

Secessionist Conflicts and Their Management

Lecturer: Prof Eiki Berg

16 and 18 November 2021

Course outlines

This course highlights fundamental questions of sovereignty and statehood in the context of secessionist conflicts. It offers an insight into the topics such as internal legitimacy and earning sovereignty; challenges to international order; agency, dependence and quest for survival; engagement without recognition, etc. It relies mostly on first hand research and is comparative in nature. More precisely, we will examine how sovereignty practices have been conflicting with the self-determination principle, and how the ideas about universal human rights inevitably clash with “obligation to refrain” norm. We will also explore how blurring of international norms work hand in hand with legitimizing military interventions under the aegis of “responsibility to protect” or become handy in support of “remedial secession”. We then turn to the phenomena of de facto states and see how these non-recognized entities differ from confirmed states, how they operate and survive in hostile environments, and what their perspectives of becoming “normal” are. A separate part of the course will be dedicated to parent state strategies which foresee the reintegration of secessionist entities back to their national body politic. This comes on a par with discussions about the role of Great Power in de facto states engagement. We will learn that interaction can be vital-- if only to promote a resolution of the underlying conflicts. In the end we will conclude that although de facto states may have important deficiencies in terms of state-building, it would be premature to see them disappearing. On the contrary, most of them have passed the viability test and seen engagement in various activities by international community.

Programme

Tuesday, 16 November	
12:30-12:45	Introduction
12:45-13:50	1. Who is Entitled to Earn Sovereignty?
15:30-16:50	2. From Secessionist Conflicts to Places That Do Not Exist
Thursday, 18 November	
08:00-09:20	3. Do Parent State Strategies Matter in Resolving Secessionist Conflicts?
09:30-10:50	4. Exploring <i>De Facto</i> State Agency: Negotiation Power, International Engagement and Patronage
12:30-13:50	5. Back-Door Diplomacy: US Direct Engagement with <i>De Facto</i> States
14:00-15:20	6. Systemic Transformations and Management of Secessionist Bids