

## CALL FOR PAPERS – WORKSHOP (ONLINE)

3-5 November 2021

### SECESSION AND (POST-)LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Over the past 5 years, a proliferation of IR scholarship has focused on the nature, transformation, or possible demise, 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-20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> century international political structures should in fact truly be viewed as ‘liberal’.

This workshop strives to intersect this scholarship with debates over the practice and theory of secession. Such debates tend to be couched in terms of wider conceptions about the character and purpose of the international political system, and about what practice best safeguards any supposed global ‘order’. It would indeed seem that research on secession is not immune to challenges against the liberal international order, because acts or discussions of secession in themselves tend to lay bare the discrepancies of this (supposed) order. Secessions may be justified in reference to prevalent rules, conventions, and norms of international politics, but such secessions end up breaking rules as well. Secessionism has been explained and justified in reference to liberal concepts (e.g. human rights, liberty, self-determination), but has also been condemned as a violent and anti-liberal disruption enacted by power-hungry self-serving profiteers.

This workshop, therefore, serves as an attempt to explore the relationships and incongruences between secessionism and liberal internationalism. In doing so, it strives to come to terms with past, present, and future of secession in a changing international political system. It invites both theoretical and empirical input and inquiry into a wide range of questions – these may include, but do not exhaust:

- What does a changing (liberal) international order mean for potential repertoires of secession-justification?
- How does a transformed liberal internationalism inform practices and norms of state recognition?
- How can we assess secessionist movement’s (or *de facto* state’s) legitimacy in light of shifting visions of international order?
- 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 efforts?
- Can we find alternative non- or anti-liberal viewpoints in localized, poststructuralist, feminist, and/or postcolonial perspectives on secession?

This workshop will try and contribute to exciting new work in the area of state creation and recognition, which already clearly contextualises thinking of secession in broader international structures (Griffiths 2021; Griffiths and Muro 2020; Visoka, Doyle, and Newman 2020). It aims to build on such works by delineating the liberal or non-liberal features of secession and international order. In doing so, this workshop hopes not merely to add understanding about secession itself, but to also specify this particular international practice as a possible signifier informing the ‘liberal international order’-debate.

The workshop is set to take place **online, from 3-5 November 2021**. To express your interest in participating, please submit **an abstract of up to 200 words, before 01/07/2021, to [l.knotter@rug.nl](mailto:l.knotter@rug.nl)**. For any further questions about this workshop, please use the same email address.