Secessionist movements and internationalization strategies: a comparative study

CATALONIA GLOBAL INSTITUTE

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Executive summary

This report analyzes the international strategies of diplomatic and paradiplomatic engagement of ten secessionist movements, partially recognized state-like entities, and UN member states, from Europe, Asia, and Africa. We review how different actors that aspire to achieve international recognition behave, and how this contributes to the success or failure of their attempts at secession.

We provide insights into how state-like actors with no or limited recognition, as well as cases that have achieved full recognition, engaged and/or still engage with the international community, and which strategies they follow to increase interactions. The report samples three types of cases: fully recognized states, de facto states with no or limited recognition, and secessionist movements or entities that have not yet achieved de facto independence. This differentiation aims at understanding international recognition, the crucial step that makes a state part of the international system and allows it to participate normally in international relations.

The report highlights the following key points:

- International recognition is the most common objective of state-like entities and secessionist movements seeking legitimacy as a sovereign state, which plays an important role in achieving UN membership and securing international support.

- Target-oriented paradiplomacy, engagement without recognition, and parastatal structures of territorial control are essential tools for achieving international engagement and recognition.

- Credibility, strategic unity, and to be perceived as a determined movement/actor, are critical factors in seeking and ultimately obtaining international recognition, along with popular support for independence.

- Human rights breaches and remedial secession are used as elements of the international narrative to gain support, particularly in cases of past or present oppression and structural human rights violations.

- Best practices in governance, former colonial status, and potential third parties' interests are also used to gain support for international recognition.

- Self-awareness of geostrategic importance and assets is a key factor for maximizing possibilities of third parties' interest, engagement and possible recognition, especially when it comes to regional and/or global powers

Introduction

In this report we analyze the strategies of diplomatic and paradiplomatic engagement of ten secessionist movements and partially recognized state-like entities around the world. We review the geopolitical conditions and environments that have influenced their actions, framing their ranges of possibilities, and suggest commonalities in how they address them. Our aim is to understand how different actors that aspire to achieve international recognition behave, and how this contributes to the success or failure of their attempts at secession. We review cases in Europe, Asia and Africa, and select both ongoing cases as well as nations that have already achieved independence during the twentieth or early twenty-first century .

Although states are the fundamental unit in international relations, the question of how many there are is far from being resolved. There are 193 members of the United Nations (UN), the largest and most important International Organization. Some of them have no universal recognition, meaning there are other UN members that do not see them as peers of the international system. There are, moreover, several entities that have the material and territorial requisites of statehood as determined by the Montevideo convention: a territory, government, permanent population and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. However they are not UN members and they are recognized only by a few countries or by entities that are themselves not members. Finally, there are hundreds of groups around the world politically mobilized to call for statehood for their communities, but without any international acknowledgement.

There is an enormous variation in the capabilities of unrecognized entities, as well as their narratives, and the degrees of engagement between them and generally recognized states. Some of these partially recognized entities have armed forces, parliaments, undisputed control of their borders, trade and even recognition by members of the UN.

Those actors are important for the study of the international system because widely recognized states constantly engage with non-recognized state-like actors, as well as with governments with which they do not have official relations. For example, in 2021 the negotiations between the Taliban government and the United States ended in the withdrawal of US forces and other allies from Afghanistan. Until today, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is not officially recognized by any other government in the world. Somaliland, an unrecognized state in the Horn of Africa, holds important trade connections with the Gulf states and has a relevant political position in East Africa, although it is not recognized. Denying their existence and their agency would make it impossible to understand the complexities of the region.

That means that focusing only on universally recognized states gives us a limited view of the complexity of international realities. In fact, there are members of the UN with less territorial control over their internationally recognized borders, such as Libya, Sudan or Afghanistan, than

some of the non-member self-governing entities. Others are political movements with varying forms of autonomy within their states, but without territorial control and/or a clear intention to be recognized as independent. In this report, we analyze this reality to provide insights on how state-like actors with no or limited recognition engage with the international community, and which strategies they follow to increase it.

There are a number of ways in which this continuum may be divided. We can, for example, distinguish between those recognized by at least some UN members versus those that are not recognized by any, or between ones which have declared independence (successfully or not) vis-a-vis those that have not. But none of these categorizations breaks down the path neatly between political movements within independent countries. In practice, being a fully fledged member of the international community normally requires not only a certain material capacity in the terms outlined above, or even that other states acknowledge you as one of their own. It also requires that the recognition is granted by at least one of the major global powers.

In this report, we sample three types of cases: fully recognized states, de facto states with no or limited recognition, and secessionist movements or entities that have not yet achieved de facto independence. In the second case we speak of states because they fulfill the criteria for statehood as much as any UN member. The logic of this sampling is that we are more interested in recognition than in the material capacities for statehood. Recognition is a political act in which states acknowledge each other as equals, even though their power might be colossally unequal. Recognition is also the crucial step that makes a state part of the international system and allows it to participate normally in international relations.

Case justifications

Some of the cases we include in this report are today widely recognized and are members of the UN, others are former members of the UN that today enjoy limited or tacit recognition only, and some others are just movements campaigning for statehood with different degrees of sub-state institutionalization. The selected cases mean to cover a varied range of state-like entities, those which became independent states and progressed from a situation of non-recognition to enjoying widely international recognition today, including Ireland (UN member), Slovenia (UN member), Israel (UN member) South Sudan (UN member) and Kosovo (non-UN member); state-like entities with limited recognition or non-recognition, including Taiwan (Republic of China), and Somaliland; and those which may enjoy some degree of institutionalization, but their international engagement is limited to calling for support for independence: Iraqi Kurdistan, Catalonia, and Scotland.

This is a convenience sample, but one we suggest offers a relevant set of factors and conditions to study strategies of international engagement. We acknowledge the challenge of studying cases that are so different from each other in all dimensions. For this reason, this report does not aim to draw political analogies among the cases studied. They all have very different historical, ideological, legal, institutional, material, and cultural backgrounds. The fact that they may have

similar goals does not mean that they are the same. Nationhood and self-determination are at the same time both universal and particular values, where two cases might be superficially similar but never equal.

Thus, our aim is not to find universal rules or build a normative argument in favor or against any of the cases that we present. The Catalonia Global Institute, as a think tank, openly supports Catalan self-determination. Nevertheless, the Institute as a research group and the authors of this paper as individuals do not take positions on the legitimacy of the demands of nationhood and international recognition of any of the cases in this report.

In this study, we aim to signal the complexity of political relations in an inter-state system. We present the fluidity of borders and national identities as an international and historical human reality, but we do not take any normative stands on specific cases. We focus on the strategies of diplomatic and paradiplomatic engagement to understand what makes some of the actors studied succeed in their goals.

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Ireland

1. Historical overview

As of the 1880s, the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) demanded self-government from Britain.[1] In 1912, Home Rule was granted and led to a critical situation - the forming of the Ulster Volunteers to resist devolution on one hand, and the Irish Volunteers on the other.[2] In 1916, two years after the outbreak of WWI, there was a dramatic insurrection against British rule in Ireland: the Easter Rising.[3] Thousands of Irish rebels seized Dublin General Post Office and other buildings in the city.[4] Patrick Pearse proclaimed the birth of the Irish republic. After a week, the British troops were able to put down the rebellion. The British response—executions and imprisonments—achieved what the rebellion had not, an intensification of the nationalist feeling amongst Irish rebels,[5] galvanizing support for Sinn Féin, the party the republicans founded. On both sides—British Protestantism and Irish Catholicism—national identity is constructed upon religion.

Sinn Féin triumphed in the 1918 Irish general election, part of the United Kingdom general election. This led to the setting up of an alternative parliament in Dublin, Dáil Éireann.[6] On January 21st, 1919, the same day Dáil Éireann endorsed a Declaration of Independence, this coincided by chance with the shooting of two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) officers, giving the impression that parliamentary and military republican forces were acting jointly.[7] However, there was a political movement. In May 1919, Eamon de Valera was elected as President of Dáil Éireann. He appointed a cabinet that included amongst others Arthur Griffith, Cathal Brugha, and Michael Collins. The latter was to run the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It was a successor of the Irish Volunteers, functioning as the republican paramilitary organization.[8]

The War of Independence went from 1919, ending on December 6th, 1921 with the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiated by Griffith and Collins. The treaty granted independence to 26 out of the 32

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[1] The Editors of the Irish War, "Irish War of Independence," *The Irish War*, accessed February 25, 2023, https://www.theirishwar.com/history/irish-war-of-independence/.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.

[4] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Easter Rising," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, March 13, 2023.

[5] English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, 5.

[6] *Ibid.*, 15.

[7] *Ibid.*, 16.

[8] Paul Arthur, Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Irish Republican Army," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, March 20, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Republican-Army#ref711106.

Irish counties, establishing the Irish Free State.[9] It offered autonomy, while remaining a Dominion of the British Empire. The Irish Free State was a constitutional monarchy, with a free parliament. The parliament was bicameral, intended by the British to protect the Protestant minority. Republican Ireland was divided over the 1921 treaty. Griffith and Collins argued that it could be the foundation to build the new republic. De Valera opposed it. The two sides fought against each other in the Irish civil war from 1922-23.[10] The anti-Treaty side lost. In 1937, de Valera's new party, Fianna Fáil, introduced a new constitution establishing the sovereign state of Ireland.[11] On April 18th, 1949, Ireland left the Commonwealth and became fully independent.[12]

2. Internationalization goals

Irish nationalists wanted independence from British rule. The quest for emancipation had split into two fronts. First, The Irish movement faced disagreement in the tactics to achieve independence -peacefully or violently. Second, there was also a clash on the pace, whether it was to be achieved progressively, eroding British legitimacy over the island and taking whatever was possible at the time, or all at once. After independence, the IRA in Northern Ireland sought a unified state on the island. However, in any case, the objective had always been complete independence from the U.K.

Another important objective for Ireland was the quest for recognition by the international community. In order to achieve this, Ireland constantly tried to use the global context in its favor. Ireland committed to President Woodrow Wilson's new world order of rights and justice. Ireland even sent a delegation —although without much success— to the Peace Conference in Paris 1919. Although Ireland's lobbying did not go far due to Britain's opposition, it did actively try to translate its words into palpable actions in trying to gain sympathy from the international community.

3. Narrative

A first line of Irish narrative for independence is rooted in historical, political, and economic grievances. Back in the 12th century, Anglo-Norman soldiers invaded Ireland.[13] Over time, the

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9   Paul Arthur, Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Sinn Féin," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, March 13, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sinn-Fein.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Christopher L. Pastore, "How the Irish Won Their Freedom," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/21/opinion/how-the-irish-won-their-freedom.html.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Robert W. White, "The Irish Republican Army: An Assessment of Sectarianism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 1 (1997): 24.

intercommunal antipathy between Protestants and Catholics continued and intensified in the early 17th century during the Plantation of Ulster during the reign of James I.[14] "The Plantation" was the systematic colonization of the Ards peninsula area of Ulster. The objective was to guard against resistance whilst simultaneously building a society based on Protestantism and English law.[15] In the 19th century, rural confrontations between Protestant Orangemen and Catholic Ribbonmen increased, the Battle of Garvagh in 1813 being a prime example.[16] In the early 20th century, although Ireland had been integrated into the United Kingdom in 1801, it was still ruled as a colony.

A second line of Irish republicanism was embodied in the preservation of faith, Catholicism. This is common in civil wars. While people include many aspects in
defining their identity, in these cases, people fall back on other identities in search of distinction. However, as aforementioned, this was not the main driver. Nonetheless, on passing on the Catholic faith, people were in a way passing on the idea of resistance and the anger about the wrongs done by the British—the atrocities, penal laws, and the theft of estates.[17]

Thirdly, there was also a cultural aspect. The late 19th century saw the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association which rejected British sports.[18] This fueled Irish identity to the extent that Patrick Pearse -executed after the Easter Rising— said: "[the Gaelic League was] the most revolutionary influence that has come to Ireland."[19] Thus, in part, Irish republicanism aimed to protect its traditions.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

The 1916 Easter Rising cannot be disengaged from WWI. For the Irish rebels, the war seemed the perfect opportunity to strike against Britain.[20] John Devoy -an exiled rebel- and Roger Casement -a former British diplomat—met with German diplomats. They all came to an agreement whereby if Germany provided military expertise and weaponry, Ireland would remain neutral in the war.[21] However, the ship carrying the material was scuttled and never arrived.

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[14] Marc Mulholland, *Northern Ireland. A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

[15] *Ibid.*, 2.

[16] *Ibid.*, 8.

[17] Eamon Collins and Mick McGovern, *Killing Rage* (London: Granta Books, 1997), 36.

[18] Pastore, "How the Irish Won Their Freedom."

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, 5.

[21] BBC Editors, "Easter Rising 1916: How an Irish Rebellion Sought International Help," *BBC News*, March 26, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35809722.

While the world did not look favorably on a potential Irish independent state, the context coincided with President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points after the war. These included "mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."[22] Again, while this was not intended for Ireland, it suited the Irish cause just right.

5. Institutional action

The Irish Free State invested a great effort in its diplomatic relations. In 1923, the Irish Free State joined the League of Nations.[23] This was a moment of optimism since it was a very significant step towards statehood. As said above, although Irish efforts were prominent, such an achievement cannot be disassociated from the principles arising after the end of WWI. The U.S. recognized the Irish Free State in June 1924.[24] In 1955, Ireland became a member of the United Nations. In 1973, Ireland joined the European Economic Community. This allowed Ireland to expand and diversify its economy, and not just be an underdeveloped appendage of the British.[25] In particular, Ireland took advantage of the Common Agricultural Policy. This allowed Ireland to present itself as an attractive place for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), accessing the European market.[26] Today Ireland is fully integrated and part of many international organizations such as the OSCE and the IMF, amongst others. It's worth noting that Ireland is not a NATO member. It cooperates with NATO in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.[27] Ireland never formally applied to join NATO due to its neutrality policy. Another factor is the remaining sovereignty claims over Northern Ireland, territory that is British—a NATO member.

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[22] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Fourteen Points," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (blog), April 3, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/event/Fourteen-Points.

[23] Pastore, "How the Irish Won Their Freedom."

[24] United States Department of State, "A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Ireland," *Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute*, https://history.state.gov/countries/ireland.

[25] Ben Tonra, "Ireland and the European Union" (Oxford University Press, December 23, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.505.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "U.S. Relations With Ireland," *Bilateral Fact Sheet*, June 2, 2022, https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-ireland/.

