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Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu

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Supervisor: Eiki Berg
Professor of International Relations
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu

Opponent: Fiona McConnell
Professor of Political Geography
University of Oxford

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INTRODUCTION

"Unofficially we are official, but officially we are unofficial". This thought-provoking statement was articulated by the Executive Director of a Taiwanese civil society organisation (CSO) during our conversation in Taipei City in late 2022. The statement was chosen as this dissertation's opening line as it concisely captures the complexities that CSOs across contested statehood areas face in engaging internationally. Although commonly considered as lightweight actors in International Relations (IR) and international affairs, domestic CSOs of de facto states operate inside and outside diplomatic realms, regularly 'bumping' into core statehood questions such as sovereignty, legitimacy and recognition. This exploratory comparative study applies qualitative data analysis and process-tracing to analyse interviews and website data, focusing on 45 domestic CSOs across three non-UN members: Kosovo, Palestine, and Taiwan.

The topic choice and research puzzle are rooted in personal experience, from my time as a researcher in a local CSO in Kosovo. In November 2019 the Consulate General of Kosovo in Strasbourg contacted a local CSO in Prishtina for support in voicing concerns to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), on a nominated Rapporteur for Kosovo. The Consulate presented evidence that the nominated Rapporteur was partial, due to previous problems with justice he had faced while serving in post-conflict Kosovo. The Consulate argued that his potential election would violate human rights standards, and sought support from some domestic CSOs to raise awareness among PACE Parliamentarians, and build pressure on Council of Europe (CoE) mechanisms. The CSO contacted by the Consulate then reached out to another CSO (my then workplace), which enjoyed connections within the CoE. Together, the two organisations drafted an open letter that was circulated and signed by nearly 50 Kosovo CSOs. This letter, sent to CoE institutions and members and made public in digital platforms, presented evidence about the past of the nominated Rapporteur, aiming to influence PACE's voting process, thus arguing against his election. While the candidate was not elected by PACE, the letter's role remained uncertain. This event sparked my curiosity about the roles that small actors such as domestic CSOs in contested statehood contexts play in international interactions and diplomacy, and the extent to which existing knowledge in International Relations (IR) covers it. At the time I asked myself whether such an activity by a group of Kosovo CSOs could have any real influence, as it was targeting a multilateral body where Kosovo itself lacks membership. A similar yet wider question is at the core of this dissertation – that is, in what ways do civil society organizations in de facto states engage internationally, and what are the outcomes of their actions for de facto states foreign reach?

Sitting in obscurity for several decades, IR scholarship has since the 1990s displayed increased interest in studying CSOs. Literature has shown that what are commonly referred to as 'civil society organisations' or 'non-governmental organisations' have existed in world politics in different forms for several centuries.

The Royal Society, established in 1660 in London, has ever since been engaged in fostering cross-border scientific collaboration (Poliakoff, 2015). Another notable example is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an international humanitarian organisation which continues to operate since its foundation in the 1860s. In some instances, the roots of existing states might be found in the work of such organisations, for example, the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel were very active in the 19th and first part of the 20th century in mobilising international support and coordinating efforts for the creation of the state of Israel.

The Article 71 of the United Nations (UN) Charter in 1945 codified the involvement of CSOs in world politics, establishing a framework for the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to engage in consultations with what were called 'non-governmental organisations'. The UN's approach was mirrored by other multilateral bodies established in subsequent years and decades, and CSOs inclusion in multilateral and inter-governmental arrangements today represents a widespread norm. The post-1990s era marked with forces of globalisation, democratic transitions, and expansion of the Liberal International Order (LIO) bolstered pluralisation of governance, both nationally and internationally. This period saw a proliferation of CSOs across the globe, especially in newly democratised states, with concepts like global governance and global civil society asserting CSO roles in reinforcing normative ideas. It was then that the study of CSOs in IR gained traction. In the mid-1990s the ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 eased guidelines for the accreditation and participation of domestic CSOs in UN activities (Götz, 2019). The revision of UN rules ostensibly served as a catalyst to further augment interaction between domestic CSOs and international organisations (IOs) and other states.

Nowadays many CSOs maintain an extensive presence across issue areas, international institutions and regimes. Being widely accepted as 'stakeholders' in tackling contemporary common challenges and regulating global governance arrangements, CSOs are found not only inside the Western-led liberal international order, but also inside non-Western intergovernmental initiatives. One such instance is BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), where CSOs engagement is regulated through the BRICS Civil Forum. As such, even multilateral intergovernmental forums of the non-liberal international order have come to recognise that purely state-centred configurations may not be self-sufficient in addressing global challenges. Since CSO inclusion can be spotted across competing international orders, then it may be argued that it has become an established feature of international politics.

CSOs try to influence policy and decision-making through lobbying and advocacy, capacity-building, sharing expertise, knowledge production and monitoring activities, and engage in service-delivery and international development. Lacking coercive resources, CSOs often utilise naming-and-shaming campaigns, aiming to mobilise support through transnational awareness raising to induce policy change (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). While collaboration is evident, the state-CSO relationship is also characterised by friction. In recent years a state pushback has

yielded a wave of restrictions a global level, shrinking the CSO space across continents. In illiberal democracies and authoritarian regimes, CSOs are increasingly facing legal restrictions and being delegitimised as 'foreign agents' of other governments. Despite such counter-globalisation forces, CSOs are not likely to wither away in the near future, hence academic investigation is warranted.

This brief discussion on CSOs sets the stage for introducing the second object of interest: de facto states. De facto states represent independent entities which display empirical statehood, despite a lack of universal bilateral recognition and UN membership. Usually born in the wake of violence, de facto states are associated with frozen conflicts that influence regional and global balances of power. Notwithstanding the temporal and spatial diversity encountered within the population of de facto states, these entities generally represent small, but inherent units of the UN-led international order. As de facto states face partial recognition and limited presence abroad, international ties represent critical channels for legitimacy. Given that establishing full diplomatic relations might sometimes be out of reach, informal ties tend to gain prominence, as exemplified by the engagement without recognition framework (Cooley & Mitchell, 2010). In other words, framing relations as 'non-political' exchanges in the absence of formal recognition broadens the informal channels for de facto states' external interactions, and bolsters communication with the international society (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018).

In order to understand the international engagements of CSOs in de facto states, we must also consider how these practices are positioned in relation to diplomatic theory. Diplomacy, practiced and studied as a state-exclusive activity for several centuries, is becoming more open and diversified through multi-actor formulas and multi-level frameworks. Notions such as citizen diplomacy, city diplomacy or celebrity diplomacy that have permeated both diplomatic studies and political discourse would be difficult to fathom a few decades ago. Nation states have both contributed and adjusted themselves to such changes, therefore CSOs nowadays represent both targets and partners of Foreign Ministries and Embassies. The takeover of diplomatic functions by non-state actors, such as CSOs, can be both state assigned, and self-claimed. Whilst inclusion of CSOs does not equate to a removal of states from their primary position, it carries potential to complement its role, thereby rendering diplomatic practices more nuanced. The inclusion of domestic CSOs in foreign policy processes has been reported even in authoritarian states, such as China (Ketels, 2023).

Scholarship reports the engagement of de facto state domestic CSOs in fields such as track II diplomacy, public diplomacy, and foreign aid. Taiwanese CSOs (TCSOs) are reported to be involved in foreign aid in different continents, offering relief and development assistance in non-recognising states (T.-C. Lin & Lin, 2017); utilising digital platforms for reaching out to foreign audiences, by implementing a form of new public diplomacy (Nanda, 2023, p. 310); and facilitating 'meaningful participation' in different multilateral organisations and settings (P.-K. Chen, 2017; W.-C. Lee, 2012). Literature accounts have depicted Taiwanese think-tanks as partners to Taiwanese institutions in the implementation of the

New Southbound Policy[1] (Rasool & Ruggiero, 2022). In the Palestinian sector, the once-dominant wave of CSO research in conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the aftermath of the Oslo process appears to have waned. More recent accounts report how Palestinian CSOs (PCSOs) interact with the UN human rights system in working to flag the violations of Israel (Falk et al., 2023); attempting to amass the support of foreign publics to boycott Israeli businesses (Awad, 2021); and engaging in public diplomacy (Natil, 2023).

The combination of literature strands on CSOs, de facto states and diplomacy establishes that the informal ties of de facto states are vital to bolster international legitimacy, and that domestic CSOs play a role in there, also confirming that diplomatic practices are increasingly becoming multidimensional. However, research on international engagements of CSOs of de facto states has either focused on a singular thematic field of action (i.e. public diplomacy, foreign aid, conflict resolution); a single de facto state; a single or handful of CSOs within the same setting; or in mixture with CSOs from confirmed states. As existing research appears limited in reach and variety, there is a lack of deeper accounts on how CSO international engagements take shape across different contexts of contested statehood, in interplay with their own foreign policy institutions, international actors, and international society at large.

The research gap is, in many ways, shaped by the specific combination of the profile and features of the objects of interest explored in this dissertation. The specificities of de facto states, due to non-UN membership, statehood contestation, and asymmetrical diplomatic battles with former host (adversary) states render CSO operating conditions unique. Settings where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and official institutions struggle to establish official state-to-state relations, or participate equally in all multilateral bodies, offer a promising lane to investigate the roles of domestic CSOs internationally. Pegg (2017) writes that more comparative work and an enlarged focus on the civil society sector within de facto states would improve our conceptual understanding, also potentially having real-life implications, by increasing potential for engagement with these units. CSOs are considered one of the main actors of the civil society sector, or to paraphrase T. R. Davies (2019a, p. 7) no issue-area of IR can be fully comprehended without considering the role of CSOs.[2] Heeding such appeals, this dissertation seeks to fill a gap in the literature by delving deeper into the international engagements of domestic CSOs through a wide-ranging and in-depth investigation, located across several contexts of de facto statehood.

At the methodological level, this study pursues a qualitative comparative research design. While Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan represent the research cases, the selected CSOs represent the analytical units. The applied methods combine qualitative research methods and process-tracing, through an analysis of primary

[1] The New Southbound Policy (NSP) is a flagship policy of Taiwan, focusing on economic and trade collaboration and regional connectivity with 18 countries.

[2] In this dissertation I use the term civil society organisations (CSOs) instead of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This choice is elaborated in subsequent chapters.

data such as interviews with CSO representatives, an original dataset constructed with CSO activity website materials, and supplementary secondary materials. Although the three cases contain temporal and spatial diversity, they share the absence of UN membership, coupled with partial bilateral recognition, and limited multilateral membership and diplomatic presence. Pursuing commonalities and differences within-case and cross-case, the study observes a total of 45 CSOs, with 15 CSOs for each case.

The thesis displays how across the de facto state category, CSOs end up intertwining sectorial issue areas stemming from common global challenges alongside national questions such as statehood and sovereignty. By so doing, CSOs emerge internationally as agents that promote the statehood credentials of their polity, combat sovereignty claims of the former host (adversary) state, and augment communication of de facto states with international actors, organisations and regimes. Secondly, the dissertation advances four pathways under which domestic CSOs in de facto states engage internationally. These pathways reveal the international engagement of CSOs as shaped by systemic factors (opportunity structures enabled by international actors), domestic factors (programmes of de facto states' foreign ministries), and organisational factors (CSO willingness and capacity). On the subject of (dis)engagement between CSOs and their own foreign policy institutions, such as the MFAs, the thesis distinguishes a spectrum of five categories, ranging from long-term partnership to competitive narratives on how core foreign policy issues directly tied to state-making must be approached. To depict some of the international activities of CSOs in de facto states I propose the notion of 'CSO diplomacy'. CSO diplomacy is considered to supplement the interaction capacity of de facto states with the external environment, be it because of, or in parallel to, official foreign policy mechanisms. Finally, the dissertation argues that due to permissive conditions such as additional spaces and evolving modes of action, including the digitalisation of international relations, de facto state CSOs consistently generate transmissions that both promote and contest sovereignty related institutions of international society.

Starting from empirical foundations, this dissertation makes a contribution to the conceptualisation of CSOs and de facto states, through coalescing these two analytical categories, namely placing de facto states into the study of domestic CSOs, and situating domestic CSOs within contexts of de facto statehood. At the methodological level this study consists of the first in-depth academic inquiry that examines the *international* engagements of domestic CSOs in several non-UN contested polities, facing statehood problems in international recognition, participation and representation. The study provides an original empirical contribution, by presenting new evidence from two streams of primary and secondary data, namely a dataset comprised of over 2300 articles scrapped by CSO websites, and 40 semi-structured interviews conducted for the study. Finally, the conceptualisation generated from the dissertation's empirical materials not only makes a contribution to the categorisation of domestic CSOs and de facto states in IR, but due to engaging with diplomatic theory, it also offers a conceptual contribution to the study of diplomatic actorness of domestic CSOs in world politics.

