

Effect of diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts on diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution

Diplomatic efforts can increase acceptance of territorial compromise amongst the affected population, and international name and shame campaigns can improve human rights.

Geographical region: Middle East & North Africa, Global

Effect size: Small effect ($g=0.081$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (2 studies; 5 ES)

Short summary

Diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts positively influence diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution. International recognition increases support for partition as conflict resolution but reduces willingness to compromise on territorial terms. Human rights advocacy improves conditions but faces diminished impact due to the negative effect of third-party interventions, limiting overall effectiveness in dispute resolution. However, we have low confidence in this cell due to limited number of the studies in the cell.

Long summary

The intervention

The interventions in the cell are (1) international recognition of statehood - specifically, UNGA recognition of Palestine; and (2) human rights organizations' "naming and shaming" campaigns aimed at improving human rights conditions directly and indirectly through third-party actions like sanctions and interventions.

How the intervention is expected to work

The intervention of international recognition of statehood is expected to enhance legitimacy, increasing public support for peaceful conflict resolution principles, such as partition. However, recognition may also reduce willingness to make territorial compromises by strengthening identity and territorial claims, showcasing both empowering and limiting effects on conflict resolution dynamics.

HRO naming and shaming campaigns is expected to work through two pathways: directly by applying moral pressure on violating states to improve human rights and indirectly by activating third-party actors to impose material costs, such as sanctions or interventions, coercing compliance.

The evidence base

The cell includes two primary studies, in the first study used a causal mediation model with global, time-series cross-sectional data. The second study employed a panel survey (before and after UNGA recognition) and a survey experiment using real-world framing, conducted in the West Bank, Palestine.

Evidence Findings

Diplomatic recognition enhances diplomatic relations and dispute resolution, increasing support for partition but reducing territorial compromise. Human rights advocacy improves conditions, but is reduced by the

counterproductive effect of third-party pressure. Overall there is a moderate effect on peaceful dispute resolution.

Included studies

Allendoerfer (2019) examines how human rights organizations (HROs) use information campaigns (e.g., "naming and shaming") to improve human rights conditions, either directly or through third-party actions such as economic sanctions and military interventions. It draws on theories like the "boomerang" and "spiral" models, which suggest that HRO advocacy prompts external actors to pressure violating states, influencing their behaviour. The research is global, utilizing a time-series cross-section of countries between 1990 and 2005. The study employs a causal mediation model to analyze the direct effects of HRO activities and the mediated effects of third-party actions on human rights outcomes. Data sources include the CIRI Human Rights Data Project, the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions (TIES) dataset, and the International Military Intervention (IMI) project. Countries included: countries with imperfect human rights with available data (1903 observations). The key findings suggested that HRO activities improve human rights outcomes directly ($p=0.001$). Despite negative mediations, the overall effect of HRO activities on human rights is positive but diminished. The study is rated as medium confidence as it is a non-experimental study with partial description of interventions and outcomes.

Shelef (2017) examine how international recognition of statehood affects public attitudes toward territorial compromise in conflicts involving self-determination. Specifically, it evaluates the impact of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer state in 2012. The research focuses on how this recognition influences Palestinian support for partition and territorial compromise. The study was conducted in the West Bank, Palestine. The research employed a combination of a panel survey (two waves) and a survey experiment. Panel survey conducted in September 2011 (before recognition) and November 2012 (after recognition). Survey experiment used real-world framing based on news articles about the recognition event, with a control group reading neutral content. For panel survey, initial sample of 200 respondents, with 134 re-interviewed in the second wave. Survey experiment included 226 respondents (both new and panel respondents). The results of an ordered logit model using data from the panel survey conducted before and after the UNGA recognition of Palestine. International recognition increased support for the principle of partition as a conflict resolution strategy by 75% (odds ratio of 1.75, $p=0.02$) in the panel survey. The survey experiment confirmed a similar effect, with recognition increasing support for partition by 59% (odds ratio of 1.59, $p=0.07$). Recognition decreased willingness to compromise on territorial terms, such as land swaps, reducing support by 39% (odds ratio of 0.61, $p=0.09$). International recognition decreased the likelihood of respondents viewing partition as their ideal solution by 16%. The intervention of international recognition significantly increased support for partition as a principle, indicating its potential to shape attitudes toward peaceful conflict resolution. However, it reduced willingness to make territorial concessions and did not increase support for partition as the ideal resolution, highlighting its limited impact on deep-seated preferences and practical compromises. This study is rated as a high confidence quantitative study.

Confidence assessment

The cell has low confidence due to a limited number of studies.

Other outcomes in the study/cell

- Violence and atrocities prevention/nature and scale of violence and atrocities
- Social cohesion/Feelings of trust & acceptance of diversity