6. The role of diaspora

The Irish diaspora played a significant role in its quest for emancipation. Throughout Irish history, the U.S. has been the most popular destination. In 1891 it reached a peak of 1.8 million people.[28] Such a high number was due to the Great Famine in the 1840s. However, Irish emigration to the U.S. predates the Great Famine. Besides the U.S., the Irish diaspora also settled in the U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand -mostly English-speaking countries.- Interestingly, it is one of the most unified diasporas in the world, and is characterized by a great sense of camaraderie.[29] In the present, it is often said that there is a diaspora of 70 million.[30] This large number is due to the definition, which includes people of "Irish ancestry living abroad."[31]

Although in 1919, the Irish failed to convince President Wilson to grant diplomatic recognition to their newly declared state, and the Irish quickly understood the diaspora's potential in the U.S.[32] They perceived that the diaspora in the US could be a means to put pressure on the American government and shape U.S. foreign policy to its interests.[33] There were many aid groups such as 'Friendly Sons of St. Patrick,' the 'Ancient Order of Hibernians,' and the 'Clan na Gael' that raised money for the cause.[34] While many organizations were raising money for humanitarian aid, there were a few sending weaponry. The lobbying continued after Ireland's independence. During the Troubles the lobbying in Congress continued to pressure the Nixon administration on the quest for unification of Northern Ireland.[35]

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[28] The Editors of Ireland Roots, "Ireland's Diaspora," *Ireland Roots*, https://irelandroots.com/ireland-diaspora.htm.

[29] The Editors of Pilot Guides, "The Irish Diaspora," *Pilot Guides*, https://www.pilotguides.com/study-guides/the-irish-diaspora/.

[30] Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, "Irish Emigration Patterns and Citizens Abroad," June 20, 2017, https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/newspress/publications/ministersbrief-june2017/1--Global-Irish-in-Numbers.pdf.

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] Timothy J. White and Emily M Pausa, "When Did the Irish-American Diaspora Make a Difference? Influencing US Diplomacy towards Northern Ireland," *A Journal of Irish Studies* no. 9 (2019): 329–46, http://dx.doi.org/10.13128/SIJIS-2239-3978-25520.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] Pastore, "How the Irish Won Their Freedom."

[35] White and Pausa, "When Did the Irish-American Diaspora Make a Difference? Influencing US Diplomacy towards Northern Ireland."

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Slovenia

1. Historical overview

Slovenia is an independent state with universal recognition that declared its independence in 1991, holding European Union and NATO membership. Prior to independence, Slovenia was for centuries part of the Habsburg Empire. After World War I and the ensuing dismantlement of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovenia integrated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was eventually renamed Yugoslavia.

In the period following World War II, Yugoslavia evolved into a socialist federal state under the leadership of Marshal Josip Broz Tito. Under socialist Yugoslavia, Slovenia became one of its constituent republics - along with Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro- and had its own constitution, which provided for self-government in matters related to culture, language, education and the economy. Moreover, Slovenia had certain powers in defense policy through its own territorial defense corps. Nevertheless, major decisions in key areas such as foreign and security policy were reserved for the Belgrade-based federal government.

Slovenia was the wealthiest federated state by GDP per capita during the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Its economy was based on diversified industry that ranged from machinery to chemicals and textiles. Besides, its highly qualified cheap labour force, combined with its geographical proximity to Italy, Austria and Germany, made Slovenia a very attractive area for foreign investments. However, in the 1980s the Slovenian economy, and overall the Yugoslavian one, began a period of decline because of factors such as a heavy debt burden, rampant inflation and the inability to promote economic innovation.

The 1980s was also a complicated decade in political terms. Up to that point, Marshal Tito had managed to keep ethnic tensions under control by ensuring a balanced power relationship between the country's federated states. However, Tito's death in 1980 triggered a period of political unrest which, coupled with economic instability, fueled tensions between the different ethnic groups in the country. By the end of the decade, Serbian nationalism started to pursue a strong predominant role for Serbia within Yugoslavia and to reduce the autonomy of its two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo -especially the latter, since it hosts an ethnic Albanian majority in spite of the high symbolic significance that the region has for Serbia.

Against this background, in the late 1980s Slovenia began to feel threatened and the prospect of seeking independence started being considered as a plausible option by the political elites and society as a whole. A key moment for the open articulation of pro-independence views was the publication of the special issue of Nova Revija magazine in January 1987, which contained a compilation of articles by several authors entitled "Contributions to the Slovene National Program".

The Slovenian leadership eventually called a self-determination referendum in December 1990, in which approval for independence gained an overwhelming majority with 95.7% in favour and a 90.3% turnout. After unsuccessfully trying to reach an agreement with Belgrade on the implementation of an orderly secession, Slovenia eventually declared independence on 25th June 1991. The Serbian-led Yugoslav government responded with a military operation in Slovenia that failed to ensure its control over Slovenian territory after ten days of hostilities -hence its historical name, the Ten-Day War.

2. Internationalization goals

During the period under socialist Yugoslavia, independence was not considered to be a priority objective in Slovenia. As explained above, it wasn't until 1987 that a significant independence movement began to emerge. The goal of independence started to be seriously considered because of the rise of the aggressive Serbian nationalist discourse that reframed the status quo and the ethno-national balance prevailing within Yugoslavia[36], which had crystallized significantly with the Memorandum of the Academy of Arts and the Sciences of Belgrade in 1986 and the takeover of Slobodan Milosevic as leader of the League of Communists of Serbia. Within this context, remaining in Yugoslavia started being considered an existential threat to Slovenia. Therefore, achieving independence in the shortest possible time became an increasingly prevailing goal.

It is important to bear in mind that the Socialist Republic of Slovenia held some powers in defense policy through its own territorial defense unit, which was key to being able to neutralize the action of the Yugoslav army during the Ten-Day War. This is a key factor in understanding the success in achieving the key objective of holding control over Slovenian territory after the declaration of independence in the absence of the support of an external power that was clearly interested in Slovenian independence, and consequently provided military support for the country. Another important objective of the Slovenian leadership was achieving international recognition, which was prepared prior to the declaration of independence with the establishment of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the implementation of the strategy that we describe below.

3. Narrative

The underlying approach was the self-determination of the Slovenian nation as a legitimate and just cause in the face of an exclusionary Serbian nationalist discourse that posed an existential threat to Slovenia[37]. This threat to the nation, in the strictest sense of the concept, was the key to

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[36] Milan Cvikl, Evan Kraft & Milan Vodopivec, "Costs and benefits of independence: Slovenia". *Communist economies and economic transformation*, Vol. 5, n°3 (1993). p. 295.

[37] Sabrina Ramet, "Confronting the past: the Slovenes as subjects and objects of history". *Družboslovne razprave*, XXIV (2008), 58: p. 33-34.

invoking the remedial cause that legitimized secession. To this effect, two key concepts that Slovenia wanted to convey was the impossibility of keeping Yugoslavia united as a consequence of the rise of an aggressive Serbian nationalism that was seeking to break the balance between the nations that made up Yugoslavia, and that the ensuing costs for the European security structure of keeping Yugoslavia united were far superior than trying to bring about a controlled dismantling of the federation.

Second, a remarkable argument that Slovenia put forward to defend its independence was an appeal to democratic values. The League of Communists of Slovenia had agreed to call the first free democratic election in the country in April 1990, which led to the victory of the opposition coalition Demos, in open defiance of Belgrade's instructions. The Slovenian leadership argued that with the independence of Slovenia, progress could be made in the full democratization of the country, a goal that was impossible within Yugoslavia under a markedly authoritarian regime that openly opposed democratic decision-making[38]. Besides, the strong support for independence in the self-determination referendum was also part of the democratic legitimization of secession.

Third, Slovenia also appealed to its legal right to self-determination, including the right to secession, as recognized by the introductory part of the Constitution of Yugoslavia. Slovenia argued that the Constitution recognized that Yugoslavia was a Federation that was built upon the original consent of its federated states and that such consent could be withdrawn at any time. The Serbian leadership contested this, since they interpreted that self-determination had already been exerted when the Federation was established and secession was unacceptable.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

This narrative was spun in several ways to appeal to European regional powers in order to adapt the perspective of an independent Slovenia to their interests. In the case of Germany, and given that Slovenia was Yugoslavia's wealthiest state, there was a clear approach of presenting the country as an economic partner with a potential for the German economy[39] through further integration into its supply chains. The productivity and level of education and technical training of Slovenian workers, combined with fairly low labor costs, made Slovenia an economically attractive option for Germany.

Berlin initially did not show direct interest in Slovenia's independence because it worried about the destabilizing effect it could have in the Balkan region, although the potential economic benefit of an independent Slovenia did not go unnoticed. In fact, Germany first tried to address the potential secession of Slovenia -and Croatia- within a multilateral framework including the whole European Community and strong cooperation with France and the United Kingdom.

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[38] Emine Pandir. "Smooth and non-violent democratization: the case of Slovenia". Linköpnig University (2005): p. 38

[39] Tomas Zipfel, "Germany and the recognition of sovereignty of Slovenia and Croatia". *Perspectives*, No. 6/7 (1996), pp. 140.

However, soon after the attack of the Yugoslav army that took place in the wake of the unilateral declaration of independence, Germany started to gradually change its position until it began unilaterally pushing for the quick recognition of Slovenia as an independent state, which Berlin issued on 23 December 1991.

As for France and the United Kingdom, the potential of becoming a profitable economic partner was not all that present in the discourse of the Slovenian leadership. Rather, the arguments that were directed at these countries -and the United States- were built upon the idea that maintaining the unity of Yugoslavia at any cost was much more dangerous for the security of the Balkan region than promoting a controlled dissolution, given that the continuity of the Yugoslav state in that context was impossible.

Despite the rationale put forward by the Slovenian government, France and the United Kingdom did not initially show any clear interest in the independence of Slovenia. These countries had a strong perception of Slovenian independence as a destabilizing element and as a trigger of dangerous instability in the Balkan region, which led them to make several diplomatic moves to prevent the enactment of the unilateral declaration of independence. In addition, Paris and London also feared that the independence of Slovenia - and Croatia - could lead to excessive German influence in the Balkans[40].

In view of the German policy of pushing for unilateral recognition, the French Foreign Minister went so far as to say that unilateral recognition of Slovenian independence by Germany would "*set Europe back twenty years*". However, both France and the United Kingdom, alongside the rest of the European Community, committed to recognize Slovenia in December 1991 and formally recognized Slovenian independence on 15 January 1992 -alongside the whole European Economic Community. The successful defense of the country in face of the attack of the Yugoslav National Army, as well as the ongoing war in Croatia and the upcoming declaration of independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, made clear that the dissolution of Yugoslavia was inevitable and that denying such a fact was no longer a viable option.

The United States likewise showed no interest in the independence of Slovenia for the same reasons mentioned above. In addition, despite being a socialist state, Yugoslavia was not aligned with the USSR during the cold war. Therefore, its dissolution was not seen as a scenario that could bring clear geostrategic benefits[41]. Therefore, the United States resisted recognizing independence until April 1992, when the facts on the ground were already completely irreversible and the disintegration of Yugoslavia was an ongoing reality no one could keep ignoring.

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[40] *íbid*, p. 145

[41] Dejan Marolov. "The policy of the USA and the EU towards the disintegration of Yugoslavia". *International Journal of Science Tomorrow*, vol. 1, n°2 (2012), p. 9.

Finally, the context in which the unilateral declaration of independence and the subsequent Ten-Day War took place was marked by the beginning of the disintegration of the Yugoslav State. Croatia declared independence on the very same day that Slovenia, and Bosnia was likely to declare independence in the immediate future. As a consequence, the Yugoslav army had strong incentives to prioritize the use of its military resources in disputing the control of these territories which, unlike Slovenia, hosted large ethnic Serbian populations within their borders.

5. Institutional action

In the years prior to the unilateral declaration of independence, no major diplomatic preparation was carried out, basically because of the fact that until 1987 no significant pro-independence movement had begun to articulate. The machinery for seeking diplomatic support was set in motion in the months immediately preceding the self-determination referendum (December 1990) and the subsequent declaration of independence (June 1991) with the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 1990. The priorities that Slovenia had at that time was establishing contacts with Germany and then with France and the United Kingdom -aside from other European countries that were close to Slovenia, such as Austria and Italy. Beyond Europe, addressing the United States was the main priority.

6. The role of diaspora

The Slovene diaspora in the pre-independence period was modest in numbers. However, at the beginning of the 1990s the diaspora organized through the Slovenian World Congress to influence the views of the public opinions of their host countries about Slovenian independence, especially in those countries that were deemed to be a priority. For instance, it is assumed that the Slovene communities that lived in Germany coordinated with the Croatian communities to shape German foreign policy on the disintegration of Yugoslavia, even though there is no evidence to what extent these diasporas contributed to the German shift towards the recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia[42].

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[42] Daniele Conversi, "German Shadows in the Balkan Wilderness: International Reactions to the Recognition of Croatia and Slovenia". *Izvorni znanstveni rad Primljeno*, vol.19 (1998), p.160.

Israel

1. Historical overview

Faced with the arrival of modernity, the rise of enlightened ideas and the progressive loss of importance of religiosity in public life, Jewish people were pushed towards a crossroads of three paths, namely: 1) wallowing in a rejection of modernity that would isolate the Jewish communities from cultural, scientific and technological progress, 2) assimilating into the Gentile nations where they resided, or 3) recovering the latent national perspective and formulating a secular identity that would pave the way for a Jewish nation-state. The first path gave rise to the ultra-Orthodox, the second affected millions of individuals who tried to gradually renounce their Jewish identity, and the third formed the embryo of what would become Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel[43]. In the success of the latter there was an extrinsic component because anti-Semitism was always an obstacle for assimilationist proposals, but to understand why the third path succeeded it is also necessary to bear in mind the will of a significant part of the Jewish people to preserve this identity.

To the extent that both the more religious and the more accommodated components had chosen the other paths, Zionism was a heterogeneous movement to which very diverse people were drawn, even before Herzl gave it organizational and logistical cover: victims of discrimination and anti-Semitism, culturalist groups, young idealists or religious people with nationalist sensibilities, among others. For this same reason, the priorities within Zionism were also different and there was no consensus on practically anything, not on the language, not on the location of the future State nor on the role of religion. And it is no coincidence that eventually people tended to prioritize the most nationalistic choices for each of these questions: the Hebrew language -with a process of revitalization with no possible comparison to any other historical reality[44]-, the vision of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine and a greater impact of religion on public life than the socialist secular elites who were once in the lead would have wanted.

The achievement of these goals was accomplished in a period of half a century: where Ottoman Palestine was home to only 13,000 Jews in 1882, in 1948 Israel declared independence in accordance with the terms of the UN Partition Plan and enforced such a declaration in a war that ended in March 1949. The outcome provided Israel with more territory and a radically favorable demographic change, whereby 90% of the population was Jewish -the previous year only 50% of the population within the borders of Israel planned by the United Nations was Jewish, and in 1914 the share of Jewish population in the overall Holy Land was 10%. The skillful management of the situation - through migration in Ottoman times and also through negotiations during British rule

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[43] Ian Lustick. "For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel" (Council of Foreign Relations), pp. 30-39.

[44] The key figure for the revitalization of the Hebrew language was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who always affirmed that the project had national goals and that "the Hebrew language will only survive if we revive the nation and return it to the homeland". On this issue, see the article "Confessions of a Polyglot", published in Haaretz on 23 November 2008.

- explain why the Zionist movement acquired sufficient dimensions to attract the bulk of the Jewish population, especially when the antisemitic dynamics of the interwar period achieved their highest point during the Holocaust. After 1949, Israel continued to face the hostility and non-recognition of all the surrounding States, but it had the sufficient strength - both human and technological - and international recognition to strengthen its existence in the face of these challenges.

