

The effect of military operations on transitions of power

Effect: Positive (presence or absence of external intervention played a significant role in the outcome of TSG claims)

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

Short Summary

The study analyses 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

The authors identify two main types of external intervention influencing TSG in post-communist CEE: international intervention and patron-state intervention. International intervention, often non-military, is associated with TSG arrangements, especially in cases of violent conflict. Patron-state intervention, while less common, can also impact TSG outcomes, but its effects are more complex and varied.

How is the intervention expected to work

The authors do not explicitly detail the specific mechanisms by which these interventions are expected to work. However, the analysis suggests the following-

- 1) By establishing a secure environment and deterring further violence. This creates space for negotiations and reduces the incentives for parties to pursue their claims through force. By deploying military personnel and demonstrating a commitment to enforcing peace, international actors alter the cost-benefit calculus of the conflicting parties, making violence a less attractive option (p.511)
- 2) By facilitating negotiations between states and minority groups, proposing power-sharing mechanisms, and using conditionality and incentives (like EU membership) to encourage states to accommodate minority demands. By linking aid, trade, or other benefits to progress on these issues, thus to adopt more inclusive policies (p.511-512)
- 3) Patron-state intervention, particularly military support, is expected to work by strengthening the position of the minority group vis-a-vis the state. By providing resources, training, or direct military involvement, patron states aim to empower the minority group to either negotiate from a position of strength or achieve de-facto control over the contested territory (p. 502, 506)

The evidence base

There is one qualitative study assessing **the effect of military operations on the transition of power in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)**. 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) International Intervention: Evidence highlights the role of international military intervention in creating a secure environment for negotiations and deterring 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).
- 2) The sources provide evidence for the significant role of international organisations in mediating and facilitating negotiations between states and minority groups seeking TSG. 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)
- 3) EU's use of conditionality to promote TSG arrangements and minority rights in candidate countries has incentivised states like Serbia to consider and implement TSG arrangements, such as the autonomy granted to Vojvodina, partly in response to pressures from Hungary, an EU member state advocating for the Hungarian minority in Serbia (p.507). Similarly, the influence of 'Europeanization' in promoting norms and practices of minority accommodation creates expectations and pressures for similar approaches in CEE (p. 494, 504).
- 4) Patron-State Intervention: this can shift the balance of power and 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. 505-507)
- 5) 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)

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)