

Abstract

This thesis attempts to understand how external support for a secessionist movement influences the parent state's strategy towards it. This question has not been well explored yet and remains relevant. The thesis tests the external security theory of secessionist conflict. The theory hypothesizes that likelihood of future war and higher levels of external support lead parent states to adopt more repressive strategies against secessionists. Likelihood of future war is understood here as determined by the relative war proneness of the region and the depth of ethnic divides between the given groups. Two pairs of comparative case studies are performed, of South Sudan and Ogaden, and of Kosovo and Serbian Krajina. The thesis concludes that the theory does explain the cases in Ogaden and Serbian Krajina, while it does not hold in the cases of Kosovo and South Sudan. It is suggested that this might be the case because of their support by the United States, an internationally dominant, yet stability-seeking power.