This thesis is comprised of six main chapters, in addition to the Introduction and Conclusion. **Chapter 1** sets out the conceptual framework underpinning this study. By engaging with IR literature on (domestic) CSOs, de facto states and diplomacy, I explore the extent to which scholarship has untied international engagements of CSOs across the de facto state category. The chapter demonstrates that informal international interactions inside de facto states have not been thoroughly researched, and comparative studies on international engagements of domestic CSOs remain restrained. This way, Chapter 1 offers the conceptual framework, lays out key literature debates, makes the case for the research gap at the intersection of the study of CSOs, de facto states, and diplomatic theory, and offers the working definitions underpinning the dissertation. **Chapter 2** presents the research design of the project by elaborating case selection, selection of CSOs, data collection techniques, data analysis methods, ethical considerations and methodological limitations. This study combines three different streams of data, including website data and interviews, which were conducted both online and through travel stays in Kosovo and Taiwan during 2022–2023. Conducting fieldwork in the Palestinian territories was not feasible due to a range of external factors which will be elaborated on later. The study also utilises supplementary secondary materials, such as documents, reports and media news. The dissertation methods include qualitative analysis methods (namely two-level analysis and qualitative analysis of interviews) and process-tracing. For reasons to be elaborated in the chapter, I chose 2008 as a starting date for analysis proper of CSO international engagements.

Chapter 3 outlines background information for each of the three cases, pertaining to their statehood contestation. The chapter also helps to comprehend developments in the three CSO sectors that occurred before the start date of the analysis. The research question of **Chapter 4** is: what is the scope and scale of the international activities of CSOs in de facto states (Kosovo, Palestine, Taiwan)? By employing a qualitative two-level analysis based on keywords scraped from website articles of CSOs, I conduct a comparative mapping exercise to compare the scope (fields of action) and scale (type of activities) of CSO international work, both within-case and cross-case. For each three cases two typologies on scope and scale are generated, resulting in the creation of six typologies in total. The chapter concludes by drawing cross-case comparisons that highlight areas of similarities and specificities within, and between, the contexts. Because the analysis is conducted by employing desk-research, thereby without direct interaction with CSOs, the chapter is labelled as the 'outside view'.

Chapter 5 focuses on underlying processes that drive CSOs international engagements, thus connecting them to core questions of the international system such as statehood and sovereignty. The second research question is: how do CSOs in de facto states become engaged internationally – (and how can the relationship(s) between CSOs and de facto state institutions be conceptualised)? Using qualitative analysis of interviews and process-tracing, four theorised pathways under which domestic CSOs become engaged internationally are constructed, which are then probed on a set of empirical examples. The four pathways are

termed as follows: a) Dyadic Formula (CSO – De Facto States Government Engagement); b) International Access and Participation; c) International Access and Participation, Plus the Dyadic Formula; d) Unilateral CSO Action. Borrowing from existing literature and supplemented with my own additions deriving from empirical analysis, the (dis)engagement of CSOs with their own foreign policy institutions, is presented through a five-dimensional spectrum: Coordination, Cooperation, Partnership, Complementarity and Competition. As Chapter 5 integrates insights from interviews with CSO representatives in the analysis, I label this part of the analysis the 'inside view'.

Chapter 6 poses the following question: what are the outcomes of de facto states' CSO international actions – (and how can they be understood in relation to IR theory)? This chapter is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section outlines dimensions documenting how CSOs enforce their actorness internationally, also making additions to the external interaction capacity of de facto states. In the second sub-section, I propose to conceptualise the international engagements through the notion of 'CSO diplomacy'. Drawing from diplomatic theory, I outline a set of six main diplomatic functions that de facto state CSOs are registered to fulfil as part of their international engagements. In the third sub-section, I discuss the shifting nature of the international order, manifested with additional spaces and emerging modes of action at the disposal of domestic CSOs as units of world politics to enlarge their international agency. Taking advantage of newly emerging spaces and modes of interventions, de facto state CSOs generate transmissions that both reproduce and contest primary statehood related institutions of international society, such as sovereignty, self-determination, non-intervention and territorial integrity and territoriality. Rather than calling for their abolition, CSO efforts appeal for the exact opposite, thus reinterpreting the meaning of these institutions and supporting their alignment with the state-building project and state recognition agenda. As Chapter 6 establishes communication between the empirical analysis and conceptualisation outputs of the dissertation with broader conversations in the IR discipline, I term this part of the analysis the 'zoom out' exercise. Finally, the Conclusion offers a general summary of the dissertation and lays out potential future research paths.

CHAPTER 1.
Conceptualising Civil Society Organisations, De Facto States and Diplomacy in International Relations Theory

This chapter presents the literature debates underpinning this dissertation, the gap it seeks to address, and provides key conceptual definitions for the thesis. The key objects of inquiry for the dissertation are civil society organisations, de facto states and diplomacy. The chapter also interacts with knowledge production with regard to other themes that are relevant for this dissertation, pertaining to theories of state sovereignty, state recognition, political authority, and foreign policy. The theoretical discussions highlight wider transformations of international relations literature, namely the interactions between state and non-state realms in the post-1945 international order, constructed inside and around the UN system. By delving deeper into how international relations theory has dealt with questions surrounding the international engagement of domestic CSOs, the existence of de facto states in international society, as well as linkages to the business of diplomacy, the chapter sets the stage for analysing the international engagements of CSOs of de facto states, but also interactions that non-UN contested polities may cultivate with the external environment via the 'CSO channel'.

1.1 Tracing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in International Relations

What are commonly now referred to as civil society organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have existed in practice under different forms for several centuries.[3] As Martens (2002, p. 272) reports "before the dissemination of the word "NGOs" became solidified through UN practice, authors also employed other expressions". Thus, in the research conducted in the pre-WWII period various references emerge in relation to international CSOs in Western states, perhaps the most prominent being 'private international associations'. Interestingly, in the beginning of the 20th century there were also attempts to organise these efforts in different countries through an established organisation named the Union of International Associations (UIA), which was founded in 1907 and based in Brussels (T. R. Davies, 2017). The UIA, which is still active, represents the first global organisation aiming to channel cross-border action by CSOs, established to facilitate cooperation between international and transnational organisations in different countries, as well as for purposes of data collection and documentation. Moreover, UIA founders sought to establish a global confederation

[3] I refer to the term 'non-governmental organisation' only in instances of citations and usage by other authors or institutions.

of such organisations, therefore, tentatively placing UIA at the centre of a hierarchical organization, a goal which ultimately failed (T. R. Davies, 2017, p. 900). Lewis (2009, p. 1059) asserts that in one of the events organised by UIA, namely "at the World Congress of International Associations in 1910, there were 132 international associations represented, dealing with issues as varied as transportation, intellectual property rights, narcotics control, public health issues, agriculture and the protection of nature".

The League of Nations foresaw international associations to play a limited, but still interactive role with the organisation, whereby the Article 25 of the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919) stipulated that "[t]he Members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and co-operation of duly authorised voluntary national Red Cross organisations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world". Some time later White (1933) reported the existence of a wide range of what he called 'private international associations', operating across fields that concerned human beings, as opposed to the predominant ideas of national interests represented by states. These findings support the claim that the emergence of the CSOs as actors of world politics has deeper roots preceding the UN-based international order, with a proliferation that can be identified at the turn of the 20th century. However, one of the related dimensions in these early conversations appears to be its Eurocentrism – not only were headquarters of these organisations mostly based in European states, whilst claiming attachment to ideas of 'internationalism', but moreover, the research conducted especially in the pre-World War II period largely excludes other forms of organisations in other geographical areas (T. R. Davies, 2017, p. 899).

The emergence and proliferation of CSOs in world politics does not seem to follow a linear curve, rather it appears more as subject of intensification and diminution over time (Boli & Thomas, 1997, p. 176). The emergence, proliferation, and involvement of CSOs in global affairs, therefore, is characterised by retreats and enlargements that were affected by wider factors of global politics. It is the foundation of the United Nations in 1945 that opened a new page for the involvement and actorness of CSOs in world politics, by making a reference to their role in the UN Charter. Article 71 of United Nations Charter, entitled 'The Economic and Social Council', foresaw the involvement of what were called 'non-governmental organisations' as consultants in specific fields of expertise, stating:

> "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organisations and, where appropriate, with national organisations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned."

The introduction of Article 71 institutionalised for the first time a form of access for CSOs in the newly established UN system. As such, Article 71 represents the first instance where the label 'non-governmental organisations' was codified, as in the Covenant of League of Nations the term was used for reference pointed to

the ‘voluntary’ formations. With the mimicking of Article 71, the UN specialised agencies also granted a similar position to CSOs, leading to what Charnovitz (1996, pp. 249–258) refers to as the ‘formalisation’ period during 1945–1949, whereby the status of these organisations, that were separate from states, became more fixed in the international system.

While it seems plausible that the post-UN period presented a change in status of these organisations, through enabling increased entry points to the key multilateralist venue, there are several arguments that point to an opposing view. For some authors, such as Martens (2004, p. 81), the ECOSOC serves as “the first hurdle for NGOs to gain access to the IGO when they want to participate within its forum”. States possess capabilities to block organisations from receiving the ECOSOC status, therefore, they still hold significant power in the process of allowing CSO access and participation. Furthermore, Article 71 also confined CSOs to limited functions in the newly created international order, such as taking roles as consultants and observers of international events, with limited space for speaking, participating, and voting. In many ways, the ability to influence decision-making outcomes became out of reach for CSOs. Finally, according to some authors, the term ‘non-governmental’ and the acronym ‘NGO’ itself carried a negative connotation at the time of its adoption (Vakil, 1997, p. 2058). Despite the validity of these arguments, a case can still be made that that Article 71 in 1945 represents a key benchmark for the role and actorness of CSOs in world politics, by representing a starting point of a larger expansion that was to accelerate later.

Following this brief introduction of CSOs in world politics, I now turn to the conversations surrounding labels and definitions. This will highlight ways to connect the dissertation with existing conversations, make the case for the choices made, and also lay the conceptual basis for the analysis that will follow in the upcoming chapters. The plurality of terms referring to the same (or similar) empirical phenomena is an important part of conversations surrounding CSOs. The most frequently used labels are ‘civil society organisations’ and ‘non-governmental organisations’. In addition, one may also come across other terms such as the third sector or non-profit organisations, which are used both interchangeably and distinctively with the terms ‘CSO’ and ‘NGO’. In addition, CSOs might also be depicted with the notion ‘non-state actors’, an umbrella term that is comprised of diverse actors, such as social movements, multi-national corporations (MNCs), and even violent groups that are often designated as ‘terrorist’. The choices of label, therefore, in addition to being semantic, are also of a conceptual and theoretical nature, as they determine how a CSOs is defined. They are also of a methodological nature, by establishing which CSOs are considered as empirically eligible for inclusion. The consensus is yet to be reached in the literature and policy realms, and it indeed may be never achieved, while the multiplicity of these many terms continues to beget confusions that hinder the CSO research agenda.

The study will employ the term civil society organisation(s) with the main reason being that in recent decades the term CSO has been gaining traction and its usage increasing at the expense of the term ‘NGO’ across different realms, including in academic literature. As Götz (2019, p. 22) posits: “[m]ost specialized

agencies and programmes in the UN system have in the past decades changed their terminology in favour of 'civil society (organizations)' as the cover concept. Even the UN itself, despite far-reaching adherence to the term 'NGO', prominently addresses civil society on its website, rather than NGOs". Moreover, such change appears to better reflect the changes in world politics in recent decades, such as the emergence of notions such as global civil society, and the proliferation of transnational linkages. Another merit of the label 'CSO' is that it allows us to regard organisations as actors that are part of something, that is, the realm of national or global civil society, rather than solely as distinctive compared in negation to a specific actor, namely, state governments. By contrast, the term 'non-governmental organisations' appears to point that these entities must constantly be validated through comparison with states as the key units of interest in international affairs.[4]

Alongside the plurality of labels lies the issue of the multiplicity of definitions. Different authors and works have highlighted ongoing difficulties caused by the plurality of definitions of CSOs. This continues to represent a significant challenge in academic research (Martens, 2002; Rainey et al., 2017; Vakil, 1997, 2018). This is certainly not aided by frequent usage of the terms in policy research and political discourse, which contribute towards further blurring, rather than clarifying, related concepts. Some even go as far as to claim that a simple definition for CSOs is hardly attainable, therefore we must operate with several typologies utilised in different realms (i.e. academic, policy and project literature), rather than singular compositions (Rainey et al., 2017). Whilst the terms 'CSO' and 'NGO' are applied widely across academic and policy realms without prior definition, in the following I try to set out constitutive characteristics of CSOs, in order to present and justify the definition utilised for this dissertation.