2. Internationalization goals

Zionism sought from the beginning to establish a Jewish State, eventually disguised as a "home". After overcoming the initial visions that contemplated other locations[45]—Kenya, Argentina—in favor of Palestine, a discussion emerged between the political sectors that wanted to achieve independence by convincing a great power to deliver it and the practical sectors that aspired to organize a migration of proud Jews who would work the land and would find in Antiquity the cultural references to emerge from the submissive mindset of the diaspora.

The confrontation between the "politicals" and the "practicals" was never completely resolved, in part because both paths were actually more complementary than it seemed at first sight. However, in general terms the practical sector prevailed because it was the one that could easily lead grassroots activism, which was the true repository of Zionist energies. When establishing the Zionist Organization, Herzl had advised against an immediate migration to Palestine because he believed that the Ottomans would perceive it as a threat and cut it off[46]; at the same time, he promoted negotiations with the great powers - especially Wilhelmine Germany, but also France, England, Italy and even Russia—in which he, posing as a vague representative of the Jews, aspired to win their support to create a Jewish protectorate with co-sovereignty. During the first decade of the organization's life, the efforts of the "politicals" proved fruitless, while migration promoted by the "practicals" was able to flourish due to the incompetence and widespread corruption of the Ottoman administration. This led to an increase in the prestige of the practical sector, who assumed effective power in 1911. However, the "practicals" kept engaging in diplomatic efforts that would end up giving its first tangible result with the Balfour declaration, the collaboration with the United Kingdom to occupy Palestine in 1917 and the subsequent definition of the British Mandate in the Pact of San Remo.

3. Narrative

The Zionist Organization had two challenges: to convince the Jews of the desirability of seeking a State, and to convince the other powers that they had an interest in facilitating its establishment. Essentially three arguments were used for the first part of the equation, namely: 1) a Jewish state

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[45] Adam Rovner "In the Shadow of Zion. Promised Lands Before Israel" (New York University Press, Nova York: 2014), pp. 45-78.

[46] Theodor Herzl "Der Judenstaat" (1886), p. 44.

was the only way to guarantee the survival of non-Ultra-Orthodox Jewish identity, 2) a Jewish State would put an end to anti-Semitism and 3) a Jewish State would provide the security that Jews could find in no other way.

Argument 1 appealed to the true intrinsic motivation that had originated Zionism, i.e., the will of those Jews who were familiar with the changes brought about by modernity and who were well integrated in their respective societies, but who kept feeling Jewish and did not want to assimilate. Argument 2 provided an idealistic motivation and an immediate remedy for the exogenous factor acting against assimilation: the reasoning was that anti-Semitism was an inevitable consequence of the existence of a foreign people within European nation-states, and that the moment this people had a homeland, they would stop being seen as foreigners and infiltrators in other nations, suppressing the sense of rejection. Argument 3 offered the immediate promise of a besieged fortress where the Jews would constitute a majority and could defend themselves, without being at the mercy of gentiles who oscillated between hatred and indifference towards the persecution of Jews.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

In the aftermath of World War II, the geopolitical scenario was not favorable for the Zionist project. However, the movement knew how to take advantage of the cracks between the actors involved. For example, the United Kingdom did not want to abandon its mandate over Palestine, but the costs generated by the Zionist resistance and the constant conflict with the Arabs, in addition to the fact that the Labour government of Clement Atlee prioritized the implementation of the welfare state (and not the preservation of the empire), led Britain to decide that it was no longer possible to control Palestine.

The United States had no geostrategic interest in supporting the establishment of the Jewish state at the time (profitable relations with the Arab world and ensuring its non-alignment with the USSR was seen as a priority), thus no direct American assistance was obtained in the establishment of the State. However, President Truman's decision to recognize the State of Israel was brought about against the State Department's judgment largely thanks to the role of the diaspora during the 1948 presidential election campaign.

With respect to the USSR, the Marxist influence of the Zionist socio-economic system—with the kibbutzim and moshavim—was exaggerated to attract Soviet sympathies and, most importantly, the provision of weapons via Czechoslovakia during the war of independence. In the immediate post-independence scenario, and faced with the evidence that Israel would not align geopolitically with the USSR (with the consequent loss of Soviet military support[47]), Zionism consolidated an alliance with IV French Republic by proving to be an asset with regard to providing intelligence on the Algerian situation and offering operational capacity to defend

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[47] Paul Johnson, "La historia de los judíos" (Ediciones B, Barcelona, 2015), pp. 769-772.

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French geostrategic interests in the Middle East, as was the case of the military campaign in Egypt in response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal[48].

5. Institutional action

When Zionist Organization co-founder Max Nordau said in private after Herzl's death that he had been a "brilliant builder of facades without an actual building"[49], he was not straying from the truth or speaking pejoratively. Herzl understood like no other the importance of forms, aesthetics and appearances. In the years when Theodor Herzl headed the Zionist movement, which was not yet fully articulated and had no reputable membership either inside or outside the Jewish world, a centralized organization named the World Zionist Organisation was founded. This organization drew up a manifesto —Der Judenstaat—and a practical program—the "publicly recognized and legally guaranteed home in Palestine" of Basel- to address several audiences with varying degrees of idealism. Afterwards, Herzl organized annual congresses and took good care that the appearance of the delegates—all dressed in tailcoats and well-groomed hair—disguised their lack of representativeness. He provided the movement with a flag and an anthem. He created a press organ, Die Welt. He established a bank, the Jewish Colonial Trust, and a fund to accumulate resources with the goal of purchasing land, the Jewish National Fund.

These institutions were little more than vacuities with pompous names, but they nevertheless opened the doors of European diplomacy to him. With the exception of the weekly newspaper Die Welt, all the institutions that he established still existed in 1948 and played a key role in the path to independence and in the early articulation of the State. Post-Herzl Zionism took good note of this and maintained the tradition of flexible institutions capable of adapting to circumstances, both for the benefit of internal cohesion and dialogue with the Palestinian authorities (Assembly of Parliamentarians, Jewish National Council, Jewish Agency), as well as propaganda and dissemination of the cause abroad (World Jewish Congress).

6. Role of the diaspora

In no other independence process has the diaspora played such a large role as in the Israeli case, in which it constituted the entire population with the exception of the modest 13,000 representatives of the old Yishuv. Unlike other processes in which the diaspora plays an accompanying role through funding and informal diplomacy, Zionism had the much more ambitious challenge of convincing the diaspora and attracting it towards Palestine in sufficient numbers to make the goal of independence possible.

The Zionist organizations established themselves among the European diaspora. It was from there that they organized themselves politically and it was also from there that propaganda was

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[48] Benjamin Pinkus, "Atomic Power to Israel's Rescue: French-Israeli Nuclear Cooperation, 1949-1957" *Israel Studies*, 7 (2002), pp. 104-138.

[49] Chaim Weizmann, "Cartas selectas". (La Semana Publicaciones, Jerusalem) 1985, p. 38.

sent and received. It was not until the aftermath of the First World War that the center of Zionism was established in Palestine, and even at that point the movement adapted its functioning to encourage the diaspora to carry out the two tasks that corresponded to it: that of repository of new individuals susceptible of militating in the Zionist movement and of migrating to Palestine -even the political parties and the linked militias went to the diaspora for new members-, and of financing the movement and influencing the governments of the countries where they reside. These activities were helped by the rise of anti-Semitism in the thirties and the desperation in which the Jews found themselves in World War II. These elements convinced (or forced by necessity) large portions of the population to move to Palestine and encouraged others that it was appropriate to devote all kinds of efforts to the goal of establishing a safe homeland in a place in which the Jews could govern themselves.

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South Sudan

1. Historical overview

South Sudan is the last country that has gained full international recognition. It is also one of the least developed and continues to be plagued by political instability and armed conflict amongst its diverse communities. It is not far-fetched to argue that the independence of South Sudan in July 2011 was achieved despite the conflict among South Sudanese, being as crude as the conflict against Sudan was. The unresolved power disputes brought the country to a seven-year civil war shortly after independence.

The struggle for self-determination originates in the marginalized position that the South of Sudan had endured during British-Egyptian rule before the establishment of Sudan in 1956 and the rule from Khartoum after that. The condominium's linguistic policies and political division arguably offered South Sudan a better position than it had after Sudanese independence. The extractive approach of Khartoum towards its periphery was the case much before the discovery of oil in the South during the 1970s; the dominance from the North harks back to centuries of economic and political influence of Arab nations in East Africa.

The South Sudanese resorted to an armed rebellion at the end of British rule in Sudan. The first Sudanese civil war (1955–1972) ended with a compromise offering the South recognition and a degree of self-rule, which nevertheless the central government never adhered to. A turning point was the adoption of Sharia law nationally in 1983, which local commentators say precipitated the second civil war, ending in 2005 with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), including a secession referendum.

1. Internationalization goals

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement and its military branch (SPLM/A) led by John Garang took up arms even though independence was not the movement's ultimate or at least primary objective. The vision of the leader was of a 'New Sudan[50]' in which the national and religious differences of the South were respected. During the late 1980s and the 1990s, the complex landscape of ethnic rivalries in the South provided opportunities for Khartoum to support various Southern groups with conflicting interests, which meant that although the objective of self-determination was always present, the situation was far from one in which a unified call for independence led the South Sudanese against Northern rule.

During the peace negotiations at the beginning of the 2000s, Garang brokered a deal that included his appointment as president of South Sudan and vice-president of Sudan. Although the deal included the organization of an independence referendum at the end of a six-year transitional period, he did not campaign for secession during the last years of the war. It was

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[50] Sudan: SPLM - a year after Garang - Sudan. 2006. *ReliefWeb*. Accessed April 14, 2023. https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-splm-year-after-garang.

finally his death in a helicopter crash in 2005 shortly after signing the CPA which shifted the position of the SPLM towards full independence.[51]

The Sudanese government of Omar al-Bashir survived decades of war in the South with only partial control of the territory and was increasingly crippled by international sanctions. Sudan turned from holding a delicate non-aligned position during the Cold War to a pariah state that gave tacit support to Al-Qaeda and rebel groups in Uganda, antagonizing Western political leaders and East African armies to its South. This combination of conditions weakened its position into having to accept the CPA, particularly after its ethnic cleansing of non-Arabs in Darfur gained renewed international condemnation and pressure, including an indictment by the International Criminal Court against al-Bashir for genocide in 2010. However, it is worth mentioning that exports of South Sudanese oil through Port Sudan starting in the 1990s assured revenue for Sudan even after the separation, and that the status of the oil-rich Abyei region was left undefined in the treaty (which it still is today).

2. Narrative

The South's arguments advocating their cause rested on the persistent oppression by their Northern rulers. For their audience amongst the US political class, they emphasized the imposition of Islam on a Catholic population. At the regional level, South Sudan and the countries surrounding them appealed to pan-African solidarity. The understanding of Pan-Africanism by the governments in the region excluded north Africa and countries with Arab influence, such as Egypt or even Libya, which under Gadhafi was a proponent of African cooperation. In turn, Omar al-Bashir was tacitly supported by the Arab world. The Organization of African Unity (the predecessor to the current African Union) backed up the self-determination of the South as early as 1994. One of the other international organizations of the region, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGADD), which unites countries in the Horn of Africa, did so shortly after.

3. Institutional action

The SPLM acted during the civil war as a government-in-waiting and established representations abroad. In the US, it found support among lawmakers concerned about the religious oppression of Catholics, but it was within the African international organizations where most of the institutional action came about. The membership of the Organization for African Unity and IGADD already supported the South to varying degrees. The conflict also appeared to allow these organizations to legitimize their existence. IGADD successfully established itself as the main

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[51] Kilroy, Walt. 2020. "South Sudan" In Routledge Handbook of State Recognition, edited by Gëzim Visoka, John Doyle, and Edward Newman. Routledge.
Frahm, Ole. 2012. "Defining the Nation: National Identity in South Sudanese Media Discourse." Africa Spectrum 47, no. 1.
"The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army - Sudan". 2005. ReliefWeb. Accessed April 14, 2023. https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/comprehensive-peace-agreement-between-government-republic-sudan-and-sudan-peoples.

mediator, albeit amidst diplomatic competition between Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan to host talks.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

Besides the ideological aspects of East African support for South Sudan, there were material elements as well. For both Kenya and Uganda, South Sudanese independence meant an additional member would join the East African Community. A less developed and land-locked member offered opportunities for power projection at the regional level for both countries. Uganda also wanted to establish a buffer state between itself and Sudan, which had been supporting its own insurgency[52]. The involvement of both countries was important in attaining independence. Uganda intervened militarily even against pressures from IGADD, and Kenya supported tacitly, for example by allowing arms imports from the port of Mombasa. As the regional hegemon, Kenya established itself as the diplomatic center of negotiations, hosting a special meeting of the UN Security Council and the signing of the CPA in Nairobi in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

At the global level, South Sudan was backed rhetorically by the United States. However, it did not support independence but instead wanted to use power-sharing agreements to secularize Sudan and reform or even change its regime. Germany, which had had a diplomatic role during earlier negotiations in the 1990s, approached the issue cautiously but supported South Sudanese self-determination.

5. The role of diaspora

Most South Sudanese seeking economic opportunities moved North, as did the thousands displaced by violence during decades of civil war. However, the politically salient diasporas were mainly in the United States, with a South Sudanese community, and Australia. The role of the diaspora was significant in the advocacy efforts with US lawmakers. Still, the political weight of the issue was not driven by their campaigns at the global or regional level. The US had a national security interest in reforming the regime in Sudan, given its support for Islamic political violence abroad. Regionally, countries in East Africa had strong ideological and material reasons for supporting the partition of Sudan, and hence the role of the diaspora was simply not needed.

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[52] Chepkoech, Doris. 2019. University of Nairobi.

Kosovo

1. Historical overview

On February 17th, 2008, Kosovo formally and unilaterally declared its independence. After WWII, Kosovo became part of the Yugoslav Federation, composed of six nominally equal republics: Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.[53] In 1974, the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvidina were granted an autonomous status within Serbia.[54] In 1989, the Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic revoked that status.[55] This prompted protests, which led Belgrade to impose direct rule over Kosovo declaring a state of emergency. Kosovo's population was composed of a Serbian minority, who were Orthodox Christian, and the majority ethnic Albanians, who were mainly Muslim.[56] Kosovo's statehood case study is especially interesting because while Muslim Albanians were demographically the majority, Kosovo was a highly symbolic region for the Serbs. Kosovo was the heart of their medieval empire and the seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church.[57] In 1389, the Serbs were defeated by the Turks in their struggle to preserve their faith under the Ottoman Turkish rule.[58]

The international community was not willing to address Kosovo's quest for statehood since the priority was the Dayton peace process ending the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.[59] The Kosovar leadership under Ibrahim Rugova began peaceful resistance in the face of Serbian repression and human rights abuses, in the quest for democracy and self-

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[53] John B. Allcock, John R. Lampe, and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Yugoslavia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, January 5, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/Yugoslavia-former-federated-nation-1929-2003.

[54] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Petar Živković," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, January 30, 2023, Petar Živković.

[55] Richard Nelsson, "How Milosevic Stripped Kosovo's Autonomy - Archive, 1989," *The Guardian*, March 20, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2019/mar/20/how-milosevic-stripped-kosovos-autonomy-archive-1989.

