

Preface

The issue of international recognition and secession is one of the key topics within the framework of the contemporary geopolitical research. As such, it was also one of the key topics studied by us and the colleagues at our institute since the beginning of our geopolitical research. In November 2015, we decided that it would be definitely worth the time and effort to dedicate a scholarly monograph to the various facets and aspects of this issue; thus, we decided to bring experts from around the world together to share their research with us and with the wider academic community. We were and still are very happy with the response this call for papers has generated. Based on these contributions of our colleagues and some additional research added later, we are finally able to bring you this volume presenting the contemporary topics of research on the unrecognized states and secession in general. We were lucky enough not only to get contribution from the foremost experts in the field such as Nina Caspersen or Mikulas Fabry but also to get contribution from experts dealing with some of the less known but still very interesting topics like the Bougainville issue presented by Vladimír Baar.

The selection of the topic is important for one other reason. Since the end of the Cold War and the diminishing likelihood of the global nuclear annihilation, the focus of the international community and, subsequently, the academia turned to other issues. One of the most prominent of these is the tension between the principle of territorial integrity and the right of self-determination in the context of the post-Second World War delegitimization of war as a means of political conduct. This topic has been brought up repeatedly, as evident from cases like the dissolution of Yugoslavia, recognition of East Timor and South Sudan, or more recently in the attempts to utilize the self-determination principle in places such as Eastern Ukraine and Kurdistan. Clearly, the topic is not going away, and the proper understanding of the issue is crucial for better grasp on these important issues. This is one of the main aims not only of this book but also of the whole geopolitical research as exemplified by the Geopolitical Studies Research Centre at the Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, from which the Editors of this volume originate.

We would also like use the opportunity to thank all the people that helped make this book happen. First of all, we thank the authors that took the time to share with us their top research, without which this work as we present it to you would not exist. Second, it is necessary to thank the Institute of Political Studies not only for institutional support as the book was financed by the Charles University Research Development Schemes, programme PROGRES Q18—Social sciences: from multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary, but also to *Annual of Language & Politics* and *Politics of Identity* journal that allowed us to share part of the papers published by the institution in this book. Third, we thank our colleague Jan Bečka for language consultations that helped us in a big way. Next, we would like to thank all those who support the geopolitical research at our institute, be it people from the Faculty in general, our students, or our colleagues that did not publish in this volume but provide stimulating research that helps the entire department to move forward. Last but not least, we cannot omit the readers of this volume without whom the whole publishing process would be pointless. We hope that this volume will provide you with a stimulating look at the contemporary research regarding the two main issues raised in the title—unrecognized states and secession.

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