One key constitutive characteristic of these potential definitions is the level of operation of the organisation. In other words, should organisations operating domestically and internationally be subject to different definitions? For some authors these two types of organisations comprise two different analytical categories, thus they must be treated with separate definitions (Kellow & Murphy-Gregory, 2018). Some other authors postulate that the same definition may be applicable to organisations operating in any of these two realms (Martens, 2002). Such conceptual disagreement spills over to the policy realm, for instance, the UIA defines as 'NGOs' only organisations operating internationally, therefore, without substantially revising the definition, since the latter was established in the beginning of the 20th century. By contrast, the UN ECOSOC rules[5] consider CSOs as operating both nationally and internationally, namely the UN ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, entitled 'Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations', states that: "the term "organization" shall refer to

[4] I use the term 'civil society organisation' even for international organisations, and the only time where the term 'NGO' is applied is through direct citations by other authors.

[5] See Resolution 1996/31 – 'Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organisations'.

non-governmental organizations at the national, subregional, regional or international levels" (1996, p. 1). Therefore, a common definition that can be found in the UN blends together both the variety of terms (CSOs and NGOs), and any distinctions between organisations based on their levels of operation (national and international).

Once the UN eased access and participation for single-country CSOs, this step was also considered an event "which complicates matters" by some proponents of keeping definitions between these entities separate (Kellow & Murphy-Gregory, 2018, p.1). Seen from a practical angle other changes appear to have further blurred the lines. This is perhaps best exemplified by one of the CSOs included in this study, Tzu Chi, which started as a small organisation operating in Taiwan, and is now considered a global organisation, with international branches operating in different countries. In other words, even if one insists on keeping definitions strictly separate for national and international CSOs, there are organisations which simply might fall into both of them. It is argued that while distinguishing between national and international CSOs can be useful in research to isolate categories of operation, separate definitions are not mandatory.

Apart from the level of operation, some other key characteristics of CSO definition relate to strategies of action (advocacy, service-delivery, research focused etc.); programmatic focus (i.e. human rights, climate change, democracy etc.); legal status or framework that regulates their activity (registration as non-profit entities separate from the government); and structural dimensions of the organisations, such as size, permanent headquarters staff, and sometimes even some form of voluntary engagement. In an influential definition Salamon and Anheier (1992, p. 125) put forth what they call a 'structural/operational' conceptual construct of the 'third sector', a term which in itself seemingly entails different entities apart from CSOs – their definition is based on five characteristics: "formal, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing and voluntary". Vakil (1997, p. 2060) wrote that 'NGOs' are to be considered as "self-governing, private, not-for-profit organisations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people".

These definitions highlight the varying focuses of different authors in defining CSO characteristics, ranging from organisational attributes to their objectives. In essence, CSOs are generally expected to be separated from governments, possess a stable structure, be legally registered in at least one country, function in an independent and non-profit basis separately from the market and the state. Employing non-violent means also appears another widely accepted constitutive element, helping to conceptually distinguish CSOs both from states (the holders of the monopoly of 'legitimate' violence) and a wide range of non-state actors, that pursue violence to achieve political and ideological agendas. These core elements are commonly found across different definitions in the scholarship.

This thesis introduces a working definition of CSOs based on Martens's (2002, p. 282) work – accordingly, CSOs are understood as "formal (professionalized) independent societal organisations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level". Martens's (2002) definition is rather holistic, namely it is comprised of legal elements (being formalised

through a legal status and professionalised, with some permanent staff); structural and organisational aspects (i.e. independence from other entities); outcome-oriented dimensions (that are common goals, thus working for public goods rather than profit-oriented actions); and operational levels (including organisations that function both nationally and internationally). Yet the definition is also rather loose, as it stipulates independence from other entities, that is, governments or private businesses, but it does not put a threshold on the percentage of donations and support that might be received by these entities, which in addition to being arbitrary is very difficult to be proven by the researcher. Similarly, the definition also mentions a formalised and professionalised structure without placing numbers on the structure that ought to be in place, which again, in addition to being arbitrary appears difficult to be proven with certainty.

The definition does not exclude voluntary engagements, but it does not make them mandatory, and it also puts forth 'common goals' allowing for diversity regarding the type of these goals and constituencies. Specific elements, such as determining how an organisation operates internally, as well as the percentage of donations from businesses and private donors, are, I argue, unrealistic and difficult to be credibly proven. Therefore, Martens's (2002) definition represents the most suitable and feasible choice for this dissertation, as on the one hand it is detailed, containing a mixture of core characteristics deriving from different strands of previous literature definitions, but on the other hand, it appears permissive for a wide cast of organisations to be valid through their fulfilment. In short, its application enables the selection process of the organisations to be conceptually and methodologically consistent.

With questions of labels and definitions out of the way, I now turn to the debates on CSOs in IR theory. Earlier it was noted that different organisational associations have existed for several centuries. Nevertheless, it was from the 1990s onwards that IR research on these organisations proliferated, which might also be explained by the fact that around that period both the role and numbers CSOs in world politics expanded significantly. Research in recent decades has shed light on CSOs forms of action, issue areas of involvement, and their relations with other units of world politics. Over the past four decades or so, the increased interest has also been driven by the emergence of new research avenues that introduced conceptual tools and methodological approaches in IR, shifting the focus away from the long-dominant neorealist and neoliberal paradigms, which often rendered the actorness of CSOs either marginal or entirely irrelevant.

The post-1990s period, marked by forces of globalisation and democratic transitions set in motion by the fall of Communist regimes, opened spaces for the pluralisation of governance both at the national and international levels. Such dynamics boosted the increased application of 'global governance' and 'global civil society' notions across academic and policy realms. Within the notions of 'global governance' and 'global civil society' CSOs came to be regarded as crucial actors in tackling global challenges, partaking in a mode of political authority that exceeds the state government as such. Such concepts not only helped to explain the evolving nature of power and authority in the post-Cold War era, but also

challenged traditional state-centric perspectives, emphasising the role of CSOs in transnational webs, and in the emergence, reproduction and redefinition of global norms.

Thakur and Van Langenhove (2006, p. 233) have defined global governance as "formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships, and processes between and among states, markets, citizens, and organisations – both intergovernmental and nongovernmental – through which collective interests are articulated, rights and obligations are established, and differences are mediated". Global governance is considered to rely on interconnectivity, and the inclusion of non-state actors to drive global efforts in solving complex issues. Another important aspect where the role of CSOs inside global governance becomes visible is the realm of international organisations. As Tallberg et al. (2013b) have demonstrated, in recent decades CSOs have benefited from a process of 'opening up' of multilateral organisations, which has facilitated increased access and participation for these actors in addressing global challenges. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were approved in 2000, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) followed in 2015, as programmes focused on tackling and addressing global challenges through a multi-stakeholder approach. Both programmes recognised the role of CSOs in achieving their objectives. The emergence and proliferation of global governance structures, therefore, can be considered one of the factors behind the increased engagement of CSOs with the UN system. While the UN represents the pioneer and a crucial player in this respect (Price, 1998; Aviel, 2018), other multilateral bodies have subsequently mimicked its approach of increasing accessibility for CSOs. In rare instances within these multilateral bodies, CSOs are regarded as more than mere consultants, gaining opportunities beyond simple observation and participation, including speaking rights and, on even rarer occasions, involvement in the decision-making process within multi-stakeholder frameworks.

In addition to global governance, the increasing importance of CSOs has been addressed by investigating their advocacy work. The influential transnational advocacy networks (TAN) theory, also known as the boomerang model by Keck and Sikkink (1998, p. 93) posits that when "the links between state and domestic actors are severed, domestic NGOs may directly seek international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside. This is the 'boomerang' pattern of influence characteristic of transnational networks where the target of their activity is to change a state's behavior". As one of the most influential theoretical contributions to the study of CSOs, the boomerang model has been applied to explain instances when local political blockages arise, leading to domestic groups attempting to address different local needs, through a so-called local-international-local formula. The boomerang model is utilised in contexts where domestic non-state actors collaborate with international partners, resulting in wider international alliances and campaigns. These international networks then utilise their political leverage to apply pressure on domestic governments towards a certain end. Over time international campaigns may instigate reaction by other state

governments and international organisations that have more leeway to mount pressure on states (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

After nearly two decades of dominance, the TAN became challenged on the grounds that not all transnational campaigns, that feature local and international CSOs, are initiated by the local unit (that is, domestic non-state actors). Pallas (2017, p. 289) sketched out a new "inverse boomerang" model to depict dynamics where international CSOs "encounter some blockage in its efforts to change the positions of international policymakers, including the staff of intergovernmental organisation and state officials with a powerful role in international policy". This model seeks to explain instances where the international CSO "recruits local organisations or communities, generally from low or middle income countries, whose needs or agendas match the international CSO's agenda or can be reframed to support it" (Pallas 2017, p. 289) – hence, the formula of the boomerang model becomes inversed.

Both these models serve as important frameworks for conceptualising transnational action, by highlighting instances where transnational networks are utilised in efforts directed at policymakers and decision-makers to overcome political blockages while also including actors such as domestic CSOs in the scheme. Finally, another framework of interactions has been framed as 'transnational non-state politics' (T. R. Davies, 2019b; Teivainen & Trommer, 2017). This area of research focuses on advocacy efforts that are entirely non-state, and can be utilized to inspect engagements between CSOs and the public opinion, CSO-CSO interactions, CSO-MNC interactions etc. Transnational non-state politics conceptualises instances where CSOs make efforts to drive change through mobilisation and collaboration that rests amongst non-state actors, thus bypassing entirely governmental actors. These three analytical frameworks will be important in locating and analysing the lobbying and the advocacy of domestic CSOs discussed in this thesis, providing a comprehensive lens for understanding their activities and engagement with the external environment.

Literature on CSO engagement with the external environment highlights that international-level forces can significantly shape the practices of local CSOs. In studying Bosnian CSOs, Jeffrey (2007) points out how the work of organisations in Bosnia was shaped by top-down geopolitical imaginaries, whereby, local CSOs came to be portrayed as agents in 'humanitarian' and 'transitional' framings. As Jeffrey (2007, p. 252) puts it: "policies and imaginaries circulating beyond the borders of Bosnia continue to shape the practices of local NGOs and civil society organizations". Furthermore, the operation across these scalar dynamics means that CSOs develop specific relationships with both the donors and the local state, while competing to accumulate legitimacy and donor funding (Jeffrey, 2007).

Building on this work, the notion of 'local or domestic CSOs' and the local-international dichotomy are understood in this study in two ways. Firstly, the term 'local CSOs' does not render them as 'local-only'. On the contrary, the argument can be developed to assert that the very notion of local CSOs can depict agents whose existence is or was enabled and maintained through international assistance and development aid. Secondly, if the setting of CSO operations is affected

by outside imaginaries, then international geopolitical framings regarding de facto states can be expected to shape the development of CSOs and influence their roles across multiple levels of operation. The navigation across scales for CSOs in de facto states can thus be expected to be shaped by signifiers stemming from the issue of contested statehood.

If such a line of argument is followed, then these scalar dynamics also affect the functioning of CSOs in de facto states, making their operations distinct from those of their counterparts in fully recognised states. Issues of contested statehood can occasionally create conditions for bypassing traditional national-scale engagement and facilitate direct access at the international level, while remaining deeply embedded locally. Due to the broader political and diplomatic context, access to different sites at the international level becomes both more open and restricted (more on this below). At the practical level, mobility and operational capacity can also be hindered by issues such as visa problems, event registration and legal status. Finally, as the statehood project across the de facto state category enjoys high internal legitimacy, the relationship between CSOs and the statehood project can be expected to enhance or hamper CSO legitimacy domestically.

As for their strategies, CSOs have been reported to employ different means to achieve policy change. Stroup and Wong (2016, p. 139) usefully divide the (international) CSO research into two waves, before and since the late 1990s, noting that while the first wave of research was focused on showing that these actors matter in world politics, the second wave asks questions such as 'what do they do and why'? Research during the 1990s mostly focused on the affirmative dimensions of CSOs' work, namely the roles that these actors played for specific states in their democratisation efforts and transition to democracy (Hojman, 1993). In this early phase of research, CSOs were widely considered as 'agents of democratisation' whose engagements facilitated the expansion of the liberal-democratic project as part of regime transitions to democracy, and adjustment of economic policies across a number of countries. It seems that expectations were rather high, given that some authors went as far as to claim that the rise of global civil society provided "an answer to war" (Kaldor, 2003, p. 144).