[56] The New York Times Staff, "A Primer," *The New York Times*, accessed March 3, 2023, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/europe/032999kosovo-primer.html.

[57] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Kosovo Conflict," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (blog), April 3, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/event/Kosovo-conflict.

[58] The New York Times Staff, "A Primer."

[59] Gëzim Visoka, John Doyle, and Edward Newman, *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 404.

determination.[60] In parallel, in the 1990s the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged with the purpose of creating an independent Kosovo, and ultimately creating a "Greater Albania" to unite ethnic Albanians across the region.[61] In 1996, the KLA launched a significant guerrilla campaign of bombings and hit-and-run attacks against the Serbian government and police.[62] Over the following two years, the KLA's actions intensified. Serbian special police and Yugoslav armed forces responded brutally, which eventually led an international informal coalition[63] to demand a ceasefire, withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo, and international monitoring, amongst other actions.[64] It is worth mentioning that the KLA also committed violations of international humanitarian law against ethnic Serbs, injuring or even killing them to make them leave the region. While Milosevic officially complied, he did not implement any changes. Thus, the KLA continued with its attacks, and the Serbian and Yugoslav forces escalated in the form of ethnic cleansing of Albanian Kosovars.[65] In 1999, NATO intervened. It began with airstrikes, at first against Serbian military targets and eventually extending the campaign to Belgrade, damaging Serbian infrastructure.[66] After three months of NATO airstrikes, Milosevic agreed to the withdrawal of security forces from Kosovo, and accepted a UN-led interim administration (UNMIK) and international security force (KFOR)[67] UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) is what *de facto* removed Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovar territory.[68] The UN was in charge of facilitating a political process to determine Kosovo's future.[69] In 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. Serbia appealed before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) but it concluded that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law.[70]

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[60] Nicholas Wood, "Ibrahim Rugova, 61, Kosovo Albanian Leader, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/23/world/ibrahim-rugova-61-kosovo-albanian-leader-is-dead.html.

[61] CIA, "CIA Report on Kosova Liberation Army," January 3, 2000, https://www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CIA-KLA-report.pdf.

[62] *Ibid*.

[63] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Kosovo Conflict."

[64] *Ibid*.

[65] Visoka, Doyle, and Newman, *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition*, 404.

[66] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Kosovo Conflict."

[67] Albert Rohan, "Kosovo's Path to Independence," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, February 2, 2018, https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_kosovos_path_to_independence/.

[68] Visoka, Doyle, and Newman, *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition*, 405.

[69] "The Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" (Ahtisaari Plan) was a close agreement. However, it was ultimately rejected by Serbia, and vetoed by Russia.

[70] International Court of Justice, "Overview of the Case," July 22, 2010, https://www.icj-cij.org/case/141.

2. Internationalization goals

Most academic literature revolves around the debate on whether Kosovo's case is legal under international law, whether Article I of the UN Charter recognizes self-determination, or whether its unilateral emancipation is a breach of state sovereignty. Despite the controversy, the aim of this report is not to engage in such a debate. The following sections put forward and evaluate the weight of the *fait accompli* in Kosovo's case study.

Unlike other cases, Kosovo enjoys widespread recognition in the international community. Today, 117 countries recognize Kosovo as an independent state. It is worth highlighting that the United States (U.S.), France, the United Kingdom (U.K.), Germany, Japan, and Singapore are among those on this list. Since Kosovo enjoys recognition of some of the world's economically most powerful states, its strategy has three main branches.

First, Kosovo works for its integration in international organizations. In December 2022, Kosovo formally applied for E.U. membership.[71] Nonetheless, for the application to increase its chances of success, it is vital for Kosovo to seek cooperation with the Serbian government in areas such as security and strengthening the rule of law. This is difficult given that Serbia still considers Kosovo to be an integral part of its territory. Furthermore, there are constant ethnic tensions in the northern area of Kosovo.[72] Besides the E.U., Kosovo's other governmental objectives are Euro-Atlantic integration, membership of the U.N., and NATO. While the latter might be a bit difficult, Kosovo aims to become a member of the NATO alliance's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 2023.[73] This would allow Kosovo to formally build up a bilateral relationship with NATO.

The second line of action is to counter Serbia's campaign. While it is true that U.S. alignment with Kosovo has made the pathway smoother, Kosovo is active in its diplomacy. Kosovo pursues a strategy of "smart" diplomatic efforts[74] with recognition by individual states, translated into five main approaches: i) seeking recognition by states based on their foreign policy; ii) working with states to incrementally build for formal recognition; iii) working with states whose recognitions would most likely pressure other states; iv) working with multilateral mechanisms to cooperate

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[71] The Editors of DW, "Kosovo Formally Applies for EU Membership," *DW*, December 15, 2022, https://www.dw.com/en/kosovo-formally-applies-for-eu-membership/a-64110674.

[72] The Editors of Reuters, "Why Ethnic Tensions Are Flaring Again in Northern Kosovo," *Reuters*, December 27, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/why-ethnic-tensions-are-flaring-again-northern-kosovo-2022-12-27/.

[73] Mustafa Ozturk, "Kosovo Aims to Join NATO's Partnership for Peace Program in 2023," December 23, 2022, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/kosovo-aims-to-join-natos-partnership-for-peace-program-in-2023/2771517.

[74] Edward Newman and Gëzim Visoka, "The Foreign Policy of State Recognition: Kosovo's Diplomatic Strategy to Join International Society," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 14, no. 3 (July 1, 2018): 375, https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw042, 375.

with individual states, and approach international organizations; v) working with former statesmen to portray a positive image and gain political momentum.[75]

Third, the country centers its efforts in moving towards good governance and towards the modernization of the state. In the long-run ensuring these aspects gives Kosovo credibility, which gets translated into formal acceptance in international organizations. In particular, Kosovo is interested in improving its competitiveness in the EU market as well as developing a modern army in line with the NATO model.

3. Narrative

While power politics plays the greatest role, perception still matters. Therefore, Kosovo's narrative for independence revolved around three main tenets. The first argumentation relies on historical grounds.[76] Specifically, Kosovo put forward how under the 1974 Constitution the region had autonomous rights that had been stripped away by Milosevic.[77] In this vein, much of the argumentative weight was on human rights abuses such as ethnic cleansing. In particular, Kosovo built on the concept of 'remedial secession.' This refers to the idea that secession might be the last resort for ending oppression. In parallel, Kosovo argued it was not a 'secession,' but rather the natural dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. The second line relied on the 1993 Montevideo Convention, particularly on Article 1: "The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; d) capacity to enter into relations with other states."[78] The third set of arguments was the evidence of how international organisms did not find the declaration of independence violating international law.[79] This specifically relied on the 2010 Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Kosovo emphasized the idea that it did not set a precedent for future cases of unilateral independence. This is noteworthy because Kosovo understood that to be accepted into the international community, new states ought not to appear as destabilizing factors to other countries that might have secessionist movements within their borders. This is a pillar of Kosovo's argumentation when trying to convince E.U. states. Kosovo did not try to empathize with other potential states, but Kosovo rather analyzed how its own interests overlap with those of well-established countries.

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[75] *Ibid.*, 376.

[76] Visoka, Doyle, and Newman, *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition*, 407.

[77] *Ibid*.

[78] "Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States," 1933, 3, https://www.ilsa.org/Jessup/Jessup15/Montevideo%20Convention.pdf.

[79] Visoka, Doyle, and Newman, *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition*, 408.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

At first sight Kosovo might seem not to offer much strategic interest, mainly because it is landlocked in the heart of the Balkans. Nonetheless, what makes Kosovo somewhat worthy of attention is its proximity to a country within the Russian sphere of influence - Serbia. Without aiming to lighten the load of the humanitarian aspect behind NATO's intervention, the degree of influence that Moscow exerts on Serbia is no secret. Five Balkan countries are already EU members, while all others -including Kosovo- have formally applied to become members. Similarly, many others are already part of NATO -Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Greece,[80] while it is also on Kosovo's horizon.

Perhaps it is the US' interest in keeping an eye on the Balkan Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) routes that is most important. The weak institutions throughout the region make it easy for drug and human trafficking routes to proliferate. The Balkans had also become an entry point for Latin American cocaine amongst others. In addition, there was also the smuggling of weapons. In all, the area had just become a place of transit for criminals and terrorist organizations into Western Europe.[81] Thus, as an American national security concern, it made sense for the U.S. to control the area. In addition, in Kosovo the U.S. has Camp Bondsteel, which is the largest and most expensive military base built by the Americans in Europe since the Vietnam War. Now the base is part of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), NATO's peacekeeping force. In other words, Kosovo's sovereignty is under American tutelage. Three main American actions were key in aiding Kosovo. First, the U.S. removed the terrorist label from the KLA.Second, the U.S. clearly acknowledged the Serbian atrocities and ethnic cleansing, and this was essential to justify humanitarian intervention. Third, the arguments put forward by Harold Hongju Koh, an American delegation adviser. Mr. Hongju Koh said that international law does not authorize or prohibit declarations of independence because international law does not regulate every human event. He continued: "an important measure of human liberty is the freedom of people to conduct their own affairs."[82]

5. Institutional action

Today, 117 countries recognize Kosovo as an independent state. In terms of major powers that do not recognize Kosovo, there is only China and Russia. Among EU countries, these are Spain,

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[80] James McBride, "Russia's Influence in the Balkans," *Council on Foreign Relations* (blog), December 2, 2022, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/russias-influence-balkans.

[81] National Security Council, "Transnational Organized Crime: A Growing Threat to National and International Security," *The White House. President Barack Obama*, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/threat.

[82] International Court of Justice, "Reports of Judgements Advisory Opinions and Orders," 2010, https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf.

Romania, Slovakia, Greece and Cyprus. The reasons for non-recognition are a matter of setting a precedent for their own internal issues rather than a Kosovo-specific case.

Kosovo maintains 32 embassies as well as 22 consulates.[83] In terms of international organizations, Kosovo is a member of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Council of Europe's Development Bank amongst some others.[84] As aforementioned, Kosovo is working towards NATO and EU membership. UN membership seems unlikely in the foreseeable future because of the organization's two opposing permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia, and their veto power.

6. The role of the diaspora

Kosovo's history has greatly impacted on its migration fluxes. Although there have been various waves of migration within the former Yugoslavia -Kosovo being one of the least developed regions within the federation as well as the ethnic cleansing afterwards- this section focuses on the role of the diaspora after Kosovo's independence in 2008.

Given Kosovo's population -around 1.78 million people reported in 2021-[85] its diaspora is fairly large. Although it remains difficult to provide an accurate number, it is estimated to be around 800.000 people.[86] The main two destinations for Kosovar Albanians are Germany and Switzerland. Other receiving countries of the Kosovar diaspora are the United States, the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Austria.[87]

Kosovo has actively worked to capitalize on its diaspora. The Kosovar government has a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora (MFA). In 2013, Kosovo approved its first strategic document, Strategy on the Diaspora and Migration 2013-2018. Kosovo's strategies aim to effectively engage with its people living abroad, focusing on ensuring that institutions serve its diaspora, preserving

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[83] The Editors of Embassy Pages, "Kosovo Embassies & Consulates," *Embassy Pages* (blog), February 27, 2023, https://www.embassypages.com/kosovo.

[84] Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "U.S. Relations With Kosovo."

[85] The World Bank, "Population, Total - Kosovo," *The World Bank*, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=XK.

[86] Amir Haxhikadrija, "Diaspora as a Driving Force for Development in Kosovo: Myth or Reality?" (Swiss Cooperation Office Kosovo, June 2009), https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/26979784/diaspora-as-a-driving-force-for-development-in-kosovo-myth-or-.

[87]*Ibid.*

cultural and linguistic identity as well as assisting the economic development of the country.[88] The economic involvement of the diaspora is particularly sought after, which is why the government focuses on investment models -such as the Diaspora Investment Fund- and economic zones that provide special regulations and conditions in specific parts of Kosovo.[89]

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[88] Liza Gashi, "The Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2013-2018," *Kosovo Diaspora* (blog), July 20, 2014, https://

www.kosovodiaspora.org/the-strategy-on-diaspora-and-migration-2013-2018/.

[89] *Ibid*.

cataloniaglobal.cat

Taiwan, Republic of China

It is important to note that the case of Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC-Taiwan), stands out in its uniqueness compared to the other cases studied in this report.

Firstly, there is a disputed narrative among the parties involved regarding the nature of the situation, and whether the case of Taiwan represents a secessionist movement. The Democratic People's Party (DPP, green camp) and the Kuomintang (KMT, blue camp) in Taipei have differing views on Taiwanese identity versus Chineseness, with the DPP traditionally seen as the pro-independence party now holding the view that Taiwan is already an independent state under the name of the ROC. Conversely, Beijing views any attempt to recognize the ROC-Taiwan as separate from the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a separatist movement.

Secondly, the ROC had a global diplomatic network and was a founding member of the UN before 1949, when the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. The ROC has since then gradually been losing official recognition, experiencing an inverse process compared to the other cases studied in this report. That makes the ROC-Taiwan today the limited recognized state entity outside the UN with the largest paradiplomatic network in the world.

Therefore, despite the peculiarities of the case and due to its uniqueness, we have included the ROC-Taiwan in the study considering it one of the most relevant examples of exceptionality in the field of sovereignty, statehood and international recognition that can be found in the present. Moreover, given the critical role Taiwan is taking in the tensions between China and the US, it highlights how exceptionality can play a central role in the current international system.

1. Historical overview

The official denomination of the government in Taiwan is the Republic of China, Taiwan. The current situation in Taiwan can be seen as a product of the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War. The forces of the Kuomintang (KMT) that governed the Republic of China (founded in 1911) were defeated by the Communist Party of China and withdrew to Taiwan. On the Chinese mainland, the CPC founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.

Since then, the PRC has considered Taiwan to be a renegade province that should eventually be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. Taiwan, on the other hand, developed into a democracy after the transition process that began in 1987 and asserts its autonomy from the mainland.

The Republic of China was the representative of the Chinese people in the UN until 1971, when it was replaced in the UN by the People's Republic of China. Under the "One China policy", in order to establish official relations with Beijing, official recognition needs to be switched from the ROC to the PRC and recognize Taiwan as part of the PRC. Currently, the ROC-Taiwan is recognized by

13 members of the UN, and the Holy See. The ROC-Taiwan maintains relations without official diplomatic rank with more than 50 countries.

The United States has been a key ally of Taiwan, providing security guarantees and arms sales while also recognizing the One China policy, which acknowledges Beijing's position that Taiwan is part of China. A revitalization of Taiwanese identity accompanied the democratization process of Taiwan, and despite the limited recognition of the ROC-Taiwan, the number of Taiwanese citizens that self-identify as Chinese has severely decreased.[90]

The Democratic People's Party (DPP) led the opposition to the KMT regime in the eighties and defended a project of independence for Taiwan. However, since 1999 the DPP has argued that no declaration of independence or constitutional change removing references to China is needed, because they argue that Taiwan is already an independent state, under the name of the ROC-Taiwan.[91] Nonetheless, this position is not necessarily shared by all the green camp. There are currently movements that advocate for the removal of any reference to China in the constitution or even for a formal declaration of independence giving birth to a new Taiwanese state distinct from the ROC and the PRC.

