.⁴

Though he illustrates the theory with many examples of settler colonialism, McNamee studies two principal cases, both recent, and therefore instances of state-led colonialism. The first, New Guinea, presents a puzzle. The Western half of the island was historically claimed by Indonesia, an anti-imperialist state, but was the target of a concerted and successful program of state-led settlement in the 1980s (chapter three). The Eastern half of the island was administered by Australia, a quintessential settler country, but repeated attempts to stimulate settler colonialism utterly failed, and the area was eventually spun off as Papua New Guinea (PNG, chapter four). The answer McNamee draws is that facing an insurgency in the Western areas bordering on PNG, Indonesia was able to provide incentives for settlers to move from overpopulated Java to the New Guinea periphery at sufficiently low cost. Settlers also flowed in after the opening of the Grasberg Mine, one of the largest deposits of gold in the world discovered only in the 1990s, which forms the natural experiment noted earlier. After the resource windfall was discovered, Javanese settlements (Muslim, as distinct from largely Christian indigenes) around the mine grew at historically unprecedented rates. In the case of Australia, however, settlers were uninterested in moving to PNG (or the country's own Northern Territory). Despite the government's concern with external threats, especially salient after Japan's attempts at control during World War II, it could not entice settlers to give up opportunities in Australia's metropolitan areas at a price they were willing to pay—especially given relatively high transportation costs compared with those on the continent itself. Unable to control the territory through settlement, Australia promoted independence despite the wishes of some in PNG.

The second case is the Chinese province of Xinjiang, which unfolds over two periods. Using newly "discovered" regional yearbooks available at only one library outside China, McNamee (and his coauthor on one of the two chapters, Anna Zhang) shows how at the time of the Sino-Soviet split in 1959, China expelled Soviet citizens previously living in Xinjiang and repopulated the area with Han Chinese to ensure control over a territory lacking natural borders. This first phase

V. I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (New York: International Publishers, 1939).

resulted in successful state-led colonialism (chapter five). Later, facing a restive Uighur minority, the Chinese government again attempted to encourage Han settlers to move to Xinjiang but could do so only in the oil-producing areas. By this second phase, economic opportunities were flourishing elsewhere in China, especially along the coast, and it was difficult and costly to induce settlers to move to the far West. Unable to settle the region with Han Chinese who are assumed to be more loyal to the center, China has turned increasingly to direct rule and repression of the Uighur minority (chapter six).

The cases confirm expectations of where and when settler colonialism is possible and, importantly, show the limits of this mechanism of control. These findings are reinforced in a brief cross-national study using proxy measures of minority displacement (chapter seven). When national income per capita rises above approximately \$6,000 USD, McNamee concludes, settler colonialism becomes all but obsolete. Israel, where the West Bank is adjacent to its main urban areas, is the principal exception to this rule.

One of the great strengths of Settling for Less is that the theory and empirical evidence eviscerate the distinction commonly drawn between internal colonialism and external imperialism, along with the distinction between domestic and international politics. McNamee shows conclusively that the same logic of colonial settlement holds in Indonesia and China, where governments want to settle areas they claim as part of their national territories, and in Australia, which eventually came to treat PNG as a foreign possession. Indeed, the cases suggest that what is internal and domestic versus external and international is actually endogenous and influenced by the success or failure of colonialism. All in all, this insight should encourage scholars to rethink other cases of colonial settlement, such as the formation of the United States and Canada, where what eventually became the "nation" was determined by who settled where, and even cases in Europe where national identities were forged only over long periods of time and in which supposedly internal migration may have played a greater role than recognized to date. Painted on an already large canvas, the frame on which Settling for Less is mounted could be stretched even further, allowing scholars to depict supposedly well-known subjects in new ways.

Indigenous Agency

One underdeveloped dimension of this otherwise outstanding book is the strategic choices of the indigenes. While formally one of the actors in the theory, and occasionally consequential in the case studies, the agency of the indigenous communities is not fully specified nor consistently assessed. To point to one aspect, the costs of "war" in suppressing indigenous opposition to settlers is critical to the calculation of the state in inhibiting or supporting settlers, but these costs are treated as fixed and exogenous in each case. In actuality, however, the costs of suppressing an indigenous opposition are a function of many things, including the size and capabilities of the indigenes, the internal coherence or fractionalization of the community, and their own strategies of accommodation and resistance. When faced with a wave of settlers, what the indigenes are likely to do and how they are likely to resist feed back all the way up the implicit game tree to the choices of settlers and the state.