Subsequent research examined the position of CSOs in international affairs through critical optics, therefore moving away from normative readings. Some of the critique for CSOs includes their legitimacy (Doyle & Patel, 2008) and accountability (Scholte, 2004), and the role that they play in fault lines between the West and the rest, or (so-called) developing and developed states. Critiques for CSOs as elitist and donor-driven, and out of touch with local needs are also common. Gutterman (2014, p. 418) makes a call to observe how these organisations "function to sustain rather than challenge structures of power (including those related to economic policies, social class, and gender) which condition global outcomes in ways that are often contrary to the goals of equality, fairness, and justice".

The literature has reported that there are persistent North-South inequalities and power asymmetries within organisations coming from these geographical milieus (Elbers & Schulpen, 2013; Shumate & Dewitt, 2008). Some rationalist

accounts point out that in addition to normative dimensions, material interests that relate to funding and survival also represent a core explanation of CSO work (Kim, 2019). These criticisms have enriched the scholarship by opening new avenues of research beyond the initial stage of research, which to some extent, vested CSOs with a 'generic and essentialist' moral authority. This stream of conversations not only serves to nuance the discussion by moving beyond generalist claims, but it also steers debates towards spatial and temporal context-specific considerations as a foundational bedrock for research on CSO roles across different settings, which is in line with the objectives of this dissertation. Relatedly, Hudson (2001) points out that CSOs working transnationally struggle to be recognised as universally legitimate, especially by states, as they disrupt sovereignty-based frameworks while claiming to represent marginalised communities.

Beyond criticism, a large bulk of research has focused on 'what CSOs can actually do' in world politics. Literature has shed light on the ways in which CSOs engage in service provision and development (Brass et al., 2018; Henderson, 1999; Poole, 1994) especially in weaker states. Literature findings assign different capacities to international CSOs, thereby they have been studied in light of 'agenda-setting' capabilities within international organisations (Joachim, 2007); as actors capable of 'knowledge production' (Markland, 2020) and issue-framing (Allan & Hadden, 2017). Stroup (2019, p. 41) notes that CSOs "have the ability to produce categories of meaning and draw upon their expertise and moral authority". In their notable constructivist work, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 893) famously asserted that (international) CSOs have capacity to serve as "norm entrepreneurs". Elsewhere, Amitav (2013) depicts CSOs as 'norm diffusers' with potential to redefine and provide alternative understandings of global norms in local contexts. CSOs are often considered to have normative and moral power, as well as epistemic resources to bring to global policy debates, in efforts to legitimise or challenge policies and monitor the work of governments. As it becomes clear, an important body of knowledge on CSOs in IR is based on the social constructivism paradigm.

Because of the state-centric dominance of IR, the relationships and comparisons between CSOs and states continue to represent an important conversation in the literature. Sometimes, the roles of CSOs are considered to be enabled solely through state permission or absence, for example Bush and Hadden (2019, p. 1133) hold that international CSOs are "central to contemporary global governance, often taking on roles states are unwilling or unable to fill". An influential typology to comprehend CSO-state relationship was presented by Najam, 2000 (p. 375), who reported that CSO-state relationship may be driven by convergence or divergence on policy ends and means. On the one hand, CSOs serve as state partners, thus implementing joint projects and programmes, with the permission and support of states, or they might simply work alongside states. State governments also represent a key donor that ensure the survival of CSO sectors globally. On the other hand, CSOs also make efforts to hold governments accountable, by adding pressure for transparency, and policy and legal reforms. Likewise, international CSOs also represent a donor to developing states.

This observation raises a crucial point. CSOs might sit at the intersection of foreign policy and strategies of action by different actors, such as their own government, other state governments (i.e. regional actors), and international donor community, such as international and regional organisations. For instance, EU's role as civilian power and a foreign policy actor is often considered to rely primarily on normative power, and the adoption of these norms also depends on local actors, such as CSOs, whose role in policymaking and engagement with international actors shape how EU norms are applied differently across regions and policies (Dandashly & Kourtelis, 2020). That is to say, the EU also works with local actors, such as CSOs, in promoting a norms-based agenda and projecting its normative power. By contrast, some accounts equate EU's normative power with 'hegemony' (Diez, 2013) – a view which proposes to consider local CSOs as mere upholders and reproducers of EU's projected structures and power, rather than as progressive agents pushing for change. As such, different interpretations can be spotted, namely, CSOs can be seen through a double layer complex process in between forces stemming from the international community, and their own state government. On the one hand, CSOs work alongside nation-states, that may be their own governments on matters of common concern. On the other hand, CSOs also work with other international actors, as the example of the EU shows. What is intriguing is that evidently the objectives and means of these actors' foreign policies might be at odds with one another, which potentially gives rise to frictions.

Stroup and Wong (2016, p. 139) recognise that different international CSOs "can be instruments of state power at one point, while later directly challenging state authority". They further note that the first wave of research on CSOs was preoccupied with showing how international CSOs "could create external pressure to change state policies" (Stroup and Wong, 2016, p. 139). The literature has moved beyond the outdated view of CSOs overtaking primacy of state governments. Instead, the task appears to understand nuances in which their role may shape facets of world politics. Indeed, such an approach enables an examination of the 'states and CSOs' relationship within specific contextual differences that may be geographical (region and country), political (political system and regime type), and social (historical trajectory of the CSO sector). Recognising the limited agency of CSOs within a state-centric structure enables a detailed analysis of specific settings, but also the examination of issue areas where CSO agency is projected, the strategies of action employed, and the factors and processes driving CSO relationships with various state and non-state actors. Indeed, it is along these lines that this dissertation is designed.

Once tension in the CSO-state relationship arises, it often results in state restrictions against CSOs. For instance, in recent years a wave of restrictions for CSOs across different states has somewhat altered the landscape, rendering the operation of CSO sectors challenging. This trend is often referred to as the 'shrinking space' for civil society, and is characterised by political pressure, as well as legal, financial, and operational constraints that foster obstacles for CSOs – restrictions include the approving of laws that limit foreign funding; imposing

additional registration, reporting and monitoring requirements; and even the potential criminalisation of CSOs, such as legally labelling them as 'foreign agents' (Boda, 2024; Moser and Skripchenko, 2018). State governments utilise different justifications for CSO restrictions, often presenting them as necessary steps for national security, and for combating foreign funding and interreference from third parties or countries.

In non-democratic regimes, the pushback against CSOs appears even more open and deeper, as authoritarian and hybrid regimes tend to consider CSOs as threats to their power and stability, through the potential to mobilise anti-government movements. State governments are not solely interested in domestic CSOs, but also in foreign ones operating on their soil. For instance, in 2017 the 'Overseas NGO Law' was enacted in China targeting overseas organisations within the territory. The law raised concerns across different levels, where Feng (2017, p. 102) asserted that the "[o]verseas NGO Law formally places foreign NGOs under the supervision of the police and gives the police broad powers to question their workers, inspect their offices, look into their documents, confiscate their assets and even arrest their Chinese partners". The effects of such restrictions at the global scale appears profound in the long run. In democratic systems, the erosion of the CSO sector represents a contributing factor to weakening deliberative governance, by diminishing public participation and free association, resulting in a more centralised and less transparent decision-making process. Yet, the effects of these national restrictive laws do not appear to halt transnational collaboration, although they might impact it significantly. As Fransen et al. (2021, p. 20) infer: "[t]ransnational advocacy does continue in these countries, but becomes tempered". Elsewhere, Bush and Hadden (2019) have found that after the rapid growth in the 1990s the growth of international CSOs faced stagnation by 2010, therefore, after a period of significant expansion, the number of established new organisations has slowed down.

The general picture that emerges from the presented IR scholarship is somewhat mixed. Seen in a wider trajectory, literature accounts show that having existed for several centuries, CSOs have proliferated dramatically in the post-1945 international order. In recent decades CSOs have found themselves at the receiving end of expanding spaces, permitting them to engage in global governance. CSOs have also gained new instruments to conduct activities, for example through transnational coalitions and campaigns across borders, even in purely non-state formulas. However, a wave of state-CSO tension in recent years appears to have reversed some of the gains across different regions, by shrinking CSO space at the global level (Sinclair & Lynch, 2016; UNPO, 2021), which renders it not only necessary, but also mandatory, to make adjustments in order to circumvent such restrictions and continue to function. That is to say, in addition to limited access to decision-making processes and resource constraints, CSOs actorness in world politics is currently also being constrained by a significant state pushback.

1.2 De Facto States as Units of World Politics

De facto states are independent entities which display empirical statehood, whilst lacking universal recognition and full United Nations (UN) membership. Being both contested and partially recognised, these entities represent an inherent unit of the post-World War II international order. Academic and political debates surrounding de facto states are not only legal, political, historical, and territorial, but also of a moral nature. Because of the constitutive elements that underpin the post-1945 international society, the community of confirmed states tends to treat with hesitancy claims for self-determination and independent statehood. When and if such an aspiration of nations manages to become an empirical reality, thus fulfilling formal requirements of statehood, a political and legal tension inevitably comes to the front. This primarily stems from the fact that post-1945 United Nations (UN) order has principally been constructed around institutionalised norms such as state sovereignty and territorial integrity of existing units. In this context, the short-term and long-term future of a de facto state may fall into five scenarios: maintenance of status-quo, thus continuation of existence in its current form; upgrade to full UN membership and universal recognition as a full-fledged state; violent invasion by former host (adversary) state[6]; non-violent absorption by the former host (adversary) state; an annexation from another state, potentially its main backer. The final scenario appears especially valid in case of geographical proximity between the two. Overall, these five scenarios are not mere theoretical constructs, for they have unfolded empirically in different contexts across time.

The fact that de facto states' emergence may cause some disruption at the systemic level, also means that to each case of de facto states, the international society tends to be characterised with divided positions by the international community. As Geldenhuys (2009) posits, the responses by full-fledged states range from military action to suppress it to the other extreme of de jure recognition, and while this latter outcome appears the most desirable outcome, it also appears to be the most difficult to achieve for de facto states. Achieving universal recognition and UN membership after a period of contestation appears unlikely, but it is not impossible, as cases of Bangladesh and Eritrea attest.

De facto states existed empirically long before academic attention was seriously drawn to them. A thorough research avenue on de facto states took off after Scott Pegg in 1998 published his book *International Society and the De Facto State*. This book marks a turning point for the in-depth studying of the de facto state as a distinct political unit. The existence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which declared itself independent in 1983, while functioning separately for a number of years prior to that had been largely ignored by mainstream IR literature. Some entities had perished long before the research program was set in

[6] In this dissertation I use the term 'former host state' instead of 'parent state'. I also use 'adversary' to refer to the three selected entities, as not all of them have a former host state whose political authority they managed to escape from in the post-1945 international order – i.e. Taiwan is a case in point.

motion, for example, Katanga which was violently reintegrated in Congo in 1963, or Biafra which was forcefully reintegrated in Nigeria in 1970, were not deemed as worthy of academic investigation at the time of their existence. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia set in motion changes in political authority and control lines, thereby creating conditions for the emergence of statehood aspirations and new de facto states in these spaces, with Somaliland also managing to 'escape' from Somalia's political authority in 1991 (Toomla, 2013).

Shortly after, increased scholarly attention began to emerge in academic research, not only focusing on the 'recent' cases which had emerged at the turn of the 20th century, but also on de facto states that perished long ago, and are now commonly studied as 'historical' cases. More recent events, such as the Declaration of Independence by the Parliament of Catalonia in 2017, the independence referendum in Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 2017, or continuous threats from leaders of Republika Srpska to break away from Bosnia and Hercegovina pose the question of whether we have witnessed the complete emergence of de facto states or if others are yet to arise. One might interpret such events as indications that academic inquiry on emerging states is not likely to wither away in the near future. This remains to be proven. However, what must be acknowledged is the displayed potential of de facto states for longevity as distinct political units, with some of them spanning a period of existence across several decades. Another indication of their relevance is that the number of individuals living in de facto state across different continents today is estimated to be over 40 million, a considerably large number by any standard.

