

The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession

By Peter Radan

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Secession is a detachment of a territory from an existing state with the aim of creating a new state on the detached territory. Secession is usually an outcome of the political mobilization of a population on the territory to be detached and, as a political phenomenon, is a subject of study in the social sciences. Its impact on inter-state relations is a subject of study in international relations. But secession is also subject to regulation both in the constitutional law of sovereign states and in international law. Following a spate of secessions in the early 1990s, legal scholars have proposed a variety of ways to regulate the international responses to attempts at secessions. Moreover, since the 1980s normative justification of secession has been subject to an intense debate among political theorists and moral philosophers. This research companion has the following three complementary aims. First, to offer an overview of the current theoretical approaches to secession in the social sciences, international relations, legal theory, political theory and applied ethics. Second, to outline the current practice of international recognition of secession and current domestic and international laws which regulate secession. Third, to offer an account of major secessionist movements - past and present - from a comparative perspective. In their accounts of past secessions and current secessionist movements, the contributors to this volume focus on the following four components: the nature and source of secessionist grievances, the ideologies and techniques of secessionist mobilization, the responses of the host state or majority parties in the host state, and the international response to attempts at secession. This provides a basis for identification of at least some common patterns in the otherwise highly varied processes of secession.

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Editorial Review

Review
'Secessionist movements - often referred to by euphemisms such as "wars of national liberation", "remedial" responses to massive human rights violations, "unique" situations, or simply "dissolutions" of existing states - continue to disrupt the stability of the international order. This volume helps us to engage in an honest and necessary debate about ways of changing current borders, since demands for such changes will inevitably continue.' Hurst Hannum, Tufts University, USA 'From Scotland to Puntland, and from South Ossetia to South Sudan, secession raises fundamental questions for national states and the international community. This uniquely comprehensive survey of current arguments and pressing prospects by political scientists, international lawyers, historians and political philosophers marks a major advance in an increasingly sophisticated field and will be the starting-point for future research.' David Armitage, Harvard University, USA 'Given the secessionist tendencies unleashed by events like the demise of the Soviet Union, and breakup of Yugoslavia, secession literature is finally approaching the critical mass it has always deserved. This research companion is a most welcome addition to that accumulation. Its 45 individually authored subtopics combine to offer perhaps the best restatement of the subject in the world... Every library offering International Law or Relations material, every diplomatic establishment, and all academics in search of an authoritative text for advanced research would be wise to obtain this particular publication. It offers as complete a picture of secessionist settings and analysis as can be found between any two covers.' American Society of International Law Newsletter

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Aleksandar Pavkovic is Associate Professor in Politics and International Relations, Macquarie University, Australia and also at the University of Macau, China. Peter Radan is Professor in Law, Macquarie University, Australia.

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