

The effect of Diplomatic recognition & other diplomatic efforts on Transitions of Power

Effect: International diplomatic recognition can help support territorial self-government, especially in low-capacity, partially democratic states. In high capacity democracies these effects may not be observed.

Confidence in study findings: Low (one study, low confidence)

Short summary

The study investigates the minority territorial self-government (TSG) claims in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). It finds that TSG arrangements were more likely to emerge in low-capacity, partially democratic states, often as a result of externally facilitated conflict management. Peaceful TSG claims were frequently denied in high-capacity democracies. The authors argue that external intervention, particularly in cases of violent conflict, was crucial in shaping the outcomes of territorial disputes. International intervention often led to TSG arrangements, while patron-state intervention had a more complex and varied impact. These findings highlight the importance of external actors in facilitating peaceful resolutions of territorial conflicts in the region.

Long summary

The intervention

Non-military international intervention, led by organisations like the UN and EU etc. was crucial for TSG arrangements in violent conflicts. External intervention and state capacity are identified as crucial factors influencing the outcomes of territorial contestation

How is the intervention expected to work

The effectiveness of international intervention in facilitating TSG arrangements is highly contextual. While military interventions have been observed in some cases (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo), diplomatic efforts, often led by international organisations, have played a more significant role. Patron-state interventions have had mixed results, sometimes leading to TSG (Georgia, Kosovo, Serbia, Ukraine) but often resulting in de-facto states (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Northern Kosovo, Transnistria). The success of intervention depends on various factors, including state capacity, violence levels, and the presence of status loss for minority groups.

The evidence base

There is one qualitative study assessing the effect of **Diplomatic recognition & other diplomatic efforts on Transitions of Power in Central and Eastern Europe**. This study is by Z. Csergo, P. Roseberry, & S. Wolff (2017). *Institutional outcomes of territorial contestation: Lessons from post-communist Europe, 1989–2012*. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 47(4), 491-521. All references are from that study.

The evidence

- 1) The role of diplomatic efforts with respect to international intervention is to create a secure environment for negotiations, mediate, and deter violence. For example, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the deployment of NATO peacekeeping forces was instrumental in ending the war and enforcing peace. This created the conditions for the establishment of TSG arrangements within the Bosnian federation. Similarly, in Macedonia, international intervention, including the deployment of NATO troops,

helped to prevent the escalation of the conflict in 2001 and facilitated the Ohrid Agreement, which introduced TSG provisions for the Albanian minority (p.497). The EU also played a crucial role in mediating the 2013 agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, which, although Kosovo had declared independence from Serbia in 2008, addressed TSG for Kosovo Serbs, even in the context of the existing de-facto state in the Mitrovica region. This highlights the potential for international actors to facilitate negotiated settlements even in complex situations involving de facto statehood (p.512).

- 2) Evidence also includes instances where patron-state actions, even without direct military involvement, have served as a deterrent and influenced negotiations. For instance, Russia's involvement in the 1990s helped to prevent the escalation of the conflict in Crimea and facilitated a negotiated agreement granting TSG to Crimean Russians (p. 505-506). This can empower minority groups and influence the outcome of territorial disputes. The cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia are prominent examples where Russian military intervention significantly strengthened the separatist movements, leading to the establishment of de facto states (p.507).

Confidence assessment

Overall confidence: Low Confidence Qualitative Study (Established small n approach is not used/Unclear, no analysis based on an explicit theory of change or theoretical framework, no triangulation done, no discussion of bias)