Understanding the emergence of de facto states in international theory, and studying it, also means being 'compelled' to address to two interrelated core points – these are the plurality of existing terms and definitions that can be found in the existing literature. The first wave of research in the beginning of the 20th century saw an adoption of a plurality of labels in reference to the similar (or even identical) empirical object, that is, contested independent polities that display the ability to fulfil elements of statehood, but lack UN membership, and also complete bilateral recognition. Similar to CSOs, the category of de facto states represents an empirical phenomenon that has been debated in the IR literature through a multiplicity of terms, such as 'contested state' (Geldenhuys, 2009) and 'unrecognised state' (Caspersen, 2011).

This study adopts the term 'de facto states' based on the rationale that in recent years there appears to be a consensus mounting around the application of this term. Even some key authors that have made contributions to the topic, such as Kolstø[7] (2006, 2021) and Caspersen (2011, 2020) have recently made the switch, by deciding to adopt the label 'de facto states', instead of their earlier choices. This also indicates that the usage of the label 'de facto state' is on an upwards trajectory, while the use of other labels appears to stand still or even decline. Therefore, the application of this label may ease the communication of the dissertation with future debates situated in the research area. I am aware that a different term may

[7] In previous works 09/07/2025 13:22:00 had adopted the label 'quasi-states'.

have also been employed as a principal label, without affecting the quality of the dissertation nor changing the substance of the conversation with regard to the attributes of the polities under inquiry. I also understand that 'de facto states' does mean that they are void and incapable of 'de jure recognition'. However, as will be seen shortly, the principal element that makes these entities different from confirmed states is the lack of full UN membership, rather than *total* absence of de jure recognition.

An interrelated issue to the applied labels has to do with defining features. In other words, what constitutes a de facto state? This becomes especially important when considered in light of selecting the valid entities for the study. In fact, disagreements on what constitutes key dimensions of the de facto state concept have led to a more profound dilemma, that is the lack of consensus in literature over which entities are valid to make the 'de facto state list'. It is common for a de facto state to figure in one list, not to figure on another, and perhaps to be depicted with another different status on a third list. Akin to this, it is also possible to encounter the same polity in two different datasets, with two different sets of years describing their birth and death. In the past quarter century or so, different authors have put forth different definitions of de facto states, based on different constitutive elements which render it conceptually distinct from other units (see: Pegg, 1998; Geldenhuys, 2009; Caspersen, 2011; Florea, 2014; Kursani, 2021). In addition to the requirements of statehood that pertain to an entity's ability to govern, its independence claim, seeking some form of recognition, and its absence of full de jure recognition, some authors have also added other characteristics, namely spatial and temporal thresholds, such as percentage of controlled territory, time in existence measured in years, and specific events where independent statehood was declared.

In other words, different definitions may also lead to different empirical cases where the concept is valid for application. In this dissertation, I employ Kursani's (2021, p. 754) definition of a de facto state as "an independent non-UN member state over which another state lays claim". In addition to being the more recent one, thus being developed in conversation with all previous definitions, Kursani's (2021) definition represents the most systematic theorisation of the concept. It also allows us to clearly distinguish it as an analytical category in IR, not only vis-à-vis confirmed states, but also other entities such as sub-states, autonomous regions, and secessionist movements with which these entities may otherwise be mixed in the literature. Kursani's definition (2021, pp. 760–765) lays out four key characteristics that comprise the de facto state which must be present at the same time: an implicit or explicit claim to independence; the absence of a seat at the UN as a full member; the fulfilment of the formal statehood requirements of the Montevideo Convention (that is; territory, population, government and capacity to enter into external relations); the absence of full recognition and the facing of contestation by the former host (adversary) state.

The existence of de facto states is closely related to debates on sovereignty and legitimacy in world politics. By their mere existence, de facto states have demonstrated capability to challenge predominant notions and conceptions

underpinning what is sometimes (in a simplified way) termed as the 'sovereign-state' system. This is especially valid if the notion of sovereignty is conceived through a zero-sum perspective, whereby a particular unit is either considered to 'be sovereign' or it is not. A common view in the literature points out how sovereignty, understood both as the predominant norm of the international order, and as an academic concept, is comprised by internal and external attributes, that are primarily related to empirical and juridical authority (see: Krasner, 2001; Jackson, 1999). Such distinction is perhaps best defined by Bull (2012, p. 8) who wrote that "states assert, in relation to this territory and population, what may be called internal sovereignty, which means supremacy over all other authorities within that territory and population…. [o]n the other hand, they assert what may be called external sovereignty, by which is meant not supremacy but independence of outside authorities". However, the attributes of sovereignty may not always be fully present together.

Krasner (2001, pp. 231–233) notably distinguished four meanings of sovereignty, starting with interdependence sovereignty, understood as the ability of states to control movements across their border; domestic sovereignty, that is political authority within the state; Westphalian sovereignty, understood as agreement by other sovereigns for non-intervention; and, international legal sovereignty, which is based upon the rule that "recognition is accorded to juridically independent territorial entities which are capable of entering into voluntary contractual agreement". Moreover, Krasner (2001, p. 248) also noted that these "[d]ifferent elements of sovereignty are not logically related, nor they have empirically always occurred together". What this suggests is that units might encompass a 'gap' in one lane of sovereignty, but fare well in another. Such a view largely corresponds to a later take by Berg and Kuusk (2010, p. 43) who by analysing sovereignty as a relative and dynamic concept infer that it "can vary not only across cases but also in time". It may be argued, thus, that sovereignty can be 'unwillingly shared' in world politics, or to put it differently, it may be claimed by competing political authorities simultaneously. Since it is agreed that state sovereignty contains different constitutive dimensions, and it is also subject to different degrees, then fluctuations amongst units are not only possible, but also to be expected. Jackson (1999, p. 434) asserts that "[w]e should probably regard a periodical reshuffling of the title to sovereignty, even major redistribution, as something to be expected from time to time".

The 'legalistic' approach points that it is possible to focus on juridical sovereignty and simply dismiss de facto states as obscure, by agreeing that the world of states is comprised of 193 political units. After all, this is what much of the mainstream literature has done, in an attempt to adhere to a 'legalist' view. However, another way of observing de facto states is through such 'redistribution' events, which vest them with internal (empirical) sovereignty, whilst full juridical sovereignty remains difficult to reach. This appears to generally hold true in relative, rather than absolute terms – for instance, some cases such as Palestine demonstrate significantly less internal sovereignty, while maintaining a considerably high level of international acceptance. Still, it can be deduced that it is the

varying degrees of negotiation, adoption, and contestation of sovereignty that give rise to de facto states in world politics. It is investigating processes under which different actors become involved into the negotiation, adoption, and contestation of sovereignty that must serve as the starting point of the analysis.

Tightly interrelated to debates of how different degrees of sovereignty and political authorities are exercised domestically and internationally, lies the question of legitimacy, that is commonly framed inside the existing relationship that the polity enjoys both with its own citizens (internal legitimacy), and other external actors and rules (external legitimacy). Caspersen (2015, p. 186) defined legitimacy quite simply as "support: internal legitimacy as popular support and external support from external sources, be it from state or non-state actors". Some literature findings suggest that de facto states have demonstrated capabilities to implement domestic policies not only in the field of security, thus exercising territory control, but also on other sectors that pertain to public policies (King, 2001, p. 525); likewise exhibiting positive levels of internal legitimacy amongst the populace, as part of broader state-building and nation-building efforts (Bakke et al., 2014; Pegg & Kolstø, 2015). Scholarship has also established that legitimacy comes in degrees, thus it is expected to change over time (Berg, 2012; Caspersen, 2015).

On the one hand, as with all other states, de facto states need legitimacy on both fronts in order to sustain their social contract and interact with international actors. On the other hand, de facto states' aspirations are doomed by insufficient external legitimacy, illustrated by recognition deficiency and partial acceptance by other actors in the external environment. Even when positive domestic credentials are present, and are strongly demonstrated with empirical statehood features (internal sovereignty) and large popular support for state-building and nation-building (internal legitimacy), they do not seem sufficient. Contested juridical sovereignty and limitations in external legitimacy are thus expected to persistently pose challenges for long-term survival and integration in international society. In any case, internal legitimacy in de facto states can be expected to sit at high levels, for if it was not, it is not likely to have been a de facto state in the first place.

This brings the question of practices and strategies that de facto states employ for the purpose of overcoming external deficiencies and engage in foreign policy and diplomatic practices at the international level. A group of authors has focused on the ways in which de facto states forge a relationship with a powerful backer, framed on the model of patron-client ties (Biermann, 2024; Yüksel & Berg, 2024). Such an explanatory model has been used to study the foreign dealings of de facto states focusing primarily on security arrangements with a powerful backer, namely through military and economic support. Recently, Vits (2024) established that the patron-client framework appears especially strong in the post-Soviet space. Nevertheless, the patron-client framework also appears to fail to account for some empirical cases where a single powerful backer can simply not be identified, or it fails to properly account for the diversity of foreign relations and channels. Palestine and Somaliland might be blueprint cases that fall into this

category, with others being on the mix in different parts of the spectrum. The patron-client framework also considers recognition practices, namely efforts for bilateral recognitions, establishing diplomatic relations and multilateral accessions, as secondary to security attainment. Nevertheless, not all de facto states rest contented solely with security arrangements. The rather diverse population of non-UN contested polities also demonstrates that active pursuit of recognition represents the cornerstone of foreign strategies of many de facto states. Indeed, the question why some de facto states are motivated to actively pursue recognition as part of their foreign policy, while some are not, remains to be answered in the literature (Kursani, 2021).

When it comes to the forms and relevance of state recognition, one finds the traditional division of two camps, namely the declaratory and constitutive proponents, who assign different values to the act of recognition in state-making (see: Crawford, 1977; Lauterpacht, 1978). For proponents of the declaratory school states exist regardless of if legal recognition is received or not. Legal recognition may thus recognise the reality of an existent state, which regardless shall continue to be an empirical reality on the ground. Writers of the constitutive school of recognition argue that recognition represents a step which essentially 'constitutes' the state, and in its absence an entity cannot be considered to have fulfilled the required attributes of statehood. The constitutive doctrine became the dominant normative practice of state recognition after WWII, and it remains so as of today.

More recently, some authors regard recognition efforts as processual practices unfolding in an incremental fashion, which may include the formal single-time event of formal recognition but without being exclusively limited to it (Newman and Visoka, 2016). Similarly, Bouris and Fernández-Molina (2018, p. 312) report that contested entities strive to multiply the "quantity and quality of their international interactions and diplomatic practices" thus seeking "recognition through "practice upgrade" – even when the prospect of the full legal stamp seems unlikely". Understanding the concept of recognition in processual terms, not only allows us to include additional interactions and practices that are at play in absence of de jure recognition, but most importantly, also allows us to include additional agents that lie outside of formal state-to-state practices in the analysis. This way, understanding recognition, sovereignty and legitimacy as dynamic processes, becomes crucial for observing the range of relations of de facto states with their external environment.

To shed light on the foreign relations of de facto states, be it related to formal recognition efforts or not, another view proposes to focus on domestic foreign policy efforts, thereby not solely limited to ties to great powers or systemic-level factors. For instance, Visoka (2018, p. 6) asserted that "Kosovo as an emerging state developed its own legitimating narratives, generated support from different states, challenged the international exclusionary norms, and found loopholes in the global legal and political system to fight for its place among the sovereign nations". An alternative to the patron-client framework, this stream of scholarship suggests turning our gaze towards the foreign policy community, thereby

examining foreign policy endeavours that take place at the domestic level. This view becomes especially reasonable when considering that those pursuing recognition and external legitimacy are characterised by an active diplomatic practice, implemented by Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and diplomatic services.

Some de facto states (namely, the ones included in this study) have also demonstrated capabilities to establish and maintain different degrees of official diplomatic relations established with other states maintaining operating diplomatic and consular missions globally based on the Vienna Conventions protocols, thereby being considered as an equal member under international law by different states. Under such conditions, de facto states are expected to forge a diverse a foreign policy toolkit that reaches out to different audiences, but also shapes different diplomatic messages depending on the interlocutor's stance, namely recognisers or non-recognisers, and likewise, diplomatic ally or otherwise. The relations with multilateral institutions are also expected to be context-specific, namely depending on if the de facto state enjoys full membership, observer status, some form of affiliated status, or perhaps no relations at all.