The KMT has traditionally supported advancing towards unification with mainland China, under the model of One Country, Two Systems applied in Hong Kong and Macao. However after the crackdown of the protests in Hong Kong and the application of the National Security Law, the KMT has distanced itself from the horizon of applying the One Country Two Systems model for Taiwan.

Currently, neither of the leading Taiwanese parties currently advocates for a radical change to the status quo. However, under the Tsai Ing-wen administration, the DPP has worked to project a more clearly Taiwanese identity separate from China, and although unsuccessfully, to gain spaces of international recognition for Taiwan. Without currently supporting advancing towards unification with the PRC, the KMT opposes distancing Taiwan from the Chinese identity, and aims at establishing better cross-strait relations.

Indeed, today the ROC-Taiwan has control over the territory of the Island of Taiwan and a few adjacent islands, with its own laws, elections, currency, flag, and army. That makes the ROC-Taiwan a de facto sovereign state, although with limited recognition and outside of the institutions of the United Nations system.

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[90] Election Study Center, National Chengchi University. 2023. "Taiwanese / Chinese Identity(1992/06~2022/12)." Accessed April 14, 2023. https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7800&id=6961.

[91] Nachman, Lev, and Brian Hioe. 2020. "No, Taiwan's President Isn't 'Pro-Independence'." *The Diplomat*. Accessed April 14, 2023. https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/no-taiwans-president-isnt-pro-independence/.

2. Internationalization goals

Taiwan has two primary goals in its diplomatic and paradiplomatic engagements. First, to keep the number of countries that maintain official relations with the ROC-Taiwan and be acknowledged as a separate entity from the PRC. In the long term, it could be argued that the Taiwan leadership's ultimate goal is to be widely recognized as a fully separate sovereign state from the PRC and regain access to the United Nations.

Second, to guarantee the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, securing the protection by the US and its allies of the self-governing island in the event of an invasion from the mainland. Amidst the escalating rivalry between China and the United States as well as its Western allies, Taiwan finds itself in a paradoxical situation. Despite having a relatively low level of official recognition, due to the tensions between the US and China it may also be one of the moments when the world is most aware of Taiwan's existence and its distinct entity from the PRC.

3. Narrative

Currently, Taiwanese authorities aim to present themselves as a separate entity from China with a distinct culture and identity. As part of this distinct identity, the Taiwan leadership emphasizes the democratic and liberal values present in its society. Taking advantage of the tensions between China and the US, the Taiwanese government presents the island as the first line of defense of the democratic world against China.[92] Taiwan has also appealed to liberal audiences and emphasized its distinct values from the PRC, like recognizing same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights and applying a more tolerant policy with regard to individual rights during the COVID-19 pandemic.[93]

On the other hand, after the disruptions of the semiconductor supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan has played the card of its strategic microchips industry to generate international attention.

Taiwan's semiconductor industry is widely recognized as one of the most crucial components of the global technology supply chain. It is responsible for manufacturing the advanced chips that power modern electronic devices, including smartphones, cars, computers, and many other high-tech products. The industry is essential to drive technological innovation and economic growth, not only in Taiwan but also globally.

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[92] Tsai Ing-wen. 2022. "President Tsai delivers 2022 National Day Address." Government of the ROC (Taiwan). Available at: https://english.president.gov.tw/News/6348 (accessed April 14, 2023).

[93] Drun, Jessica. 2022. "Taiwan's engagement with the world: Evaluating past hurdles, present complications, and future prospects." Atlantic Council. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/taiwans-engagement-with-the-world/ (accessed April 14, 2023).

Although semiconductors aren't the reason why Beijing is interested in incorporating Taiwan into the PRC, Taiwanese officials have advocated that should Beijing gain control of Taiwan, the West would lose access to strategically important components that are difficult to reproduce elsewhere. This narrative highlights the significant economic and geopolitical implications of China's potential acquisition of the island. By emphasizing the strategic value of Taiwan's technological capabilities, Taiwanese officials seek to underscore the importance of protecting Taiwan's autonomy and maintaining its self-governing status.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

Taiwan's geostrategic situation has relevant implications for regional security and economic stability in the Indo-Pacific. The island is located on the eastern edge of the Taiwan Strait, which means that it is located close to important sea lanes and trade routes in the Pacific, including the South China Sea. Along with the Ryukyu islands and Japan, Taiwan forms the first island chain, which has a strategic role in containing China's naval expansion.

The United States has long been a key player in Taiwan's security. It maintains close military ties with Taiwan and provides it with weapons and paradiplomatic support. Japan has also developed important informal ties with Taiwan in a context of growing mistrust from China. At the international level, the recent shortages of semiconductors and the fact that Taiwan has one of the most developed industries in this area has also helped

China claims Taiwan as a part of its territory and has threatened to use force to bring it under its control. China has also sought to isolate the ROC-Taiwan diplomatically and has used economic coercion against the island. In a scenario of growing tensions between China and the US, Taiwan has found renewed interest in its relationship with Washington, which has become one of its key cards to maintain its security and international presence.

Apart from the US, Europe and Japan, the ROC-Taiwan paradiplomatic action has paid special attention to South East-Asia, an area with which it shares geographic proximity, strong economic ties, and diasporic communities.[94]

5. Institutional action

Despite not having official relations with most countries in the world, Taiwan has a network of non-diplomatic ranked representation offices in countries that do not recognize the ROC-Taiwan. Those offices usually use names like Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Offices (TECRO), although the exact name can vary.

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[94] Hioe, Brian. 2022. "Can the Tsai Ing-wen administration's emphasis on Taiwan soft-power offer lessons for Catalonia?"
Catalonia Global Institute. Available at: https://cataloniaglobal.cat/en/can-the-tsai-administrations-emphasis-on-taiwans-soft-power-offer-lessons-for-catalonia/ (accessed April 14, 2023).

In those countries where Taiwan does not have representations, its "paradiplomatic" personnel and physical work spaces are not protected by the Vienna Conventions. However, in the United States, TECRO personnel enjoy many of the privileges and immunities of diplomats. In those countries where the ROC-Taiwan has official relations, their embassies operate as ordinary diplomatic bodies. Here we will focus on the ROC-Taiwan paradiplomatic offices.

Taiwanese paradiplomatic institutions try to keep a diplomatic-like protocol in their events and meetings, manifesting the nature of their officials as representatives of a people and a state. When dealing with third parties, the difference in diplomatic rank is acknowledged. However, internally representation offices act as if their members had official rank. Representation Offices, although having the same departments as an Embassy, do not have a department called a "political" because they are supposed to be offices that are developing a "cultural" or "economic" task.[95]

In recent years after the intensification of tensions in Taiwan's strait, Tsai Ing-wen's administration has pushed for changes to their official naming to include a reference to Taiwan despite Beijing's opposition. That is the case of the Taiwanese Representative Office recently opened in Lithuania, instead of the formulas that avoid making reference to Taiwan.[96]

Apart from carrying on administrative and para-consular work, Taiwan's TECROs are responsible for lobbying in host country institutions to expand tacit recognition of Taiwan, identifying sympathetic political and institutional actors, promoting Taiwan's economy, and monitoring international relations where China is involved.   Private personal engagement with public representatives who may sympathize with Taiwan are key in opening communication channels that would be difficult for foreign ministries to do due to the unique political situation of Taiwan.[97] If Taiwanese representatives can establish communication channels with institutional representatives, that implies a tacit recognition of Taiwan's existence as a separate actor from China, which is the first goal of the ROC-Taiwan paradiplomatic activities.

6.   The role of the diaspora

The Taiwanese diaspora has played an important role in the external relations of Taiwan, particularly in the context of the absence of official relations, to lobby for the interests of the island.

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[95]Pajtinka, Erik. 2017. "Between Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy: Taiwan´s Foreign Relations in Current Practice." Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics 1 (11): 39-57.

[96] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan). 2022. "The Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania commences operation, exchanges and cooperation between Taiwan and Lithuania chartering a new and promising course." Available at: https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&s=96821 (accessed April 14, 2023).

[97] Deans, Phil. 2001. "Taiwan in Japan's Foreign relations: Informal politics and virtual diplomacy." Journal of Strategic Studies 24 (4): 151-176.

Taiwan counts on the Overseas Community Affairs Council to handle relations with the diaspora.[98] This institution is especially useful for managing personal relations as a paradiplomatic tool in South East Asian countries, which is a priority area for Taipei, despite having limited recognition in the region.

It is worth noting that, in addition to the Representative Offices, there are also private organizations consisting of Taiwanese and/or natives of the host country that play a role in promoting and articulating relationships with Taiwan. For example, in the US, the Taiwanese American Citizens League[99] which advocates for the Taiwanese American community and organizes cultural events and leadership programs, or the Formosan Association for Public Affairs[100] that lobbies the US government for Taiwan's democracy, human rights, and security.[101]

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[98] Effendi, Tonny Dian. 2016. "The roles of diaspora community in Indonesia - Taiwan relations." International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies 2 (4): 25-36.

[99] See https://tacl.org/

[100] See https://fapa.org/

[101] Lin, Catherine Kai-Ping (2006) "Taiwan's Overseas Opposition Movement and Grassroots Diplomacy in the United States: the case of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs," Journal of Contemporary China, 15(46), 133-159.

Somaliland

1. Historical overview

Historically populated by Somali people, Somaliland was a British protectorate from 1884 to 1960, over which the British government exercised limited jurisdiction. On June 26, 1960, it became independent for just five days, as on 1 July of the same year it merged in a federation with present-day Somalia, until then under Italian rule.

A rebel group, the Somali National Movement (SNM), emerged in Somaliland years later, as one of the main opposition forces to the Siad Barre regime. Following the civil war that began in Somalia in the 1980s and the subsequent overthrow of that country's government in 1991, the SNM secured the region comprising the former British Somaliland. In May 1991 the group announced that the 1960 federation was no longer valid, and declared the independence of the Republic of Somaliland following the ousting of the military dictator Siad Barre, whose forces had committed massive human rights violations, and killed tens of thousands of people during civil war along ethnic, clan-based lines.

The SNM declared the city of Hargeisa the capital of Somaliland, and although it has been a *de facto* independent territory and state since then, *de iure* it remains internationally unrecognized to this day. Over the following years, the SNM elaborated a new constitution for Somaliland, which was voted in a public referendum in 2001. Though not internationally recognized, Somaliland is a relatively stable territory—in sharp contrast to the permanent state of civil war that has been going on for decades in Somalia, where the official authorities barely effectively control Mogadishu -the capital city- and its surrounding areas. Taking advantage of that stability, the Somaliland government has been able to rebuild most of the region's infrastructure that was destroyed during the war, as well as establishing functioning institutions for its current population of approximately 4 million inhabitants, making steady democratic gains and attracting foreign investment.

2. Internationalization goals

International recognition of Somaliland's statehood by other states is and has been for years the main priority of its foreign action since its declaration of independence from Somalia in 1991, with the ultimate goal of becoming a member of the United Nations. Recently though, the country has been increasingly committing greater efforts to what is commonly known as "engagement without recognition". That is, engaging with third state entities through sectoral agreements, especially in economic areas, seeking to attract foreign direct investment and foreign assistance in sectors such as health or education, promoting diaspora relations, and providing consular services. Engagement without recognition is a goal per se, but in Somaliland's case this strategy also serves to reinforce the appeal for recognition, as it would enable the creation of an even

more effective entity and allows Somaliland to emphasize the possible strategic benefits of recognizing its independence.[102]

3. Narrative

From a legal perspective, Somaliland's most important argument in favor of its recognition is its separate colonial status: the British protectorate of Somaliland. Therefore, it claims the territorial borders of the former British Somaliland[103].

Secondly, Somaliland vindicates its brief five-day period of partially recognized sovereign statehood in 1960, when it obtained its independence from the UK. Thirty five UN member states recognized Somaliland, including the five permanent UN Security Council members. The five-day period of independence before joining the union with Somalia on 1 July 1960 allows Somaliland authorities to present its case as a restoration of its former sovereignty[104].

Third, Somaliland makes its legal case for recognition based on the fact that it represents the dissolution of a failed union, presenting the union between Somalia and Somaliland as one that was never properly consummated. Somaliland and Somalia never signed an international treaty forming their union as their respective parliaments passed separate Acts of Union that differed to a great extent[105].

Last, Somaliland's legal case claims its right to sovereignty as "remedial secession", considering the massive human rights violations against Somaliland people by the Somali regime during the 1980s, a period in which tens of thousands were killed and several hundred thousand displaced[106].

The second part of Somaliland's claim for international recognition is based on the political de facto arguments, based on the fact that it is a *de facto* state, and therefore has "earned sovereignty"[107]. From the point of view of state building, this argument refers to the existence of effective institutions, a relatively high level of good governance and legal guarantees, including respect for human rights, and the development of democratic institutions based on the rule of law.

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[102] Caspersen, N., '*The Pursuit of International Recognition after Kosovo*', 2015, Global Governance, p 21.

[103] Pegg, S. , "*Somaliland*", in Routledge Handbook on State Recognition, Routledge Handbooks, 2019, p 417-418

[104] Pegg, S. , "*Somaliland*", in Routledge Handbook on State Recognition, Routledge Handbooks, 2019, p 418

[105] Pegg, S. , "*Somaliland*", in Routledge Handbook on State Recognition, Routledge Handbooks, 2019, p 418

[106] Pegg, S. , "*Somaliland*", in Routledge Handbook on State Recognition, Routledge Handbooks, 2019, p 419

[107] Richards, R, "*Understanding Statebuilding: Traditional Governance and the Modern State in Somaliland*", Farnham (UK): Ashgate, 2014, pp 117–118

Another aspect of Somaliland's earned sovereignty strategy for recognition is the democratic one, demonstrating widespread popular support for independence. Although it has not conducted a referendum on independence per se, the 2001 constitutional referendum (99.61% turnout, 97.10% "Yes" vote) approved a Constitution in which Article 1 refers to restoration of independence[108].

Finally, the third factor by which Somaliland sustains its earned sovereignty argument is the relative peace and security enjoyed in most of the country since 1997, especially if compared with many other sub-Saharan African countries.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

Somaliland is situated at the Gulf of Aden, near the Bab el-Mandeb sea-lane, an area of passage for almost one-third of the world's shipping. Its location has helped the Somaliland government attract trade and development deals over the last years. The Horn of Africa has also attracted security-related investments in recent years. Djibouti has become a hub for foreign military bases of global and regional powers such as China, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States. Currently there is no third state genuinely interested in unilaterally promoting a *de iure* independence of Somaliland, but this fact does not prevent regional and global actors from engaging with it.

At a regional level, Somaliland has important economic relations with neighboring Ethiopia. A large part of Ethiopian exports are handled via the port of Berbera, since Ethiopia can no longer use Eritrean ports. Despite its friendly relations with Somaliland due to Addis Ababa's role as the home of the African Union (AU), it hesitates to push the issue of recognition, fearing that might divide its members.