Logically, indigenes have several options. At one extreme, they can of course resist violently. James Fearon and David Laitin, following Myron Weiner, classify

such insurgencies as "sons of the soil" conflicts and find they account for approximately one-third of all civil wars since 1945. At the other extreme, indigenes can integrate with the settlers and attempt to commit credibly to cooperate with and even facilitate the goals of the settlers and state. When facing an insecure border, a common catalyst for state-led colonialism, indigenes might cut ties with co-ethnics in the neighboring country, invest on their own in defensive fortifications, or join the national military; these are all costly signals that they accept their status within the state. Between these extremes, indigenes might accommodate the settlers but bargain for some degree of autonomy, engage in everyday acts of resistance, or simply flee to areas less desirable to the colonists, both strategies identified by James Scott in his studies of exactly such indigenous communities. In short, indigenes have options and choices.

Moreover, within any indigenous community, different groups or factions may make different choices, depending on their own goals, capabilities, and internal conflicts. Recalling the first period of settlement in North America, some Native American communities attacked and killed the English colonists, and others fed and supported them during the first harsh years. Later, some Native American tribes allied with settlers, the colonial authorities, and eventually the U.S. government to acquire access to "trade goods," mostly guns and ammunition they could not manufacture themselves, which were then used to gain superiority over traditionally rival tribes that they assumed were more threatening. Settlers and states, in turn, exploited divisions within the indigenous population in tried-and-true strategies of divide and conquer, which greatly reduced the costs of suppressing resistance. Rather than treat the indigenous community as a unified whole, as McNamee tends to do, the agency and internal politics within the group deserve more detailed treatment. Indigenes are at least as important players in the game of colonial settlement as the settlers and the state.

Alternatives to Settler Colonialism

A second dimension upon which *Settling for Less* might have expanded is the alternatives to settler colonialism. The problem for states, as noted in the Introduction to this review, is how to extend their political authority to some distant periphery. Settler colonialism is one mechanism. The metropole either permits or encourages members of its "home" community to migrate to the periphery and displace the indigenous group or overwhelm that group with sheer numbers and political power. By sending its "agents" to the periphery, the state aims to secure the area with a loyal population. Given the sometimes conflicting goals of settlers and the state, however, why settlers from the metropole are always more loyal than the indigenes is unclear; and this perhaps should be a variable rather than an assumption. This is especially true if the indigenous community is divided against itself, as suggested in the previous section.

⁵ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War," World Development 39, no. 2 (2011): 199–211. Myron Weiner, Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁶ James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). James C. Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁷ Pekka Hamalainen, *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2022).

McNamee is explicit in posing coercion and direct rule as an alternative to settler colonialism (42–43). We see direct rule in the cases in the second period in Xinjiang in which, given China's industrialization, it is now more difficult to induce the majority of Han Chinese to move to the region. Concerned with a restive Uighur minority that might ally with ethnically similar Muslims across the Western border, China eventually resorts to repression and re-education, often moving Uighurs suspected of disloyalty into camps where they can be more tightly controlled—a move similar to the "strategic hamlet" programs that have failed in other counterinsurgency cases and to which McNamee often attaches the label of genocide. Whether repression can solidify the metropole's political authority over a region remains to be seen in the case of Xinjiang or documented well in other historical cases.

A second alternative—and I would argue a more common one, although we have no way of systematically counting instances of any such mechanism—is indirect rule, or the exercise of political authority by the metropole through agents from within the indigenous community. There are at least two modes of indirect rule in theory and practice, both now modeled as principal-agent relationships. In the first, the metropole uses selective incentives to influence the choices and actions of an existing political leader within the indigenous community. Here, the metropole rewards acts by the leader that it desires and punishes those it opposes. The more distant are the political preferences of the metropole from those of the indigenous community, the larger the carrots and sticks that must be employed to control the leader. But this mode of indirect rule fails if the political preferences of the metropole and periphery are too far apart and, as a result, incentives become too costly relative to the alternatives.

In the second model, the metropole selects the group within the indigenous community that has political preferences most closely aligned with its own and aids that group in securing political power. ¹⁰ With similar interests, the "allied" group then acts on its own to enact policies more or less desired by the metropole. That is, aid from the metropole supports the group within the indigenous community that wants to do in its own self-interest what the metropole prefers. In this mode, the cost to the metropole is ensuring the group secures and retains office. Again, if the cost of supporting the group is too great, this mode of indirect rule fails.