Informal ties that arise in interaction practices and in the absence of official recognition represent an important vector of interaction with the international community for de facto states. The literature indicates that international actors invest in fostering interactions or some sort of informal ties with de facto states, which has been conceptualised as 'engagement without recognition' (Cooley & Mitchell, 2010; Ker-Lindsay, 2015). One may encounter in the literature claims that generalise the treatment that de facto states receive, as entities that are ignored or even treated with hostility. By contrast, it also appears that complete isolation and long-term survival are hardly encountered in practice, as the international community is also wary against the isolation of de facto states. Along these lines, Berg and Toomla (2009) came up with a normalisation index as a tool intended to measure degrees of engagement that de facto states nurture with their external environment. Since external engagement appears to come in degrees, the engagement without recognition framework has proven helpful to study instances where confirmed states and the international community at large opt to interact with the de facto state institutions, or other actors, in instances short of formal recognition. Practically, all forms of acceptance are generally considered as welcome for de facto states, as they signal international integration. Theoretically, the framework is central to conceptualising ties from de facto states with the international community, not only at the governmental level, but also stemming from the non-state domain, such as the CSO sector.

In addition to such a top-down dynamic, that is, instances where engagement without recognition is instigated by the international community, a bottom-up dynamic also appears present. Within the bottom-up dynamic, informal ties may also be instigated from the de facto state itself, through various tools and policies that are instigated or supported by foreign policy institutions. For instance, Zondi (2022, p. 106) holds that Taiwan "uses carefully located Taipei Representative Offices or Taipei Liaison Offices where it would have established diplomatic missions, and ensures the offices operate like embassies without the power and

full mandate of an embassy". As such, cultural and economic offices offer a viable way to increase presence in non-recognising states, via 'Embassy-like' arrangements. Among others, de facto states themselves might opt to adopt various informal engagement tactics, such as contracting private companies (Bouris & Fernández-Molina, 2018). Some others have been reported to resort to symbolic acts, such as establishing ceremonial awards (Pacher, 2020). To this end, engagement without recognition may be set in motion through the diplomatic practices of the de facto state, rather than as an effort that is primarily driven by the international community.

It may thus be argued that de facto state institutions explore alternative avenues to implement engagement without recognition with the international community. In recent years there has been an increase in academic research of the informal ties of de facto states and non-state actors, for instance, Brucker (2025) has observed the inclusion of international civil society in the Biafran secession conflict. Inside these informal engagement frameworks, CSOs represent important actors with various forms of access to international society. In the literature, there is a noticeable disparity in the volume of studies on CSO sectors and their international engagements across different cases selected for the study – specifically, CSOs in Taiwan and Palestine have garnered more academic attention than those in Kosovo. The literature does not say almost anything about the diplomatic engagements of Kosovar CSOs after the declaration of independence in 2008, however it is noteworthy that an interesting study has shed light in the employment of sports diplomacy (Brentin & Tregoures, 2016).

When it comes to the international engagements of Taiwanese CSOs there are studies that investigate their engagement in foreign aid, international participation, and actions in the digital domain. Some authors have focused on the positive relationship between CSOs' foreign aid and Taiwan's international position, for instance Rawnsley (2014) holds that the offered humanitarian aid by TCSOs must be seen in light of soft power and public diplomacy. T.-C. Lin & Lin (2017) assert that foreign aid by CSOs tends to enhance Taiwan's international profile. Recently, Nanda (2023, p. 310) has shown how TCSOs have used digital platforms to reach out foreign audience by implementing a form of new public diplomacy. The literature contends that TCSOs are partners in implementing the New Southbound Policy, where think-tanks offer a separate avenue to share expertise at the regional level (Rasool & Ruggiero, 2022). Both academic and policy research findings have also outlined different ways in which Taiwanese CSOs have facilitated and enhanced participation in different multilateral organisations and settings (P.-K. Chen, 2017; Glaser, 2013; W.-C. Lee, 2012). These studies have reported that TCSO undertake various forms of international interactions that pertain to Taiwan's international participation, cooperation, and presence.

When it comes to the international engagement of Palestinian CSOs there are a number of studies that have focused on their engagement in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and track II diplomacy, especially in the aftermath of the Oslo process (for debates see: Agha et al., 2004; De Vries & Maoz, 2013; Kellen et al., 2013). Awad (2021) investigated the work of the Boycott, Divestment, and

Sanctions (BDS) movement, and asserted that the network managed to increase political consciousness about Palestine abroad and affected the public discourse surrounding Palestine in foreign states. Elsewhere, three former Special Rapporteurs wrote a book on the United Nations human rights system and Palestine, where the role of Palestinian CSOs is highlighted through different submissions focused on promoting the human rights agenda (Falk et al., 2023). Among others, Palestinian CSOs engage with different international actors and broader global audiences through social media and technology as part of public diplomacy efforts (Natil, 2023). The literature, therefore, has reported various forms of connections between PCSOs with the Palestinian cause, relating to regional peace initiatives, internationalising the Palestinian cause abroad, and interacting with the UN system on human rights.[8]

While these works provide important insights, they appear insufficient to provide a more complete picture for the international engagements of diverse CSO sectors and diverse CSOs across various contested polities. The existing research on CSOs therefore tends to focus on their domestic activities; capturing the CSO engagements in a single or a few issue areas; and capturing the CSO engagements within a single de facto state. Additionally, some studies concentrate on a single individual CSO, rather than a larger portion of the CSO sector. I argue that studies on CSOs' international engagement in de facto states lack comprehensive and systematic comparisons across different contexts. To build on these works, a comparative in-depth study is warranted, due to its potential to offer a deeper understanding of the patterns of CSOs international engagements in such unique legal and political contexts, and to produce knowledge regarding informal access to different international actors, regimes, and institutions, via the 'CSO channel'. Comparing 'tactics' of CSOs in Taiwan, Palestine, and Kosovo has the potential uncover insights that may inform knowledge on both analytical categories of CSOs as agents of world politics, and de facto states in the current international order. For de facto states, informal ties influence key existential issues of statehood and political authority, namely how sovereignty, legitimacy, and recognition are claimed, negotiated and exercised.

1.3 (Local) CSOs in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

The study of CSOs does not a priori imply an examination through the lens of diplomatic theory. This sub-section aims to engage with the literature and debates on diplomatic theory, particularly concerning domestic CSOs in the business of diplomacy and foreign policy, thereby laying the groundwork for analysing the international involvement of de facto state CSOs as diplomatic agents in subsequent chapters. Diplomacy represents a notion that is widely used across academic, policy and political discourses, and given that its meaning and application

[8] An expanded elaboration of the CSO sectors for the three cases under scrutiny is offered in a separate chapter named 'Background'.

tends to shift, it also becomes complex, fluid, and difficult to grasp. As Balzacq et al. (2020, p. 2) argue diplomacy is "simultaneously, a particular activity, a sector of state intervention, and a subspecialty of political science". Traditional diplomacy refers to formal state-to-state interactions. What is often referred to as 'old diplomacy', is largely based on the Westphalian understanding of diplomacy as a practice employed between state sovereigns to fulfil functions of communication, negotiation, representation, and information-gathering at the international fora. The state-centric definition of diplomacy is widespread, and has dominated the research field for several decades. Bull (2012, p. 156) defined diplomacy as "[t]he conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means". Cooper et al., 2013 (p. 2) assert that "[d]iplomacy is at its essence the conduct of relationships, using peaceful means, by and among international actors, at least one of whom is usually governmental". Hart and Siniver (2020, p. 3) write that "[s]tate-centric definitions perceive diplomacy as the operational side of foreign affairs, which has the mandate to implement governments' foreign policies". The state-centric definitions of diplomacy continue to be widespread.

Scholarship largely depicts diplomatic functions based on diplomatic conventions and treaties, sometimes specifying them further and expanding their application. In the literature these diplomatic functions are commonly connected to negotiation, communication, representation and information-gathering. In many ways, negotiation lies at the heart of diplomatic practices. For example, Constantinou and Sharp (2016, p. 15) write that "continuous negotiation underscored the importance of always retaining open channels of communication, so that compromise and settlement may follow when conditions allowed for them some time in the future". Jönsson and Hall (2005, p. 25) distinguish "communication, representation and the reproduction of international society as three essential dimensions of diplomacy", whilst Sharp (1999, p. 33) holds that diplomacy must be seen as "a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of necessarily ambiguous identities". Earlier, in one of the most influential works of the English School and diplomacy studies, Hedley Bull (2012, pp. 163–166) identified five key functions of diplomacy: communication; negotiation of agreements; gathering of intelligence or information about foreign countries; minimisation of friction between states in international relations, and symbolising the existence of the society of states.

Tyler et al., (2017, p. 1) have analysed the diplomacy of think-tanks in the basis of four functions: "negotiation between states, communication with foreign publics, information-gathering and reporting, promoting friendly relations and minimising friction in international affairs". This framework of functions has been utilised recently by Axyonova and Lozka (2024) to study the role of Ukrainian think-tank experts as wartime diplomacy actors. Despite some differences, it can be argued that diplomatic functions in scholarship revolve around ideas of peaceful negotiation and communication between states, or international actors more generally, and tasks pertaining to representation, and information-gathering. In broader terms, the diplomat is conceptualised as an agent that bridges divides and

navigates across points of contention, protecting the state's interests in world politics, and by so doing, also reproduces the practices and norms underpinning international society.

The so-called 'modern diplomacy' that took shape after the Peace of Westphalia was initially concerned with 'high politics', focusing on primarily solving matters such as war and peace. The literature highlights several trends that have influenced the evolution of diplomacy since its emergence among European states around the time of the Westphalian Treaty. Petiteville and Placidi-Frot (2020, p. 47) assert that "[o]ver the next three centuries states pursued multilateral diplomacy at regular intervals (at major peace conferences), while transforming the practice by globalising dialogue beyond Europe, institutionalising it via international organisations, and opening it up increasingly to non-military issues and non-state actors". Views that the notion of diplomacy is becoming increasingly contingent, and diplomacy as a practice is becoming increasingly decentralised no longer sit at the margins. A quarter century ago Cooper and Hocking (2000, p. 361) argued that the evolving interaction between state and non-state actors, particularly CSOs, highlighted the need for a "re-calibration of diplomacy", which involves embracing more inclusive understandings of diplomatic practices. In other words, views that diplomatic practices must account for the plurality of new actors, additional sectors, and innovative functions in order to fully grasp trends of international relations have also gained prominence. Along these lines, Guilbaud (2020, p. 193) notes that "talking about diplomacy by non-state actors means recognizing that the international system is not merely between states, even if the issue of representation has not been resolved, as it remains fragmented between different kinds of actors (states, social movements, NGOs, firms, etc.) while states continue to be the depositary of sovereignty".

The question therefore is not if a state-centric understanding of diplomacy is accurate, but if it is broad and nuanced enough to account for the multiplicity and transformations of interactions at the international stage. If not, how can that be addressed? Sharp (1999, p. 51) asserts that once "[o]nce diplomacy is seen again in terms of representation rather than as an instrument of more substantive foreign policies, then it becomes possible to see how it expresses a human condition that precedes and transcends the experience of living in the sovereign, territorial states of the past few hundred years". The nation-state, in this view, does not beget diplomacy, but rather it is preceded by it, and moreover it perhaps can be partly seen as one of its products. Diplomatic theories that capture different non-state actors that shape diplomacy alongside foreign ministries and diplomatic services, in the literature, are often grouped in what is referred to as the 'new diplomacy' (Kelley, 2010), as opposed to 'old diplomacy' or 'classical diplomacy'.

Ramel et al. (2020, pp. 308–309) summarise contemporary diplomacy with changes to what they describe as the '3 Ds': the development of new diplomatic frameworks; the increasing diversity of diplomatic participants; and the growing density of diplomatic subject matter. According to Willetts (2000, p. 208), the role of international CSOs in diplomacy primarily stems from the UN, given that the "evolution in the UN from consultative status to partnership, with the

consolidation of extensive participation rights, is evidence that the interstate system has been transformed since 1945, both politically and legally, into a multiactor system". Willetts (2000) argues that receiving consultative status from ECOSOC in essence means that an organisation has achieved legal personality under international law, alongside states and intergovernmental organisations, although he does not extend such an argument to include national-level operating CSOs. There are numerous terms that have been combined with 'diplomacy', each focusing on different dimensions of analytical investigation. One of these avenues conceptualises diplomacy based on actors that either implement, or are targets of diplomatic activities (e.g., citizen diplomacy, public diplomacy, business diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, club diplomacy). Another avenue focuses on the themes and sectors (e.g., human rights diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, science diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, environmental diplomacy, economic diplomacy). A third category focuses on processes and instruments (e.g., multilateral diplomacy, track II diplomacy, para-diplomacy, network diplomacy). The increased terms and notions in the analytical investigation of diplomacy serve as an indication of the growing entanglement of actors, and the diversification of both diplomatic practices and academic inquiry.