Egypt advocates for a united Somalia as it believes this will help it in its fight with its competitor Ethiopia over the use of Nile River basin water, although during the last three years has sought links with Somaliland.

The unresolved Somaliland-Somalia conflict is also influenced by regional dynamics of competition in the Middle East, with the UAE on one hand and Turkey and Qatar on the other playing the most relevant roles. In the case of the UAE, in 2016 Dubai-based DP World signed an agreement with Somaliland to invest up to US$442 million to upgrade and expand Berbera's port. The UAE also agreed to establish a military base in Berbera, to train Somaliland soldiers and police, and to accept Somaliland passports for travel and work visas to the UAE. On the other hand, Qatari and Turkish groups secured contracts to manage the Port of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. Turkey has also played a mediating role, and Somaliland and Somalia did engage in a series of direct talks between 2012 and 2014, many of which were hosted by Turkey, but which achieved no results.

When it comes to the US, it engages and cooperates with Somaliland on security,

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[108] Pegg, S. , "*Somaliland*", in Routledge Handbook on State Recognition, Routledge Handbooks, 2019, p 420

counterterrorism and democratic electoral process. Recently, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 passed by the US senate was an important step in the history of the Republic of Somaliland, as it included important articles that guarantee the consolidation of bilateral relations[109]. Both the US and the UK have both expressed a willingness to recognize Somaliland once its African neighbors do so, but have so far been unwilling to take this step unilaterally, ceding all initiative on the issue to the African Union. For its part, Italy is clearly opposed to the secession of Somaliland, motivated by its economic interests in Somalia and its ex-colonial ties[110].

Another important actor growingly engaged with Somaliland is Taiwan (Republic of China). In July 2020, Somaliland announced it would establish a representative office in Taiwan. In August, Taiwan opened its office in Somaliland which was reciprocated by Somaliland by opening an office in Taiwan on 9 September 2020. This was regarded by Beijing as a threat to its strategic interests in the Horn of Africa, and has reinforced its support and cooperation with Somalia since then.

5. Institutional action

Integrated as part of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somaliland has 19 representative offices around the world. However, these missions do not enjoy formal diplomatic status under the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. They are located in Africa (Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan), North America (US, Canada), Asia (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Republic of China-Taiwan, Yemen, UAE), Europe (Belgium, France, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom), and Oceania (Australia). In turn, there are nine diplomatic missions in Somaliland, namely three Consulates (Djibouti, Ethiopia and Turkey), and four representative or liason offices (UK, Denmark, Kenya, UAE). In addition, the Republic of China (Taiwan) opened in 2020 a representative office in Somaliland. The Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation was established on 18 May 1991 when the people of Somaliland declared independence.

When it comes to international organizations, at a regional level engagement with the African Union (AU) is a key priority in Somaliland's foreign action. The AU sent a fact-finding mission to Somaliland in 2005[111], the recommendations of which urged the AU to take up the issue of recognition. The African Union has not acted accordingly on that report and has played a minor role since then. Somaliland formally applied to join the African Union in 2005, and the application is still pending.

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[109] Gulaid Yusuf Idaan,"Op-Ed: Somaliland's diplomatic efforts", *Horn Diplomat*, January 31st 2023 https://www.horndiplomat.com/2023/01/31/op-ed-somalilands-diplomatic-efforts/

[110] Gulaid Yusuf Idaan,"Op-Ed: Somaliland's diplomatic efforts", *Horn Diplomat*, January 31st 2023 https://www.horndiplomat.com/2023/01/31/op-ed-somalilands-diplomatic-efforts/

[111] African Union Fact Finding Mission to Somaliland - 30th April to 4th May 2005 http://www.somalilandlaw.com/AU_Fact-finding_Mission_to_Somaliland_2005_Resume.pdf

Regarding the UN, in 2020 Somaliland suspended co-operation, banning all UN agencies from operating in its territories and suspending development and humanitarian projects. The trigger for the decision was probably a cooperation agreement signed in October 2020 by the UN and the government of Somalia, which also covered Somaliland. The agreement was described as "an affront on the sovereignty and internal affairs of the Republic of Somaliland" by President Muse Bihi's cabinet[112]. In 2021, Somaliland sent the UN a direct requirement for engagement that would respect its sovereignty[113].

6. The role of the diaspora

The Somaliland diaspora, which according to the International Organization for Migration in 2015 was estimated to be around 650.000 people worldwide, has played a significant role in promoting paradiplomatic activities and initiatives for the recognition of Somaliland as an independent nation, and during the last decades has been actively involved in promoting Somaliland's cause through various initiatives.

These include lobbying foreign governments, organizing conferences, and engaging in cultural and educational exchanges. They have also established cultural and educational exchange programs with universities and institutions around the world to promote Somaliland's culture and history. The Somaliland diaspora has also been involved in economic paradiplomacy by investing in Somaliland's economy and promoting trade and investment between Somaliland and other countries. Regionally, the Somaliland diaspora can be divided into a relatively resourceful group of people residing in Europe (especially in the UK, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries) and North America, and a more marginalized group of Somalis living in neighboring countries like Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Yemen[114].

The Somaliland MFA Diaspora department[115] plays a fundamental role in this field, as it is mandated to strengthen, mobilize, and effectively connect the diaspora to their homeland. It maximizes and supports diaspora returning to Somaliland by guiding both their human and financial resources. It does so through the Somaliland Diaspora Global Network, and activities such as the Annual Somaliland Diaspora Conference[116], of which the 5th Edition was held in

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112 "Why did Somaliland just suspend cooperation with the UN?", *African Arguments,* November 9th 2020
 https://africanarguments.org/2020/11/why-did-somaliland-just-suspend-cooperation-with-the-un/

113 "Somaliland sends the UN engagement expectations demand", *Somali Dispatch*, February 16th 2021
https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-sends-the-un-engagement-expectations-demand/

114 Peter Hansen, "Migrant transfers as a development tool: The case of Somalialand", Econstor, DIIS Working Paper, No. 2004:15 https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/84608/1/DIIS2004-15.pdf

115 Republic of Somaliland Ministry for Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation - Diaspora Department https://mfa.govsomaliland.org/article/diaspora-department

116 The Fifth Somaliland Annual Diaspora Conference 2021 https://sldiasporaconference.com/

September 2021.

From a civil society perspective, the Somaliland Forum[117] drives political and social engagements by the wider diaspora who are important for the development of Somaliland. The Forum started as a discussion group on the Internet. It later developed into an organization that has become involved in Somaliland through collective remittances for development projects and politically motivated activities in both Somaliland and Europe and North America.

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[117] Nisar Majid, with Khalif Abdirahman and Shamsa Hassan, "Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia - Assessing sources, uses and delivery mechanisms", Rift Valley Institute, November 2017 https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/633401530870281332/pdf/Remittances-and-Vulnerability-in-Somalia-Resubmission.pdf

Iraqi Kurdistan

1. Historical overview

Iraqi Kurdistan is an Autonomous Region with broad powers recognized by the 2005 Iraqi Constitution. Prior to constitutional recognition, this situation was achieved de facto during the first Gulf War with the implementation of a UN no-fly zone by the United States, United Kingdom and France[118]. Since then, territorial control has been divided between the country's two main parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which fought in a civil war during the 1990s and maintain the loyalty of the tribal structures in their respective territories.

The 2005 Constitution, enacted after the US-led invasion of Iraq -which Iraqi Kurdish leaders supported-, does not grant the Kurdistan Regional Government control over the entire area with a majority or significant Kurdish population, which leads to structural tension with the central government. The most important of the regions outside Kurdish control is Kirkuk, which the Kurds consider to be its historical and cultural capital and whose economic importance lies in its vast oil reserves. Other important areas outside Kurdish regional Government control include the Diyala and Ninewa provinces.

Prior to the 2005 Constitution and the 1991 no-fly zone, Iraqi Kurds had struggled for their recognition and self-determination. The first notable rebellion took place in 1961, when with the support of Israel and Iran, the Kurdish Democratic Party initiated an armed uprising against the Iraqi State after the unkept promises of autonomy that had been made in the aftermath of the 1958 coup which had overthrown the Hashemite Monarchy and transformed Iraq into a republic. The conflict ended in 1970 with a provisional agreement for the recognition of the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan which the Iraqi government never implemented. As a consequence, the Second Iraqi-Kurdish war erupted in 1974 and ended just one year later with the Iraqi government retaking full control of the Kurdish-populated areas in Iraq.

Despite the setback in 1975, the Kurdish insurgency continued and attained new heights during the Iraq-Iran war of the 1980s. In response, the Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein engaged in a strong arabization campaign and eventually genocide against the Kurdish people[119]. The campaign reached its peak during the 1988 Halabja massacre and went on until the establishment of the no-fly zone in 1991. It is estimated that tens of thousands of Kurdish people were killed or went missing during this genocide.

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[118] UN Doc. S/RES/688 (April 5, 1991)

[119] The Iraqi Cassation Chamber ruled that the events related to the Anfal Campaign constitute a crime of genocide. The ruling is available online at http://www.iraq-iht.org/ar/doc/ihtdf.pdf

2. Internationalization goals

Prior to the recognition of autonomy by the Iraqi Constitution in 2005, the two main Kurdish political parties maintained goals that oscillated between broad autonomy and independence, depending on the time and the historical context. The last occasion when there was a clear attempt at achieving independence was, as in Catalonia, in 2017, taking advantage of a window of opportunity that started from 2014 with the offensive of the jihadist organization "Islamic State", which led the Iraqi government to lose control over large swaths of its territory.

Against that background, the Kurdish leadership -especially that of the KDP party- considered that a window of opportunity for full independence existed. Nevertheless, as we describe below, the incentives of regional and global powers for recognition of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan did not change in spite of ample territorial seizure by the Islamic State in Iraq and the effectiveness of Kurdish forces in combating the operations of the jihadist organization. After the failure to proclaim independence in the wake of the 2017 self-determination referendum, and in view of strong rejection of Kurdish independence by neighboring regional powers and the United States, the Kurdish regional government does not now show a clear intention of pushing for independence in the short-term.

Another reason why Iraqi Kurdistan seems unwilling to pursue independence in the near future is the lack of control over the Kurdish-inhabited provinces that lay outside the constitutional limits of the Kurdish Regional Government. This scenario changed temporarily between 2014 and 2017 due to the takeover by the Kurdish authorities of most of the territories historically claimed by the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the strategic city of Kirkuk (which the Kurdish Regional Government claims as its capital). The Kurds took advantage of the Islamic State offensive that started in June 2014. This jihadist campaign had severely weakened the ability of the Iraqi army to retain control over large parts of its territory, therefore providing an opportunity for the Kurdish Regional Government to take control of the Kurdish territories outside its constitutional borders.

Controlling almost the entire Kurdish inhabited territories provided a strong incentive for the Kurds to seek full independence during the 2014-2017 period, since establishing an independent state would not have entailed giving up claims to the provinces over which the Kurdish Regional Government had no power. However, the loss of control over these territories, including its historically claimed capitaland the re-establishment of the territorial status quo after the 2017 referendum seems to have contributed to altering the incentives of the Kurdish leadership in seeking independence in the short term. Attempts at normalizing relations between the KRG and the Iraqi federal government, such as the recent deal to resume direct oil exports from the KRG through Turkey[120], point in this direction.

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[120] Reuters (2023). "Iraq to ask Turkey to restart northern oil exports after Kurdish deal". Accessible on: https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/iraq-krg-reach-initial-deal-restart-northern-oil-exports-krg-spokesman-2023-04-02/

3. Narrative

The basic approach during the period leading to the 2017 referendum to legitimize the quest for independence is the self-determination of the Kurdish people as a legitimate and remedial cause of secession, to the extent that their long-term security within the Iraqi State could not be guaranteed due to its structural tendency towards persecution and forced Arabization of its national minorities. This argumentation was supported by acts that were deemed to be violations of the Iraqi Constitution, such as centralisation policies, cuts to the budget of the KRG and lack of resources for the KRG Peshmerga militia forces. Moreover, the seizure of large swaths of Iraqi territory by the jihadist organization Islamic State, which was seen as a short-term existential threat to the Kurds, was also a strong motive to justify the need for an independent Kurdish State that could better protect the Kurdish population and keep it away from the recurrent sectarian disputes in Iraq.

This narrative was modulated to appeal to the main regional powers in order to make the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan compatible with their interests. The strategic behavior of the Kurdish regional government towards Turkey was to avoid promoting irredentism in the territory of Turkish Kurdistan and not questioning the territorial integrity of the Republic of Turkey, a fact that was facilitated by the endemic rivalry between the KDP and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which holds the hegemony of Kurdish nationalism in Turkish Kurdistan. This same approach based on offering guarantees of non-irredentism in Kurdish-inhabited territories was also applied to Iran, with whom the PUK party maintains good relations.

As far as Israel is concerned, Iraqi Kurdistan has historically presented itself as a first-order geostrategic asset for the Jewish State. Since the beginning of the first Kurdish-Iraqi war, the financing of the Kurdish Peshmerga allowed Israel to maintain a strong internal insurgency that made it difficult for Iraq to devote its military efforts to attacking the Jewish state, while during the 2014-2017 period the perspective of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan was presented as a geostrategic element of great interest for Israel due to its long border with Iran, presently Israel's main existential enemy.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interests

Turkey is comfortable with the current status quo insofar as the Kurdish Regional Government is not controlled by the PKK -considered by Turkey to be a primary threat to its territorial integrity- and the fact that one of the two main parties in the region, the KDP, maintains an extremely hostile relationship with the PKK and has no pan-Kurdish aspirations. Due to this situation, Turkey has had no problem maintaining profitable commercial relations with the autonomous

Iraqi-Kurdish region[121]. However, Turkey is clearly sided against the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan because this scenario would be highly destabilizing for the country to the extent that, even if the Kurdish authorities in Iraq do not maintain irredentist aspirations, the creation of a Kurdish state southeast of its border would set a dangerous precedent that could further mobilize the fourteen million Kurds living within the Turkish state. It is for this reason that Turkey maintained manifest hostility in relation to the 2017 self-determination referendum, going so far as to carry out military exercises on the border and threatening the Kurdish Regional Government with stopping its export trade in oil -on which its entire economy is based- without depending on Baghdad.

In the case of Iran, and despite the good relations that this country has with the PUK party, the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan is seen as a red line for national security. Aside from the effect that the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan could have on its own Kurdish minority, Tehran assumes that the geopolitical alignment of the new state with Israel would be notable[122] due to long-standing relations between the KDP and the Jewish State. In addition, the border region with Iraqi Kurdistan has critical proximity to areas of the country where most of the country's natural resources, such as gas and oil, are found. Consequently, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, under the command of General Qassem Suleimani, provided support for the federal troops and the Iraqi Shia militias to regain control of the disputed territories under the administration of the Kurdish Regional Government and to prevent the country's independence with the threat of intervening in the constitutionally recognized Kurdish territory if independence was declared, which ultimately did not happen.