The second agent selection mode of indirect rule has played out in different ways across historical cases. In one "international" example, England ruled India indirectly through local potentates for centuries. Through the British East India Company and later the crown, Britain allied with various local rulers and recruited minority groups into its colonial army to govern the subcontinent. India never experienced settler colonialism. British viceroys, military officers, and traders rarely migrated permanently to India. Over time, India evolved from indirect rule to more direct rule from London, but even in 1947 at the time of independence, five hundred sixty-five princely states still remained governing 40 percent of the territory and 23 percent of the population of colonial India. In Africa, to note a second

⁸ Lord Frederick J. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, UK: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922).

⁹ Eli Berman and David A. Lake, eds., Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Walter C. Ladwig III, The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relations in Counterinsurgency (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

David A. Lake, *Indirect Rule: The Making of U.S. International Hierarchy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2024).

¹¹ Lawrence James, Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

example, the temperate regions were settled by white Europeans, supporting McNamee's theory, but the tropical regions were largely ruled indirectly, perhaps because their climates were inhospitable. 12 Britain and other European imperialists either worked with existing leaders or, more frequently it appears, "manufactured" leaders who were sympathetic to the empire and, more important, were dependent on goods from Europe or used European support to gain political power. Supported by London, Paris, or Berlin, these "traditional" elites governed in ways that the metropole desired or at least found preferable to abandoning the colonies or attempting to rule them directly. In doing so, Europeans profoundly altered the domestic structures of African communities in ways that have had longlasting effects. 13 Finally, and in similar ways, the United States backed landed elites in the Caribbean during the early twentieth century against their landless majorities to speed the commercialization of agriculture, and today Washington supports royal families or military regimes in the Arab Middle East against increasingly religious majorities demanding greater income equality. In supporting these elite regimes, moreover, the United States has backed some of the more vicious dictators in history while at the same time giving lip-service to democracy promotion.¹⁴

The preferences and strategic interactions of settlers, the state, and the indigenous community—and factions within the latter—together shape the possibilities of different authority structures. At the very least, we might pose alternatives as varying from anarchy or relations between fully sovereign states (no authority exerted by the metropole) to indirect rule as described here, settler colonialism in which the metropole governs through its migrants and direct rule by the metropole. The more attractive indirect or direct rule is, the less likely we are to observe settler colonialism, and vice versa. This opens the possibility of a richer understanding of the various forms of political domination.

Understanding alternatives more fully also offers a potential challenge to McNamee's explanation for the decline in settler colonialism. As noted, McNamee sees not settler colonialism but its waning as the highest form of capitalism. As economic development opens more attractive opportunities, it becomes harder to induce settlers to move to typically underdeveloped peripheries. This is, I am convinced by McNamee's evidence, largely true. But various changes in the international system may also make indirect rule more or less attractive. As norms of sovereignty and self-determination take hold in former colonial territories and effective but weak national governments form, ruling through indigenous elites becomes both possible and relatively profitable. This further undercuts the incentives for settler colonialism. Even if settlers are willing to move, ruling through indigenous elites may be preferred.

¹² Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91, no. 5 (2001): 1369–1401.

Catherine Boone, Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Catherine Boone, Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Jeffrey Herbst, States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Lake, Indirect Rule: The Making of U.S. International Hierarchy.

Statebuilding in the Periphery

Exerting and consolidating state authority over peripheries remains a challenge. Political topographies are hardly flat. This does not imply that areas of limited statehood or peripheries where state authority is weak are "ungoverned," an analytic slip commonly made in the early "failed" states literature. 15 Rather, peripheries are often governed by "traditional" nonstate authorities who resist giving up their rights and powers to a central government. ¹⁶ Not everyone wants to be part of a state, especially those indigenous communities that are a majority in their territories but would become a minority in a "national" political community. Weakly integrated peripheries are not given by nature but are the product of political struggle and compromises by all of the actors McNamee posits. 17 Nonetheless, states typically want to control their peripheries, and indeed many today are hardening their borders. 18 Transnational ties between indigenes in one state and majority groups in a neighboring state are often a source of friction and war. 1 Indigenous communities are sometimes too weak to control illicit activities within their borders or form alliances with violent actors seeking sanctuary against their states, all of which can create negative externalities for regional or international communities. On the positive side, states can exploit economies of scale and often provide better public services than many traditional authorities. 20 Weak state authority over peripheries is not necessarily a problem, though states themselves and much of the international community treat it as such and promote the march of central-state consolidation.

The impediment to integration for indigenous communities in peripheral areas is the threat of future exploitation by the central government. Consolidation of indigenes into a national community typically weakens these groups over time. Group solidarity frays as identities change. Central authorities take over the roles traditional leaders used to secure their positions, leading to the further fraying of group solidarity. Unequal "treaties" divert resources from the indigenes to the government or majority groups, depleting their political power. As their political power wanes, agreements reached today on indigenous autonomy and political rights can and likely will be violated and even overturned by the central government tomorrow, which further erodes their ability to bargain with the metropole. The history of Westward expansion by the United States and repeated violations of treaties reached with Native American communities is but one striking example of this problem.

