

**SECESSIONISMS IN EUROPE:
SOCIETIES, STATES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER UNDER STRESS**

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In spite of development of international and global institutions, the modern state remains a powerful construct as the legitimate means of political organization and the exclusive location of political authority. Contemporary states went through a long process of institutionalization marked by the milestones like the Westphalian peace, age of the world imperial system, The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, decolonization, Helsinki treaty, and globalization. Despite this long history, the modern state system does not fully deliver on its promise of order and security, and often leads to contestation of territorial integrity and alternative claims to sovereignty. Such claims occur within existing recognized states from groups which feel themselves excluded and prefer to aspire to their own statehood and international status. By implication, competing claims to statehood can turn into seemingly 'frozen conflicts', as local authorities embark upon their state-building projects in the absence of international recognition, while still participating in peace talks.

Contemporary Europe has evolved into a complex and contradictory set of states within an international order at risk. In the last three decades, the political geography of the European continent has been shaped by two simultaneous, yet contradictory processes. On the one hand, West European countries have undergone a deep, peaceful and comprehensive integration, which has resulted in the creation of a political centre in the form of the European Union (EU) and a more balanced redistribution of power between the Union and national and local governments. (As Brexit, Scotland's referendum attempts, and/or Catalanian separatism show, EU did not solve all center-periphery issues, however it created legal and political frameworks for peaceful resolution of any secession attempt). On the other hand, Eastern European countries have witnessed the disintegration of complex state and regional unions, such as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. In the former Eastern Bloc, the collapse of the old political institutions has

stimulated an upsurge of nationalism and conservatism, resulting in the creation of newly independent, recognised states. Moreover, it has ignited irredentist and secessionist movements, which in some cases have led to the creation of de facto states.

The USSR is a good case in point here. Its dissolution resulted in the creation of fifteen new recognised states and four non-recognized statelets (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria). These polities comprise a stable network with elements (state-like entities) that have been engaged in a 'frozen conflict' with their parental states (Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova) in early 1990ies. Each of these state-like entities has its peculiar forms of legitimacy and political economy and demonstrates systemic dependence on their sponsor states (Russia and Armenia).

Even though these state-like entities were long regarded as a security threat limited to Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Mediterranean region and the Balkans, they have developed into a source of secessionist practices and ideologies that have proliferated across parts of the continent, eventually becoming a factor of attraction for secessionist movements in many European countries. For example, before 2008, the population of Nagorni Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria was approximately one million while their governments were under international sanctions and were not recognised by other states. After the Russian-Georgian War in 2008, South Ossetia and Abkhazia enlarged their territories while obtaining partial recognition from states such as Russia, Nicaragua and Syria. In 2014, the outburst of Russian-backed secessionist movements in Donbas led to the creation of two more parastates, the Donetsk People Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People Republic (LNR), whose local elites used the state- and nation-building experience of the 'older' de facto states to institutionalise their own secessionist endeavours. As of today, this growing network of de facto states counts a population of over 4 million people. Furthermore, horizontal ties between the six de facto post-Soviet nations are growing at the level of government, trade unions and local communities while Western European secessionist movements and their activists are actively involved in the political and military processes in Donbas.

How can we explain the evolution of post-Soviet secessionism from a phenomenon of regional importance to one that may have a bigger impact on EU member-states and their stability?

So far, studies of post-Soviet and post-communist secessionism have adopted either a macro- or micro-political approach. A group of scholars considered post-Soviet secessionism to be a part of the bigger process of transition from the Soviet Union to post-Soviet states, suggesting that smaller ethnic groups managed to secede from their mother states by using the contradictions between bigger national players. Moving from a traditional nation-state perspective, V. Tishkov (1997), N. Bougai (1996), R. Sunny and T. Martin (2001), and R. Brubaker (2011) posited that contemporary interethnic conflicts and secessionism in the region have their roots in Soviet nationality policies. However, others, such as T. De Waal (2003), D. Aphraidze & D. Siroky (2011), C. Ciobanu (2008), Ch. Zürcher (2007) and J. Hughes and G. Sasse (2011), paid more attention to the mistakes made by the elites of the new independent states, which led to interethnic clashes, secessions and frozen conflicts.

Another group of scholars focused on the internal dynamics among the populations living in the de facto states, seeking to understand how individuals, communities and economies manage to survive under the combined pressure of external sanctions and internal autocratic or warlordist regimes. V. Kolosov & J. O'Loughlin (2011), P. Kolstø (2006) and S. Fischer (2016) suggest that after almost thirty years of existence, the Eastern European de facto states evolved into a specific political reality that has its own shared political culture, model of development and peculiar role in the pan-European political environment.

However, the question of how post-Soviet de facto states are embedded in a wider network of secessionist movements in Eastern and Western Europe was not described. As a result, scholarship endorses a narrative that characterises post-Soviet secessionism as a uniquely Eastern European phenomenon. Similarly, scholars of Western European secessionist movements, such as L. Hooghe (1995), A. Bourne (2014), D. Muro and M. Vlaskamp (2016) underestimate the growing linkages between Eastern and Western European separatists.

To address this issue and to draft a larger, comprehensive picture of European secession movements, the Institute for European Studies at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt Oder in cooperation with the Center for Eastern European and International Studies (ZOiS) organized an international workshop, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in December 2018. The debate that started at this workshop continued and led to the publication of this issue.

This issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal aims to examine contemporary secession movements, statehood claims from above and from below, non-recognition policies and possibilities of conflict settlement in Europe from conceptual and comparative perspectives. The issue focuses on the analysis of the complex relationships between parental states and sponsor states with unrecognized statelets in the East and West of Europe as well as the internal state-building challenges in the paternal states.