As for Israel, it is the only regional power that has shown a clear interest in the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan with the prospect of maintaining good relations, securing affordable access to the massive oil resources located in Iraqi Kurdistan, and above all, use of the border territory with Iran as a base of operations against that country when necessary. The problem for the Kurdish side is that open Israeli support for KRG independence[123] causes Iran to raise a geostrategic red line that strongly incentivizes Tehran to devote as many resources as necessary to prevent Kurdish secession from Iraq, as demonstrated with the Iranian intervention that caused the Kurdish Regional Government to lose control of the Kurdish territory not included in the constitutional territorial delimitation. On the other hand, and unlike Iran, Israel does not have the capacity to directly assist the Kurdish Regional Government in maintaining control over its territory.

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[121] Salim Bahzad Taher and Svetlana Murtuzalieva, "The economic relations of Kurdistan Region (KRG) with Turkey and Russia" (2019).. Accessible a: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342134413_The_economic_relations_of_Kurdistan_Region_KRG_with_Turkey_and_Russia

[122] Behnam Golipour, Iran Wire, "Why is Tehran Scared of an Independent Iraqi Kurdistan?" (2022). Accessible a: https://iranwire.com/en/politics/71469/

[123] Reuters (2017). "Israel endorses independent Kurdish state". Accessible on: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-israel-idUSKCN1BO0QZ

Regarding the United States, despite its traditionally good relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government, Washington was strongly opposed to the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan because it considered the destabilizing potential for the Middle East region to clearly outweigh any geostrategic advantage that could be gained in the struggle to contain Iran's nuclear ascent. In addition, the United States believes that keeping Iraqi Kurdistan as a solid ally within a stable Iraq[124] is more appropriate in order to continue exerting an appropriate level of influence in the country, thus preventing Iraq from fully aligning with the interests of Iran.

5. Institutional action

Among the broad Kurdish Regional Government's competences recognized by the Constitution is external action, with a department of external relations that maintains direct relations with foreign governments. The Kurdish Regional Government maintains representative offices in thirteen countries, distributed among North America (United States), the Middle East, (Turkey, Iran), Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom), Oceania (Australia), as well as a permanent mission to the European Union. On the other hand, there are a total of twenty-nine diplomatic missions from other States located in the capital of the Kurdish Regional Government, Erbil, among which the Consulate General of the United States stands out.

6. The role of the diaspora

There is no significant Iraqi Kurdish diaspora. On the other hand, the diaspora on the Turkish side is very well organized, but since their organizations hold positions close to the PKK, it does not serve the interests of the Kurdish Regional Government.

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[124] Krishnadev Calamir. "Why doesn't the US support Kurdish independence?", The Atlantic (2017). Accessible a: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/us-kurdish-independence/543540/

Scotland

1. Historical overview

Scotland became part of the United Kingdom after the act of Union in 1707. The Scottish nationalist movement began to gather support in the second half of the 20th C. In 1979, the UK government held a referendum on devolution, which would have given Scotland a degree of self-government within the UK. However, the proposal was narrowly defeated. The Scottish National Party (SNP) would begin to build momentum during the nineties. In 1997 under the leadership of Alex Salmond, a second referendum was held which resulted in the establishment of the Scottish Parliament with powers of self-government.

In 2014, Scotland conducted a referendum on independence which resulted in a defeat for the "Yes" campaign, with 45% in favor and 55% against.[125] The issue of Scottish independence resurfaced in 2016 because of Brexit, where a 62% majority of Scottish voters supported the "Remain" option. However, as is widely acknowledged, the "Leave" campaign won in the UK, leading to Scotland's exit from the EU despite its pro-remain stance.[126]

Following the Brexit referendum, the SNP regained momentum under the leadership of Nicola Sturgeon. In 2022, Sturgeon announced her intention to hold a new referendum on Scottish independence in October 2023. Her plans were thwarted by the UK Supreme Court's rejection and a series of internal crises in Scotland. Consequently, Sturgeon resigned in February 2023.

In March 2023, Humza Yousaf succeeded Sturgeon as Primer Minister of Scotland and leader of the SNP.[127] Yousaf has pledged to revive the push for Scottish independence. However, at the moment of writing this report, it seems unlikely that Yousaf will commit to follow through with a unilateral independence referendum without permission of Westminster.

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[125] BBC, "Scotland Decides," September 2014, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/events/scotland-decides/ (accessed April 14, 2023).

[126] BBC. "EU Referendum". June 2016. Available online at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results (Accessed April 14, 2023).

[127] PA Media. "New SNP leader Humza Yousaf voted in Scotland First Minister." The Guardian, March 28, 2023. Accessed April 14, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/28/new-snp-leader-humza-yousaf-voted-in-scotland-first-minister.

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2. Internationalization goals

In 2014, Scottish officials weren't especially concerned about the possibility of lacking international recognition, as the referendum was agreed with Downing Street. Therefore they did not fear being ostracized by the international community and they trusted an ordered transition would unfold. In the document *Scotland's Future,* it was even argued that part of the current properties of the UK diplomatic service would be transferred to an independent Scotland. [128]

Until recently the main goal of the Scottish government officials has been reassuring their international partners of Scotland's commitment to fulfilling its global responsibilities, such as contributing to security as a member of NATO and providing aid for developing countries. While the issue of recognition has not been a top priority, Scottish officials have focused on highlighting the potential benefits of Scottish independence for future partnerships.

Nevertheless, given that the British government seems much less open to granting a second independence referendum, it seems that the SNP will need to recalibrate its international goals. Trying to take a unilateral path to self-determination would make international recognition much more uncertain and integration in the EU much more difficult to achieve.

The difficulties of organizing an independence referendum without agreement with Westminster might have prompted Nicola Sturgeon's resignation. Although it seems unprovable, were Humza Yousaf to follow a unilateral independence strategy, Scotland would need to make securing international recognition one of its priorities. The publication in Spring 2022 of Scotland's new international strategy, the Global Affairs Framework, might be an acknowledgment of the new complex scenario the SNP is facing.[129]

3. Narrative

In the context of post-Brexit UK, Scotland's independence supporters have framed Scottish independence as the opportunity for Scotland to return to the EU. In their engagement with European audiences, they have pushed a narrative of misgovernment in post-Brexit Britain, against which should be contrasted the better managed and pro-EU self-governed Scotland.

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[128] Scottish Government (2013) *Scotland's Future.* Disponible a: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-future/

(accessed April 14, 2023)

[129] McIver, Iain. "The Scottish Government's new approach to its international work." *SPICe Spotlight*, 9 May 2022. Available at: https://spice-spotlight.scot/2022/05/09/the-scottish-governments-new-approach-to-its-international-work/. (Accessed 14 April 2023).

It is important to state that Westminster recognizes Scotland as one of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom. Contrary to other cases explored in this report, Scotland is not currently facing an existential threat to its identity under a policy of forced assimilation by a central government. For instance, while the Scottish accent remains an integral part of Scottish identity, the original languages of Scotland have all but disappeared and do not form the cornerstone of its identity.

Many Scots feel that London has disregarded their desire to remain in the EU and ignored their interests in the negotiation process. On policy grounds, England and Scotland have fundamental differences. While England favors pro-market policies, Scottish society leans towards pro-welfare state policies Thus, the case for Scottish independence is primarily based on arguments related to values of governance and economic policies. In other words, supporters of Scottish independence do so due to the belief that their country would be better governed if it were an independent state rather than seeking to protect its national identity. After Brexit, to this they add the promise of returning to the EU.[130]

The SNP government aims to project a liberal progressive image of Scotland to global audiences. The Global Affairs Framework states that Scotland should portray itself as a "good global citizen" and contribute constructively to addressing global challenges. The Framework sets out the values and principles underpinning Scotland's international work and its prioritization. The government's domestic priorities aim to accomplish the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Through its international work, Scotland aims to support the creation of good, green jobs, reduce child poverty and inequalities, share its policy-making experiences, and learn from others. Scotland's global reputation, connections, and outlook enable it to make a welcomed and valued contribution to the world.[131]

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

Right after Brexit, Scotland aimed to use the strained relationship between Britain and the European Union. Constant clashes marred negotiations for the Brexit agreement, and the resulting deal has been considered by many as far from satisfactory, with numerous unresolved issues, such as the Northern Ireland protocol. However, after the UK-EU deal and the resignation of Boris Johnson, coupled with the UK's involvement in the conflict in Ukraine, tensions between Brussels and London appear to have eased, making Scottish demands of European support for its independence way less appealing. An example is the operationalization of the Northern Ireland protocol through the recent Windsor Framework.

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[130] Sanjaume, Marc. 2021. Independència i Progrés. Barcelona: Saldonar.

[131] Scottish Government. 2022. "Scotland's Global Affairs Framework." Accessed April 14, 2023. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-global-affairs-framework/pages/1/.

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In terms of geopolitics, Scotland has been working to establish ties with the Nordic countries to support the SNP's social model, as well as with the EU. Scotland has also been striving to carve out an independent role within international institutions such as the Nordic Council.

On reading the new global power configurations, the Scottish government has not only targeted the United States but also China in order to gain their support for a future independent Scotland. Canada, a country with a large Scottish descendance has also been one of the priorities of Scotland global engagement.

5. Institutional action

As a devolved nation within the United Kingdom, Scotland does not have independent diplomatic relations with other countries. However the Scottish Government has offices in Beijing, Berlin, Copenhagen, Brussels, Dublin, London, Ottawa, Paris and Washington DC. There are plans to expand the office in Brussels to strengthen relations with the EU, and to open a new office in Warsaw during 2023.

Furthermore, Scotland also strategically utilizes its network of more than 30 Scottish Development International trade and investment offices in 20 countries to promote trade and investment as a political tool to present its separate reality.

Scotland also participates in the work of the UN through the UK's representation and contributes to UN discussions on issues such as climate change, human rights, and international development. Scotland has also expressed an interest in building ties with the Nordic countries and has participated in the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) cooperation format, which is a forum for cooperation between the Nordic countries and the Baltic states.

Scotland's paradiplomatic strategy is geared towards emulating the approach of a sovereign state, as highlighted by Jamie Maxwell's observation that "think like a state, act like a state" has become a Scottish nationalist motto. Scotland places a strong emphasis on its national interest and prioritizes its relations with representatives of sovereign nations over non-state entities.

6. The role of the diaspora

Due to the highly institutionalized approach of the SNP, and the horizon of an agreed secession from the UK, the Scottish Government under the leadership of the SNP has not cultivated a strong grassroots movement in Scotland or among the Scottish diaspora. The political role of the diaspora in its bid for independence has been testimonial.

However, the Scottish government has paid special attention to fostering relations with its diaspora. Regardless of whether Scotland becomes independent or not any time soon, the diaspora can be a source of business opportunities and projection of Scottish identity around the world.[132] The Scottish government has the GlobalScot program which connects successful Scottish business leaders with Scottish companies and entrepreneurs overseas to provide advice and support.[133]

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[132] McDonald, Stuart and Murray, Andrew. 2021. "Scottish Connections (Diaspora) Work: Literature Review". Scottish Government. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/literature-review-scottish-governments-scottish-connections-diaspora-work/pages/6/ (accessed April 14, 2023).

[133] Global Scot. 2023. Retrieved April 14, 2023, from https://www.globalscot.com/home

Catalonia

1. Historical overview

This conflict is closely linked to the international environment, given that the loss of Catalan freedoms and its constitution in 1714 occurred in the context of a European conflict: the War of the Spanish Succession. The contemporary Catalan national liberation movement has a long history, dating back to the late 19th century - early 20th century. In recent years, it has gained renewed momentum, with a surge in support for independence. This resurgence has been fueled by a number of factors, including political, economic, linguistic, and cultural grievances.

The last two decades have been a particularly tumultuous period. In 2006, a new statute of autonomy for Catalonia was approved, which granted the territory greater powers of self-government. However, the statute was subsequently challenged by the biggest Spanish right-wing party, and was partially struck down by the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2010. This decision was seen by many in Catalonia as a violation of their autonomy and a betrayal of the democratic process.

This decision marked a boost for the independence movement and led to a series of mass protests the subsequent years, the creation of a mass grassroots movement, and political moves by the Catalan government, including a non-binding consultation on independence in 2014. On October 1, 2017, a Catalan independence referendum was held in the midst of Spanish police violence. With participation by 2.2 million people (a 43% turnout), "Yes" to independence won with 90% (2,044,038 votes) of the votes cast in the binding referendum. The Spanish authorities responded with a firm hand, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the referendum and threatening legal action against Catalan leaders. They declared the referendum illegal and dissolved the Catalan parliament, jailing several Catalan politicians and leaders on charges of sedition and rebellion. Other leaders went into exile in different European countries. This led to mass protests in Catalonia and a deepening political crisis in Spain.

In December 2017, new regional elections were held in Catalonia which saw pro-independence parties win by a slim majority of seats in the Catalan parliament. However, the Spanish government continued to refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the independence movement and rejected calls for negotiations.

In October 2019, the Spanish Supreme Court sentenced nine Catalan leaders to lengthy prison terms for their role in the 2017 independence referendum. This sparked a new wave of protests in Catalonia, with thousands taking to the streets to demand their release. The issue of Catalan independence remains a contentious issue in Spanish politics, being the most important unresolved territorial conflict in the European Union.

2. Internationalization goals

The current goals of the Catalan pro-independence movement in the international arena are negatively affected by the internal divisions that have characterized it since 2017, and they do not include the achievement of international *de iure* recognition of a political sovereignty that at present does not exist *de facto*. In a similar vein, there is a lack of strategy to project Catalonia abroad as a national reality clearly differentiated from Spain. There is a lack of a shared internal approach on how to proceed with the struggle for self-determination among the political and social actors that until recently played a leading role, that is three political parties (Esquerra, Junts and CUP) and two civic entities (Catalan National Assembly and Omnium Cultural), and the state of relations between them is now highly divisive and often even confrontational. At the same time, there is a growing distance between discourses and political action and facts, and the governing party (Esquerra) has in practice abandoned any disposition to go on with the pro-independence struggle in a unilateral manner.

This division is conveyed to the international goals of the movement, and the interpretations of the political meaning and implications of the October 2017 independence referendum. There is a lowest common denominator among all actors though, and that is the international denunciation of human rights abuses by Spanish authorities against Catalan activists and political leaders.

The current Esquerra government defends that the only possible way to move on is through a self-determination referendum agreed with the Spanish government and authorized by it. This scenario is extremely unlikely, considering Spain's history and political culture with regards to Catalonia. In this sense, Esquerra's government appeals rhetorically to a so-called "international community" to support this endeavor, but not in a practical manner.

Although the October 2017 referendum generated an important international projection and awareness regarding the Catalan independence cause, the doubts, confusion, improvisation and about-turns by the political leaders during and after those weeks generated reputational deterioration abroad, especially when it comes to the credibility and determination of the movement, causing damage that has not yet been reversed.

The Catalan pro-independence movement has not yet reached a level of maturity to be considered as a serious and reliable actor abroad. For this reason, the main goal to be addressed in the mid-long term remains to rebuild its international reputation as a serious, consistent, and determined actor that thinks and operates in the language of power, therefore capable of becoming a state.

3. Narrative

A substantial part of the current narrative of the Catalan pro-independence movement is one

that combines a legal and political approach, to build what is known as "the case of the Catalans" in order to externally legitimize the Catalan push for self-determination, with some sort of legal effect. That is to say, to base the case of self-determination and the independence of Catalonia on democratic principle and the "just cause" for violation of fundamental rights.