There are also views in the literature that simply opt to ignore the 'old diplomacy' and 'new diplomacy' dichotomy, envisioning the diplomatic order as unpunctuated. For instance, Bàtora and Hynek (2014, p.1) propound that the diplomatic order is less state-centric than it is considered, positing that: "the modern diplomatic order has hitherto consisted of multiple co-existing old and new diplomatic orders of different historical origin, retaining their relevance". From this perspective, the pluralisation of diplomacy and its multi-order texture appear less as a recent phenomenon and more as a longstanding feature of the international order. Building on this, the authors distinguish between two sets of diplomatic spheres, namely "the core of diplomacy" and "its soft shell" (Bàtora & Hynek, 2014, p. 7). Whereas the core of diplomacy is considered to represent a state-centric closed system regulated by diplomatic law and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the 'soft shell' is imagined as a broad milieu with diplomatic interactions consisting of a wide range of non-state actors, including CSOs (Bàtora & Hynek, 2014, p. 7). According to Bàtora and Hynek (2014, pp. 1–6) the soft shell is composed of what are termed "fringe players"; however, moving into the core remains a difficult task for them, and the only ones that have been fully recognized as equal participants by states are the Holy See, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and the European Union. Nevertheless, even while Bàtora and Hynek (2014, p. 3) question the view that current transformations fundamentally challenge the state-centric sphere, they still acknowledge their significance, noting that such insights "provide useful leads on many important aspects of the changing conditions for the conduct of diplomacy". To this end, the pluralisation of diplomacy can be interpreted either as a challenge to the state-centric system or, if not, as a process of transformation in the conditions surrounding the conduct of diplomacy. In both readings, whether as a transformative phenomenon or as an extension of longstanding practices, the plura-

lisation of diplomacy is acknowledged as a process that reshapes contemporary diplomatic relations.

Scholars have proposed different framings for understanding the nature of non-state actors in the realm of international relations. In addition to the aforementioned notion of "fringe players" (Bàtora & Hynek, 2014, pp. 1–6), literature has also focused on para-diplomacy and protodiplomacy, both of which deal with the activities of sub-national governments at the international level. Whilst the object of attention for these two notions is the same, that is sub-national governments, the difference lies in the intentions and goals of such practices. Protodiplomacy captures instances where sub-national ambitions pertain to achieving an independent state (Criekemans, 2010). Similarly, Cornago (2018) notes that while paradiplomacy relies on constitutional loyalty between different levels of power, protodiplomacy is likely to increase political tensions between central governments and sub-national entities. Elsewhere, McConnell (2017, p. 149) asserts that some actors ought to be analysed through the anthropological notion of 'liminality' as they are: "inside and outside the international system, making use of borrowed meeting places and occupying liminal subject positions between political activist and official diplomat". Hence, another frame for understanding the nature of non-state actors in international affairs is by envisioning them as 'liminal actors' positioned at the threshold between official and unofficial diplomacy, as part of a wider undertaking whereby legitimacy is consistently constructed and contested via diplomatic activity.

At the practical level, two examples might help to elucidate these contemporary diplomacy developments pertaining to the fragmentation of representation (Guilbaud, 2020, p. 193) or the "re-calibration of diplomacy" (Cooper and Hocking, 2000, p. 361). First, the engagement of Independent Diplomat (ID), a private consultancy offering diplomatic services to governments and political groups, and second, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), an organisation representing nations and peoples are not sufficiently content with the representation by existing sovereign states under jurisdiction of whom they live (McConnell, 2017). Both these actors engage with diplomatic actors and challenge the traditional state-centric model by facilitating the inclusion of marginalised entities in official diplomatic processes, even in state-dominated venues. Through their actions, the ID and UNPO contribute towards expanding the scope of diplomatic theory, and redefining the role of non-state actors in global governance in the contemporary era. Indeed, such instances also demonstrate how communication (lobbying and advocacy) and representation, as key constitutive elements of diplomacy, are now claimed by different "fringe players" (Bàtora & Hynek, 2014), albeit the extent to which such claims are recognised and validated by nation-states is prone to different degrees.

The discussion above showed that in the current international order, partnerships between state and non-state actors represent a regular mode of action on the international stage. Building on this view, the working definition of diplomacy in this dissertation is borrowed from two authors. The first is Der Derian (1987, p. 93) who framed diplomacy as "a mediation between estranged individuals,

groups or entities". The second is Sharp (1999, p. 33) who defined diplomacy as "a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of necessarily ambiguous identities". While dated, these definitions remain well-suited to this research. In addition to depicting diplomacy as a process of mediating differences between groups and polities in world politics, they point to the versatility of diplomacy in non-traditional settings and practices of interaction, which is key to the arguments that this project advances. These definitions also highlight diplomacy's functional roles, such as representation and negotiation, while positioning it as part of a broader process of performing and constructing state identities. In this light, diplomacy serves as a device that redefines the frames of reference through which the state is perceived in international fora. Table 1 below outlines the definitions of the three core concepts that underpin this study: CSOs, de facto states, and diplomacy.

Table 1. The working definitions of three key notions utilised in the dissertation.

Civil Society Organisation(s)	"formal (professionalized) independent societal organisations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level" – Martens's (2002, p. 282)
De Facto State(s)	"an independent non-UN member state over which another state lays claim" – Kursani's (2021, p. 754)
Diplomacy	"a mediation between estranged individuals, groups or entities" (Der Derian, 1987, p. 93) "a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of necessarily ambiguous identities" (Sharp, 1999, p. 33)

The multilateralisation of international order, and additional accessible spaces for CSOs represent key developments in enabling their engagement in diplomatic practices, with technological evolution representing another avenue of transformation. One such change can be observed in intra-state relations, namely how foreign ministries have responded to the adaption of different technologies, not only adding new departments and offices for digital diplomacy, but also adopting virtual communication, expanding audiences, as well as adjusting the communication language to respective platforms. Bjola and Manor (2024, p. 4) push the argument further by claiming that "[d]igital diplomacy may also affect the balance of power between different countries, as it allows smaller and less powerful actors to have a greater voice and influence in international affairs". Likewise, Bjola and Manor (2022) assert that the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the application of what they refer to as 'virtual diplomacy', as due to the global pandemic, diplomatic actors were compelled to complete their tasks through digital devices.

According to McConnell and Manby (2024, p. 388) CSOs have benefited from digital technologies in three main ways, by "spearheading the effective use of ICT in multilateral diplomatic settings; professionalization of these actors as diplomats; and a shift from online observation of diplomacy to online partici-

pation". Digital technologies are likely to both ease the implementation and management of different activities for CSOs and create shortcuts for reaching out to state and non-state actors. Elsewhere, the engagement of non-state actors through digital means has been reported even in state recognition practices, namely in seeking digital state recognition from MNCs (Berisha & Kursani, 2025). To this end, scholarship leads us to expect that digital technologies are altering diplomatic practices, by providing additional modes of action to increase the diplomatic actorness of smaller units, such as domestic CSOs.

Some valuable findings have shed light on the various ways that CSOs across different countries have engaged in diplomacy and the foreign policy. Some of the fields where CSOs have been researched include track II diplomacy, public diplomacy and foreign aid. Perhaps of note, Betsill and Corell (2007) adopted the term 'NGO diplomacy' in examining the influence of international organisations in international environmental negotiations. Although foreign policy is traditionally regarded as the domain of governments, the literature now contends that CSOs, think-tanks and different groups in democracies are actively involved across stages of the policy cycle, such as policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. CSOs have been depicted as actors that are capable to project soft power (Nye, 2002). In democratic regimes it is common to encounter CSOs instigating and shaping debates and activities that aim to mobilise the public and institutions at the domestic level, in relation to the foreign policy orientations of a country, from arms sales to military interventions. In addition, domestic CSOs now figure across different foreign policy strategies and documents of states, as entities that are involved in the foreign policy process.

Embassies and diplomatic missions implement projects targeting the public and CSOs within their host countries. These projects illustrate multidirectional diplomatic dynamics, showing how CSOs may be affected or included in different states' foreign policies – either as joint implementers with their own state or as targets of other states' policies. Some authors, such as Cooper (2001) and Marchetti (2021), have utilised the concept of 'hybrid diplomacy' to capture instances where CSOs and MFA's undertake joint international actions. Marchetti (2021, p. 2) describes hybrid diplomacy as a "the synergy that occurs between governments and non-governmental organisations in the international ambition of a certain country". In such instances, MFAs and domestic CSOs create a united front that implements activities targeting different international actors, such as state governments, IOs, general publics and so forth.

When it comes to engagement abroad, the role of CSOs is evident in track II diplomacy, which involves non-governmental actors, including CSOs engaging in informal dialogue and problem-solving efforts, by acting as intermediaries, facilitating dialogue processes that seek to build trust, and offering expertise on conflict transformation. Marchetti (2021) notes how the engagement of the Italian Catholic organisation Community of Sant'Egidio together with the Italian Government led to the 1992 peace agreements in Rome between the parties in conflict in Mozambique. The engagement of Sant'Egidio' in the Mozambique peace process is widely considered as an example of successful CSO engagement

in conflict resolution. Beyond this story of success, CSOs are active participants in track II diplomacy across different regions and conflict zones, although the track record represents another question. The state-CSO alliance in Norway as performing a leading global role in peace-making has been described as 'the Norwegian Model' (Bandarage, 2011). More recently, Ketels (2023) asserts that Chinese CSOs are also involved in Chinese foreign policy as a tool to enable China to expand its global reach. Kopeček, Hoch, and Baar (2016, p. 455) inferred that civil society represents "a set of distinct and often divergent interests which can not only help to transform the conflict, but which may also oppose its peaceful solution" in Nagorno-Karabakh. Another study of the same authors demonstrates how Abkhazian CSOs initially contributed to conflict transformation through track II diplomacy but then shifted away from engagement with Georgian counterparts along the way (Hoch, Kopeček, & Baar, 2017).

Another area of interest pertaining to CSOs' international engagement relates to the general public of other states. As the general international public began to matter more in foreign policy debates, citizens became targets of different campaigns aiming to communicate and elaborate foreign policy choices, also resulting in an increase of transparency and influence. In this sense, foreign policy issues such as humanitarian interventions and military alliances are debated by publics domestically and internationally, with CSOs playing important roles in facilitating deliberation. The notion of 'new public diplomacy' as a looser notion that considers activities by non-state entities, including CSOs beyond the domain of sovereign governments, and implementation of actions directed at shaping perceptions, narratives and relationships on the global stage (Melissen, 2005). Therefore, literature attests that CSOs play a role not only in facilitating dialogue with domestic constituencies on foreign policy issues, but also targeting publics in other countries, implementing (new) public diplomacy, be it through partnerships with their domestic government, or alongside it. CSOs have been considered to raise awareness of the global public in global health governance, through their public diplomacy efforts and cooperation with international organisations (Barmania & Lister, 2013). The involvement of domestic CSOs in public diplomacy across different contexts has also been demonstrated (Broś, 2017; Zalas-Kamińska, 2022).

On the subject of international aid, CSOs are reported to mobilise national and international resources, deliver goods in other states, and implement development projects in collaboration with local communities, state governments and other international donors. CSO engagement in foreign aid can occur by aligning with the foreign policies of states or operating independently alongside these efforts. As with being donors, CSOs are also recipients of foreign aid, with local CSOs mostly being at the receiving end. Pallas and Sidel (2020, p. 1) write that "[e]ngagement with local CSOs can help democratize development by allowing some measure of local input and control over development projects", also noting that "CSO reliance on donor aid threatens organisations' sustainability during periods of aid reduction and donor exit". With some reservations, de facto states'

CSOs might also be perceived as 'more or less political', thereby representing a viable channel for engagement for international actors (Kyris, 2014).

In general, CSO engagement in track II diplomacy, public diplomacy, and foreign aid highlights different avenues in which CSOs can be seen in light of diplomatic theory and different dimensions of foreign policy implementation. It is thus argued that CSOs do not represent merely marginal actors that engage transnationally to pressure foreign policy decisions of states from the outside; they can also be regarded as actors that are participants inside the policy area itself. Examining the international engagements of CSOs through the lenses of diplomacy is a foundation that already exists in the literature. Yet, there are significantly fewer studies that look into domestic CSOs, and the dominance of international CSOs continues to mark the CSO research agenda in connection to the business of diplomacy. In addition, it is argued that domestic CSO involvement in the foreign policy of fully-recognised states compared to de facto states is likely to render the involvement of CSOs different, due to the nature of foreign policy questions at play. In other words, in de facto states foreign interactions are largely shaped around existential questions such as survival and recognition.