This issue starts with the article written by Bruno Coppieters. The author argues that seceded authorities and parental states countering secession may enter into negotiations with regard to a ceasefire or some trade agreements without implying the recognition of statehood. Coppieters shows how such processes of mutual recognition regarding the non-use of force and trade lead to the de-escalation of conflicts, but do not suspend political contestation. Which means that policies of recognition and non-recognition provide the conflicting parties with tools to defend their statuses and identities, as well as to preserve or to strengthen international security. In his article, Coppieters refers to the cases of recognition- and non-recognition-policies regarding Abkhazia, North Cyprus and Transdniestria.

In the second article, Mikhail Minakov applies a world-system analysis to define the status of post-Soviet non-recognised states. The author argues that these non-recognised states constitute an 'extreme periphery' in relation to 'the global centre.' In the decades after the dissolution of the USSR, these breakaway territories or communities turned into a fairly stable network of polities that oppose international law and the global order. This opposition creates a state model that has proved to be sustainable in spite of

conflicts and sanctions, and that proliferates across Europe. Minakov also shows how the establishment of the two non-recognised statelets of the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic' and 'Lugansk People's Republic' was affected not only by the political, military and economic sponsorship of Russia, but also benefitted from cooperation with the 'governments' and societies of Transnistria and Abkhazia. This leads the author to the conclusion that the states on the "extreme periphery" tend to cooperate and proliferate regardless of international law and order.

In the next article, Sergii Tolstov reviews how the asymmetric transfer of authority from a central government to autonomous regions influences ethnoregional politics inside the European Union. The author focuses on the cases of Scotland and Catalonia. Tolstov argues that ensuring the rights of democratic self-government at the regional level has not been sufficiently effective. In regions with a strong historical tradition, this process transforms dissatisfaction into ethnoregional self-awareness and economic disparities. The latter adds to the politization of separatism and to the policies of regional authorities that clash with the central government.

Gwendolyn Sasse and Alice Lackner revisit the famous dictum of Charles Tilly about the link between war-making and state-making. The authors argue that this is not always the case. Based on original survey data from 2017 and 2018, Sasse and Lackner analyse Ukrainian society amidst the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine. The authors identify a significant shift towards a civic identity centered on the Ukrainian polity, which contradicts the official state ideology at the time which focused on a narrower ethno-linguistic definition of the Ukrainian nation and its state.

Olena Aleksandrova and Roman Dodonov analyze how one state can construct secession in another state by discursive means. The authors analyze the case of Donbas irredentism. They demonstrate that Russia's intervention into the Ukrainian media sphere has formed the discourse that enables the society's fragmentation and the formation of the self-proclaimed polities. Aleksandrova and Dodonov compare the Donbas case with Russia's failure to create a similar situation in Latgale, a region of Latvia with a large share of the Russian-speaking population.

Nataliia Kasianenko's contribution to this issue offers an examination of the strategies used by the self-proclaimed governments of the 'Donetsk People's Republic' and the 'Luhansk People's Republic' for achieving internal legitimacy. The author reviews how the two regimes use direct democracy for their purposes in the eastern Ukraine. Kasianenko argues that it is possible to attain legitimacy in the absence of external recognition and sovereignty. She shows that the two de facto authorities managed to gain some level of internal legitimacy due to the provision of basic public goods and services for the residents of the non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine.

In her article, Nataliia Malynovska analyzes the impact of the Crimean annexation on the status of the Crimean Tatars in Ukrainian society. The author analyzes unwritten Ukraine's policy on the de-occupation of the Crimea and the interaction with the Crimean Tatar community in the rest of Ukraine. Malynovska discusses a variety of complications characterizing the relations between the Crimean Tatar community and the Ukrainian government. A number of obstacles limit the integration of the Crimean Tatars into

Ukrainian society, including differences in the collective memory of certain historical events and figures, the suspicion towards Muslim organizations, and the ongoing change in the relations between different religious groups in Ukraine. Malynovska concludes with policy recommendations that could help solving the old and new obstacles to integration faced by the Crimean Tatars.

Viktor Koziuk, Oleksandr Dluhopolskyi and Vitalij Petruk analyze economic aspect of separatism in Europe. The authors study two regions in Belgium, Flanders and Wallonia, which have reacted differently to the need for structural adaptation to economic globalization. They argue that these differences add to the split between these regions and cause the risk of secession. Koziuk, Dluhopolskyi and Petruk also compare fiscal policies of Belgium and Ukraine in terms of enabling or disabling secession risks. They argue that differences in the ability of regions to respond to increasing economic competition create the prerequisites for the collapse of national economies and of political unity.

In the final article of this issue, Stanislav Kovalskyi traces the evolution of dual irredentism in Cyprus. The author argues that dual (i.e. Greek and Turkish) irredentisms caused the separation of Cyprus. He shows that the Greek and Turkish ideas of a merger of Cyprus with the maternal states has led to the split. However, Kovalskyi also shows that this split was supported by complicated international conditions of the Cold War. These conditions limited the opportunities of the sponsor countries, Greece and Turkey and led not only to the confrontation between Greece and Turkey, but also to the confrontation between Greece and the Greek Cypriots, and between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

We hope that this issue with its discussion of different state-building challenges across Europe will encourage a wider research community to think of Europe as one region—rather than a region divided in east and west—in discussions about secessionist movements and inter-state or inter-polity ecology.

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