Anne L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas, eds., *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Peter T. Leeson, Anarchy Unbounded: Why Self-Governance Works Better Than You Think (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Tanja A. Boerzel and Thomas Risse, Effective Governance Under Anarchy: Institutions, Legitimacy, and Social Trust in Areas of Limited Statehood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

¹⁷ Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.

Beth A. Simmons and H. E. Goemans, "Built on Borders? The Institution Liberalism (Thought It) Left Behind," *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 387–410.

Will H. Moore and David R. Davis, "Transnational Ethnic Ties and Foreign Policy," in *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict*, eds. David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 89–103; Stephen M. Saideman, *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy and International Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Idean Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Idean Salehyan, Kristian S. Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups," *International Organization* 65, no. 4 (2011): 709–44.

²⁰ Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore, *The Size of Nations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

The inability of the government to commit credibly to an autonomy agreement with indigenes in the face of shifting power can result in war. The solution, if you will, that might draw peripheries into the national political community is for the distant metropole to commit to an informal or formal constitution that protects indigenes over the long term. None of the forms of rule considered previously nor the strategies of statebuilding advocated by the international community in recent decades are likely to achieve this result.

Take settler colonialism first, as it is the subject of this review. To the extent settler colonialism "works," that is, migrants from a majority group move into and dominate the periphery so as to attach the region more firmly to the national-state, the indigenous community is not only displaced and exploited in the moment but is economically and politically undermined for the future. The indigenes are not credibly protected against future exploitation but, at the extreme, are eliminated in a genocidal war carried out by the settlers or the state. Sons-of-the-soil conflicts are not inevitable—indigenes might recognize their plight and simply flee further into the periphery—but fear of the future can drive groups to greater resistance in the present.²² Direct rule and repression have much of the same effect, merely confirming for the indigenes that their interests and any agreement will not be respected by the central government. Indirect rule is usually no better. When an external actor bolsters the political power of an allied group at the center, it strengthens the government against the indigenes, as well. Unless the indigenous group is the ally, as in the case of the Kurds in Iraq under U.S. indirect rule, the now stronger central government can more easily impose its will on the indigenes. Anything that strengthens the central government typically increases fears of distant minorities about their future.

Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has pursued a liberal statebuilding strategy emphasizing democracy and minority inclusion to address just such fears of exploitation.²³ This is sensible but insufficient. Even when successful, no present majority, no matter how democratic and inclusive, can bind a future majority. Supreme courts might be charged with overseeing minority rights, but as recent events in Israel and even the United States suggest, courts can be politicized and minority rights threatened. Especially in weakly consolidated democracies, common in what we consider fragile or failed states, a democratic government may be replaced by a different government in the future. Liberal models of statebuilding work only when all parties expect democracy to persist. In fragile polities, however, decades and even centuries of political struggle mean expectations of future stability are difficult to form and sustain. Many hope that external actors can enforce a peace settlement and defend new institutions over the long term so that a new equilibrium can emerge. There is evidence that following civil wars in which the parties themselves have reached an agreement, external guarantors can lend credibility and reduce the likelihood of renewed

²¹ James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 379–414; Robert Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem," *International Organization* 60, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 169–203.

²² David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 41–75.

Roland Paris, At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations (New York: Routledge, 2009); David A. Lake, "The Practice and Theory of U.S. Statebuilding," Journal and Intervention and Statebuilding 4, no. 3 (2010): 257–84.

fighting.²⁴ This does not appear to hold, however, or at least has not been investigated across cases where the parties have not reached a settlement.²⁵ In the end, the question hinges on the willingness of an external power to invest in the peace over the long run.

Statebuilding is hard. Integrating all parts of a national territory is difficult. To the extent that settler colonialism is ever a solution, it works by defeating and displacing the indigenes. Settling the American West at the expense of Native Americans, or Indonesia in New Guinea, and China in Xinjiang are hardly examples we should seek to emulate. The search for effective statebuilding strategies continues. Political topographies are likely to vary long into the future. We might well question whether this is a bad thing.

²⁴ Barbara F. Walter, Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Page Fortna, Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Alia M. Matanock, Electing Peace: From Civil Conflict to Political Participation (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁵ Melissa M. Lee, "International Statebuilding and the Domestic Politics of State Development," *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (2022): 261–81; Kelly Matush and David A. Lake, "Militarized Statebuilding Interventions and the Survival of Fragile States," *Journal of Peace Research* (forthcoming).