

SYMPOSIUM  
TERRITORY, BELONGING  
SECESSION, SELF-DETERMINATION AND TERRITORIAL RIGHTS  
IN THE AGE OF IDENTITY POLITICS



EDITORIAL PREFACE

BY

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## Editorial Preface

The recent emergence of separatist claims in some countries has brought legal and political theorists to shift the focus from the traditional principle of self-determination to a possible right to secede. But it is far from being uncontroversial and widely accepted in the academic debate—as well as in other fields—that there is such a right.

Many philosophers take secessionist demands as claims of justice and a question of fundamental human rights. Some scholars do recognize the fundamental right to secede but they limit it to ethnically or culturally distinct groups and grant such a right provided that it is consistent with a liberal democratic framework. Others again have conceptualized more modest notions of this right, understood sometimes as a ‘remedial right’ or a ‘contingent right.’ Philosophical disagreements notwithstanding, all theorists do acknowledge that there are unjust territorial arrangements, but condemn the violent and sometimes ‘illiberal’ character of groups making a claim of secession and the role of democracy are at the stake.

This special volume of *Philosophy and Public Issues* addresses these problems through a discussion on the notion of secession and territory belonging. In the first part of the volume, Neera Chandhoke presents her recent *Contested Secessions. Rights, Self-determination, Democracy and Kashmir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012), addressing questions by Allen Buchanan, Margaret Moore and Valentina Gentile. In the second part, we host three papers critically engaging with contemporary theories on secessions and political and philosophical relevance.

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