

SECESSION, STATE CREATION, AND (POST-)LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Convenor

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Over the past years, a proliferation of IR scholarship has focused on the nature, transformation, and/or ostensible crisis, of the so-called *liberal international order*. Such scholarship tends to assess whether the norms, practices, and institutions of liberal international order can still be taken for granted, and/or whether the late-20th and early-21st century international political structures should in fact truly be viewed as ‘liberal’.

This workshop strives to intersect this scholarship with debates over the empirics and theory of secession and state creation. It would seem that research on secession and state creation is not immune to changes or challenges to the liberal international order, because acts or discussions of these phenomena in themselves tend to lay bare the discrepancies of this (supposed) order. Secessions and state creations may be – and have been – explained and justified in reference to liberal concepts (e.g. human rights, liberty, self-determination), but they have also been condemned as violent and anti-liberal disruptions enacted by power-hungry self-serving profiteers.

This workshop, therefore, serves as an attempt to explore the relationships and incongruences between secessionism (broadly defined) and (post-)liberal internationalism. It strives to come to terms with the past, present, and future of secession and state creation in a changing international political system. Contributing to exciting new work in the area of state creation and recognition that already clearly contextualises secessionism in broader international structures (Griffiths 2021; Griffiths and Muro 2020; Visoka, Doyle, and Newman 2020), this workshop will aim to specifically delineate the liberal or non-liberal features of secessionism and international order. In doing so, in turn, it hopes to anchor research on secession and state creation into the ongoing conversations over the nature of liberal international order ‘in crisis’.

The workshop invites both theoretical and empirical input and inquiry into a wide range of questions – topics may include, but do not exhaust:

- What does a changing (liberal) international order mean for potential repertoires of secession/state creation-justification?
- How can we assess secessionist movement’s (or *de facto* states’) legitimacy in light of shifting visions of international order?
- How does a transformed liberal internationalism inform practices and norms of state recognition?
- What is, and would be, the role of international organisations in channelling or counteracting liberal approaches to secessionism?
- How would a ‘post-liberal’ international politics affect secessionist groups’ external relations with parent or patron states?
- What modes of ‘engagement-without-recognition’ will be bolstered or weakened under a (post-)liberal international structure?
- What is the role of liberal principles like ‘democracy’ and ‘free-market’ in sustaining or hampering secessionist/state creation efforts?
- Can we find alternative non- or anti-liberal viewpoints in localized, poststructuralist, feminist, and/or postcolonial perspectives on secession and state creation?