These violations of rights[134] include the imprisonment of Catalan civil and political leaders, mass brutality by Spanish riot police against peaceful protesters, prosecution of hundreds of pro-independence activists, banning elected representatives from office, even including Catalan President Quim Torra, the massive use of illegal spyware Pegasus by Spanish secret services to spy on activists and representatives, and a long etcetera.

The decisions of international courts and UN human right bodies may partially limit the capacity of Spanish authorities to exert repressive actions against Catalans, but they will hardly open the door for the recognition of their right to self-determination, as despite being recognized as a fundamental principle of international law by the UN Charter or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, this is a highly political issue which depends mainly on actual facts, power relations, and political realities on the ground. Besides, an approach that appeals for self-determination as a measure of collective protection in what can be considered as a sort of "remedial secession" to defend the rights of the local population is highly unlikely to succeed, as even in cases of mass killings of civilians or genocide there are no established international legal mechanisms to implement it.

On the whole, these actions also seek to erode the international reputation of Spain as a so-called democratic state, and thus make the Catalan cause for independence more understandable and acceptable abroad. The fact that Spanish authorities work hard to oppose and combat these initiatives from a legal and political point of view indicates that to some extent they consider them harmful for the interests of the Spanish state, therefore proving a certain degree of effectiveness.

4. Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

Catalonia is located in the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula, bordering France and the Mediterranean Sea. It is a region with a rich cultural and historical heritage, as well as significant economic and strategic importance. From a geographic perspective, Catalonia's location has historically made it an important crossroads between Europe and the Mediterranean. Its coastal location has given it access to important trade routes and ports, making it a hub for commerce and maritime activity. The Port of Barcelona in particular is one of the busiest ports in the EU in terms of cargo[135].

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[134] Spain versus Catalonia: inventory of a national persecution in the EU
https://ruleoflaw.cat/

[135] "Top container ports in the EU 2021", *Shiphub* https://www.shiphub.co/top-container-ports-in-the-eu-2021/

Catalonia's location, economic strength, and cultural and historical significance make it a geostrategically important region for Spain and Europe as a whole. From a geopolitical point of view, the Iberian Peninsula is part of the US sphere of influence on one hand, and of France and Germany on the other. Due to the hardening of Europe's geopolitical environment, during the last years Spain has gained importance as a strategic ally and member of the EU and NATO, which makes it less likely that any of these three powers may somehow be inclined to support Catalonia's push for independence at the present moment. Spain is also a key partner for the US and France's interests in the Maghreb and North Africa, and Germany is not interested in the destabilization of the fourth economy of the Union.

There are several small European countries, such as Ireland, Slovenia, Belgium, Hungary or the Baltic countries[136], and others outside the EU such as Switzerland or Iceland, that in the past have signaled either some degree of support for Catalan self-determination, or criticism and concern for Spain's actions repressing it. The current hardening of the European security environment due to growing hostilities with Russia, and Spain's participation in some key NATO deployments in Eastern Europe, now make this less likely to occur.

Outside Europe, Venezuela is the country that has most openly criticized Spain's repression of Catalonia. Progressive governments such as Chile, Colombia or Mexico, may be willing to raise their voices from a human rights perspective if the situation implodes once again.

Israel and Japan are two actors that could somehow benefit from Catalan independence, but they will hardly express any opinion in this sense in the current scenario. China is aligned with Spain in this issue, as it upholds the principle of territorial integrity as one of its main guiding values of its foreign action, always with an eye on Taiwan, but also on Xinjiang and Tibet regions. This is precisely one of the reasons that explains why Taiwanese authorities have on some occasions expressed sympathy for Catalan pro-independence leaders[137].

5. Institutional action

The Catalan government has sought to promote its own international profile by establishing delegations in other countries, particularly those with significant Catalan communities in Europe, the US and Latin America. Now there are around 20 delegations abroad[138], all of which are integrated in the structure of the Catalan Ministry for Foreign Action and the European Union, including three in Africa and two in Asia. The Catalan government also has a network of dozens of trade and tourism offices around the world, but so far they have never been conceived by the

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[136] "The Prime Minister of Latvia does not see an issue in recognising Catalonia if it reaches independence in a "legitimate" way", *CatalanNews,* September 13th 2013
https://www.catalannews.com/politics/item/prime-minister-of-latvia-recognising-catalonia-independence

[137] Tweet by the ROC (Taiwan) Twitter account, May 20th 2020 https://twitter.com/MOFA_Taiwan/status/1263083444482928641

[138] Catalan Ministry for Foreign Action and European Union - Catalan Government delegations abroad https://exteriors.gencat.cat/en/ambits-dactuacio/afers_exteriors/delegacions_govern/index.html

authorities as tools to internationalize the struggle for independence. There are 94 foreign consulates in Barcelona, Catalonia's capital, being one of the cities in the world that hosts the greatest number, right after Hong Kong, New York, Los Angeles and Hamburg.

The Catalan government used to carry out actions of international denunciation of Spain's repression through some of its delegations abroad, with a strong focus on human rights violations. These have vanished almost completely recently, hand in hand with the attempts at "normalization" of relations between Catalan and Spanish governments within the Spanish Constitutional framework.

When it comes to international organizations, the EU, and especially the European Parliament, has been an institutional platform where the Catalan issue is most often raised, especially through the five Catalan pro-independence MEPs that are represented. To a lesser extent, the Council of Europe, especially its Parliamentary Assembly[139], and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe[140], have been platforms to push initiatives and debate to denounce Spain's repression. Since 2019, the UN Human Rights Committee[141] as well as several UN Human Rights mechanisms have expressed several opinions and published decisions condemning or expressing concern on Spain's repressive actions, and calling for investigations.

6. The role of the diaspora

There are currently 357.011 Catalans officially residing abroad[142], a total of half a million according to the Catalan government[143], a diaspora population that is especially significant in France, the UK, the US, Germany, and Latin America. The main pro-independence organization under which Catalan activists abroad are organized is the Catalan National Assembly, through its Foreign Assemblies. At the present time there are around 20 that are active (around 20 non active)[144], especially in the countries where the diasporas are larger. They carry out paradiplomatic activities

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[139] "Council of Europe committee makes forceful demands to Spain on Catalan repression", *El Nacional*, June 3rd 2021
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and initiatives, engaging with local authorities, NGOs and media in order to raise awareness on the Catalan cause, and also organizing protests, conferences and seminars with the same purpose. Other Catalan pro-independence entities organized abroad are the Committees for the Defense of the Republic, a mirror of those existing on Catalan soil. Catalan parties also have some minor presence abroad, especially the CUP. Finally, aimed at promoting and preserving Catalan identity and the rights of Catalans abroad, the International Federation of Catalan Entities (FIEC, in Catalan) brings together dozens of *Casals Catalans* ("Catalan Houses") and other Catalan cultural associations around the world, driven by their respective local Catalan diasporas.

Conclusions

Internationalization goals

- **International recognition.** International recognition as a sovereign state by United Nations member states remains the most common and main objective of de facto states, as a goal by itself and because it plays an important role in being able to become a member of the United Nations, especially if recognized by part or all the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The cases analyzed show how, in order to reach a fully international recognition, the optimum scenario is to obtain recognition by powers with opposed interests, which gains even more importance considering current dynamics of growing global confrontation between powers.

- **Target-oriented paradiplomacy.** A key trait of a successful paradiplomatic strategy has been target-oriented engagement focusing first on individual states, as the cases of Slovenia and Kosovo show, developing the relationships in a progressive manner, and finding common points with regards to foreign policy with the country recognition is sought from.

- **Engagement without recognition.** In cases in which recognition is not guaranteed and may take years or even decades to happen, engagement without recognition, that is, to engage with third states through sectoral agreements, especially in economic, development, technological, cooperation and/or defense areas, seeking to attract foreign direct investment and foreign assistance, is an essential tool for defending national interests as a de facto entity (Somaliland), and/or in order to guarantee a favorable de facto status quo, by securing the protection of the self-governing by third powers (ROC-Taiwan), and eventually to create more favorable conditions and incentives for a *de iure* recognition by third states.

- **Territorial control.** The establishment of parastatal structures that allow total or partial control over the territory in the moment immediately after the declaration of independence is a goal in itself as well as a *sine qua non* means to achieve international recognition and/or engagement, as the cases of Slovenia and Israel show.

- **Credibility and strategic unity.** To seek and build credibility for the case has proven to be an aim in itself, as a basic factor that determines success or failure in trying to achieve other ends at an international level, especially third parties' support. In a similar vein, internal disagreements over strategy and tactics often affect the main objective of an internationally recognized emancipation. In the case of the Irish, they struggled on whether to do it progressively or all and once, as well as when it comes to the means, either peaceful or violent.

Narrative

- **De facto earned sovereignty.** The claim for international recognition is above all based on earned sovereignty, when a state-like entity has achieved effective control over a territory and population.

- **National discourse and multifactorial grievances**. The baseline argument for self-determination is in most cases historical, political and/or economic grievances. In a similar vein, it is paramount to highlight those aspects that are the backbone of a society and its collective national identity (language, traditions, literature, national culture, etc.) arguing the need for self-determination and sovereignty as an instrument to preserve, protect and promote them.

- **Democracy as a useful tool.** Demonstrating widespread popular support for independence, and emphasizing the democratic values present in the society and form of government, is also a useful argument as part of an international recognition and/or engagement strategy, as the cases of Taiwan, Somaliland and Slovenia show.

- **Human rights breaches and remedial secession.** The right to self-determination as a "remedial secession", in cases of past or present oppression, and structural and massive human rights violations, or the potential risk, has been framed with several degrees of intensity as an element of the international narrative to gain support abroad, for instance in Slovenia, Israel, Iraqi Kurdistan and Somaliland. The Catalan pro-independence movement has also used human rights violations suffered as a way to make the Catalan cause for independence more understandable and acceptable abroad.

- **Factors of stability**. Most of the cases analyzed show a type of projection abroad in ways that make clear they will not be destabilizing factors for the international system if they do achieve independence. In other words, seeking to align with states with common foreign policy interests rather than with pro-independence movements from all over the world.

- **Potential third parties' interest.** Showcasing the potential benefits of future partnerships for third parties is another line of argument. Scotland showing a pro-EU stance versus the post-Brexit United Kingdom, therefore being more appealing for several EU member states individually as well as the EU as an international organization, is one case that exemplifies this point.

- **Best practices in governance.** Some cases portray themselves as examples of good practice from a point of view of democratic system, good governance or progressive policies, projecting a sort of soft power. Scotland makes the point of its pro-welfare state policies in opposition to the UK's pro-market oriented policies, Taiwan portrays itself as a

liberal democracy in contrast with mainland China's authoritarianism, whereas Somaliland argues its functioning governing institutions in contrast with Somalia as a failed state.

- **Former colonial status.** In the case of former colonies, the separate colonial status argument is used in favor of international recognition, as is the case of Somaliland and its claim over the territorial borders of the former British protectorate of Somaliland.

Geostrategic environment and exogenous interest

- **Maximizing geography.** Self-awareness of geographic location and geostrategic importance and assets is a key factor to maximize possibilities of third parties' interest and engagement, ideally by becoming an actor of importance to regional or world powers. This can be applied in the form of location of strategic defense or transport infrastructure, but also when it comes to commerce and/or migration routes.

- **Exploitation of global and regional competition.** Most of the cases analyzed have explored, analyzed and maximized regional and/or global dynamics of competition, as Taiwan does by using in its interest the growing competition between China and the US and many of its allies. Similarly, Scotland strengthened ties with the EU exploiting the strained Britain-EU relationship.

- **Momentum and mainstream narratives.** Using momentum and contemporary international narratives can potentially play in one's favor. Ireland made use of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points -which included the people's right to self-determination- to reinforce its cause, even when those were not aimed at Ireland's case (note that Ireland did not convince President Wilson).

- **Modification of external incentives through *fait accompli*.** Promoting the idea that the cost of maintaining state unity at all costs is greater than accepting independence has proven to be a paramount factor. That means establishing a '*fait accompli*' on the ground that is impossible to ignore in order to alter the status quo ex ante, and therefore the incentives of third parties with regards to the conflict. This also applies when it comes to the possibility of third-party mediation.

Institutional Action

- **International structures of representation.** Prior to independence recognition, the establishment of diplomatic or paradiplomatic structures to engage with powers that are deemed to be a priority has proven to be effective, as Slovenia and Israel did, including by strategically engaging with key officials of those powers that are most open to considering support for independence and can influence the stance of state institutions

on this matter. Representative institutions abroad with no formal diplomatic status can contribute to this goal. For instance, this is the case of the Scottish Development International trade and investment offices, which promote trade but also showcase Scotland's separate reality to others. In fact, promoting trade and investments from other countries can also make certain powers more open to consider recognizing independence, as the case of Slovenia with regard to Germany shows, or to openly engage without formal recognition, as it is the case of Taiwan and Somaliland with most countries.

- **Non-diplomatic representation.** In those cases where de facto sovereignty is not recognized by a substantial number of states, it is good practice to establish a network of non-diplomatic ranked representative offices in countries that do not recognize independence, like the Taiwanese paradiplomatic institutions that try to keep a diplomatic-like protocol in their events and meetings, therefore manifesting their nature as representatives of a people and a state.

- **International human rights bodies.** Creating a "human rights case" to strengthen the legitimacy of the cause for self-determination by denouncing human rights violations before international bodies has proven several degrees of effectiveness. For instance, since 2019, the UN Human Rights Committee, as well as several UN Human Rights mechanisms, have issued opinions and decisions condemning or expressing concern on Spain's repressive actions against the Catalan independence movement, and calling for investigations.

- **Pragmatism and sense of statehood.** Successful strategies of institutional action require thinking like a sovereign state and acting like one. Prioritizing relations with independent states rather more intensively than with fellow independence movements has proven essential, especially when it comes to convincing more reticent powers that the establishment of a new state will not set a strong precedent that other independence movements can use.

The role of diaspora

- **Funding initiatives and public diplomacy.** Diaspora can be a useful asset in terms of contributing to the funding of the independence movement and promoting public diplomacy actions that help gain support from the public opinions of the states where the diaspora is based.

- **Cultural and educational soft-power projection.** In a similar vein, the diaspora can potentially play an important role when it comes to the establishment of cultural and educational exchange programs where possible, which can help in improving and

framing a positive international image of the country. In this vein, the Somaliland diaspora has successfully played a significant role in promoting exchange programs with universities and institutions around the world in order to promote Somaliland's culture and history as a separate reality.

- **Political pro-independence advocacy.** To strengthen, mobilize and connect the diaspora to the independence movement has proven to be a vital aspect of a successful strategy. For instance, Israel actively mobilized the diaspora prior to its independence -and continues to do so nowadays- through the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization. The Somaliland Forum drives political and social engagements by the wider diaspora, which are important to the development of Somaliland.

- **Individual and small scale actions do matter**. The political capitalization of the diaspora has proven effective even if it is small, as was the case of Slovenia and its tiny diaspora community in Germany that sought support for independence there, or similarly, building a strategy that is tailored to the diaspora, as Kosovo did.

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