1.4 State and Non-state Realms

The literature debates presented thus far have shed light on the role of CSOs, de facto states and diplomacy. I suggest creating a mental map for these IR concepts using categories from the English School, and one way to observe state and non-state realms both interact and function distinctly, is by referring to the conceptual distinction between the international system, the international society of states, and the world society.[9] This distinction was advanced by one of the leading figures of the school Hedley Bull in 1977 in his book The Anarchical Society,[10] and this tripartite categorisation continues to represent one of the core mental maps not only of the English School but of IR theory in general. The 'three worlds' contain differences regarding principal actors and processes that they encapsulate.

Bull (2012, p.9) defined the international system as a situation where "two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions", inferring the international system as prone to power politics that stems from an ontology of states, in conditions of structural international anarchy. Indeed, such a take may also be considered as broadly parallel to mainstream realism and neorealism. While the notion of the international society also relies on an ontology of states, it instead focuses on processes of institutionalisation of shared interests and identities among states, with a focus on the creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules, and institutions (Buzan, 2004). Insofar as the order of the international society is maintained by institutions,

[9] Hereinafter in the text, I use "world state" and "non-state realm" interchangeably.

[10] I cite the 2012 edition of the book.

and membership is granted according to principles of the society, the state remains the main unit of interest.

By contrast, the third realm, the world society, elucidates dynamics under which different non-state actors, including CSOs, groups, transnational networks, and individuals interact both with each other and with other components of world politics. Therefore, not only do the notions of the international society and the world society focus on different units – that is, state and non-state actors – but they also represent distinctive domains. Although treated as analytically separate categories, the state and non-state realms are also considered to be in constant encounters with one another. As Reus-Smit (2004, p. 90) notes "international society is not a self-contained realm autonomous from the forces of world society". On that account, it is argued that one suitable way to envision the access and participation of de facto CSOs in international relations is through imagining the tripartite distinction of the English School, as shown in the Figure 1 below. Utilising Figure 1, one can imagine how de facto state CSOs, therefore, represent units that sit primarily in the world society, but are in constant contact with international actors located elsewhere.

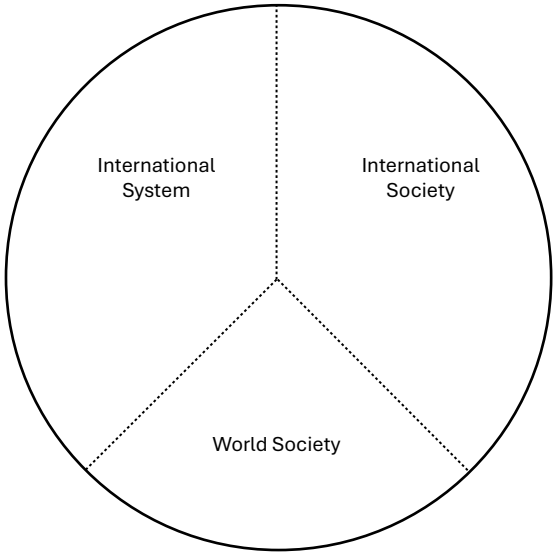

Figure 1. The three traditions of the English School – based on Buzan's triad illustration (2004), building on earlier work by Bull (2012).

In addition to this tripartite categorisation, one of the key features of the international society relates to the fact that it is comprised of primary and secondary institutions. The idea of an institution within the English School sits rather close to the constructivist conceptions of norms that underpin the macro structure, thereby an institution is envisioned as a non-legally binding underlying normative structure that shapes inter-state social interactions. According to Makinda (2002, p. 366) a primary institution represents "a stable set of rules, principles and norms". Institutions are considered to guide states' behaviour and interaction

within the field. In the literature the primary institutions of the English School are commonly considered to be war, great powers, diplomacy, the balance of power, international law, sovereignty, and territoriality, while some newer additions also often make the list, such as nationalism, the market, and human equality (see: Bull, 2012; Friedner Parrat, 2017; Buzan, 2018). In addition to these primary institutions, the international society is also comprised of secondary institutions that pertain primarily to organisational dimensions of world politics, which are also initiated from state action. According to Makinda (2002, p. 366) a secondary institution can be imagined as "a formal organisation", while Friedner Parrat (2017, p. 629) asserts secondary institutions are "formalized versions of primary institutions, and at the current time, they are formalized within international organizations". Buzan (2018) asserts that secondary institutions are similar to the key objects of attention of regime theory, or liberal institutionalism, these being international organisations, treaties and multilateral formulas. Once secondary institutions become locked, and become path-dependent, agents run into difficulties into modifying them.

There is no consensus on what constitutes primary and secondary institutions, nor on what an exhaustive list for either set of institutions would consist of. While there is agreement that institutions such as human rights and democracy gained traction inside international society, which was confirmed through the creation of various secondary institutions, they did not manage to become primary institutions. The increasing presence of secondary institutions in the international society indicates the growing relevance that different ideational frameworks have enjoyed since the turn of the century. At the same time, despite their robustness that extends back several centuries, dating from the emergence of the Westphalian society, the primary institutions of international society are also not entirely fixed, thus they are constantly evolving through reproduction by agents. Even notions such as sovereignty, war, and diplomacy are not immune to renegotiations and contestations – whilst they have proven largely persistent in maintaining their central position, they are also prone to incremental changes in the way they are understood, and thus enforced, by units.

If primary institutions rest in a state of continuous evolution, it also means that they may weaken to the point of delegitimisation, thus moving away from the centrality of the international society. Both primary and secondary institutions are influenced by various actors, including CSOs, that promote or contest them. This contestation might be imagined as a spectrum that ranges from contestation of their existence altogether seeking to replace them with some other institutions, to lighter forms of contestation, such as attempts to redefine them. Seen more broadly, primary and secondary institutions are not only of paramount importance for the interaction between state and non-state agents, but also for interactions between the international society and world society.

Viewing de facto state CSOs as actors within world society raises a key question: what type of diplomacy can be pursued and operationalised within this realm? Two conceptual tools are particularly useful for framing CSOs' ambiguous and shifting diplomatic objectives, as well as the complex ecologies of practice

within which they operate. The first is the notion of 'polylateralism' or 'polylateral diplomacy' (Wiseman, 2004, 2010). Polylateral diplomacy or state-to-non-state diplomacy is defined as "the conduct of relations between official entities (such as a state, several states acting together, or a state-based international organization) and at least one unofficial, nonstate entity in which there is a reasonable expectation of systematic relationships, involving some form of reporting, communication, negotiation, and representation, but not involving mutual recognition as sovereign, equivalent entities" (Wiseman, 2010, p. 24). Polylateral diplomacy represents a third mode of diplomacy, distinct from both bilateral, that is state-to-state, and multilateral diplomacy, that is involving three or more states (Wiseman, 2010). In addition, Wiseman (2010, p. 27) distinguishes between transnational and diplomatic interactions involving civil society actors such as CSOs, noting that polylateral diplomacy "clearly indicates that the participants are thinking and acting diplomatically: they represent, communicate, report on, negotiate with, and promote better relations between entities with standing in world politics" (Wiseman, 2010, p. 27). Accordingly, a commitment by actors located in world society to transnational causes or advocacy can evolve into polylateral diplomacy. In other words, the two can be seen as both closely connected and deeply intertwined.

A second conceptual frame to approach the evolution of diplomatic practices by non-state actors concerns the relationship of practitioners to diplomacy as a profession. Indeed, today's practitioners of diplomacy can include individuals and groups with little or no formal training in traditional diplomatic institutions, and to whom diplomacy is not the main job. In this context, Constantinou, Cornago and McConnell (2016, p. 3) have introduced the notion of "transprofessionalization: a productive development that reflects the expanded diplomatic space and intensified pace of global interconnections and networks, and the new possibilities they unleash for practising diplomacy in different milieu". The authors argue that the expansion of diplomatic practitioners beyond those with formal training does not herald a movement towards its deprofessionalisation, but rather signals an opening up of diplomacy both within and across professions (Constantinou, Cornago and McConnell, 2016). Taken together, the concepts of polylateral and transprofessional diplomacy reveal the evolution of diplomacy as a practice that is dispersed across actors, levels, and professions. Most importantly, the notions offer theoretical insight into how actors situated in world society enable diplomacy to shift across state and non-state boundaries, and between professional and informal forms of action.

1.5 Research Gap

The theoretical discussion of CSOs, de facto states and diplomacy uncovered that the international engagements of domestic CSOs across different contexts of contested statehood remain underexplored and insufficiently understood. Although the literature underscores the significance of informal channels in de facto states,

and that diplomacy is becoming diversified both in actors and practices, our understanding of the role and dynamics of domestic CSOs located within the de facto state category remains elusive. One path forward to address this is by offering a comprehensive picture of the international engagements of CSOs, not only examining a diverse population of CSOs with different missions, ways of working and partnerships, but also a set of diverse de facto state settings. Although recent gains have expanded our understandings, the two analytical categories of this study – domestic CSOs and de facto states – still remain on the margins of IR theory, therefore the comparison represents an original contribution to our analytical investigation of both these units of world politics. In some ways, the study brings into the spotlight actors who have remained somewhat in the shadows of their research field, united by the notion of diplomacy. Namely it brings domestic CSOs into the CSO research that is dominated by international CSOs, and more broadly it also focuses on a marginalised analytical category within the population of states, such as the non-UN contested polities that suffer from incomplete recognition. In parallel, diplomatic theory can benefit from deeper comparative accounts that focus on the diplomatic actorness of CSOs operating within de facto states. To this end, based on the assessment of literature strands it became clear that exploring new alternative theoretical and conceptual avenues to capture the complexities of informal interaction of de facto states with the international society, seen from the lenses of domestic CSOs, represents a timely endeavour.

CHAPTER 2.
Research Design

This chapter covers the methodological foundations of the thesis, including the selection of its cases, the selection of its CSOs, the collection of its sources, and its data analysis methods, as well as the thesis' ethical considerations and limitations. The study aims to compare the international engagement of domestic CSOs in de facto states, examining the themes of action, forms of engagement, and outcomes of their international interventions. By analysing the interactions between de facto state CSOs and international actors, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding on if and how domestic CSOs influence international relations in contexts of limited statehood. To examine the collected data the study relies on qualitative methods, such as two-level analysis, interview analysis, and process-tracing. A key strength of this dissertation lies in its combination of diverse sources and analytical approaches, as it customises specific methodological actions to align with the unique requirements of each research question. The research questions that guide the order of the key chapters of the study are as follows:

i. What is the scope and scale of the international activities of CSOs in de facto states (Kosovo, Palestine, Taiwan)?
ii. How do CSOs in de facto states become engaged internationally – (and how can the relationship(s) between CSOs and de facto state institutions be conceptualised)?
iii. What are the outcomes of de facto states' CSO international actions – (and how can they be understood in relation to IR theory)?

2.1 Case selection and timeframe

Three de facto states (Kosovo, Taiwan, Palestine) comprise the cases for this study, while domestically operating CSOs represent the unit of analysis. These three cases were selected because they exhibit extensive CSO international engagements, and because their respective CSO sectors also display considerable variations, allowing for comparison and contrast. The three entities possess regional and temporal variations in patterns of state-building, which resonates more broadly in comprehending the dynamics of de facto states as a separate analytical category. The entities under scrutiny came into existence in different periods, and are located in different regions of the world, which in case of commonalities should make our understandings stronger. At the basic level, the three cases have an ongoing contest pertaining to their legal status in the international system, falling short of achieving full UN membership. In spite of this, the three cases also possess considerable levels of bilateral recognitions, multi-

lateral membership and presence, and diplomatic networks, such as established diplomatic relations, diplomatic missions, and cultural and economic offices.

The case of Palestine possesses distinctive characteristics that distinguish it not only in comparison to the two other cases, but from most other de facto states. First, its degree of legal personality in the international arena is rather high, as it holds the status of UN non-member observer state, its right to statehood has been recognised across UN General Assembly Resolutions, it participates in organisations such as UNESCO, and maintains *locus standi* in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Another key difference concerns the inability of the Palestinian state to exercise effective control over its territory in Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). In other words, the Palestinian international struggle goes beyond legal international recognition and is connected to the capabilities to display empirical statehood and the aspiration to exercise de facto control over the territories, which does not apply to the other two cases in the study. Yet, although Palestine does not have full territorial control, it is nevertheless included in the broadly defined category of the 'de facto state' (Quigley, 2010; Kursani, 2021).

This dissertation employs the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) model for comparative case analysis. The MSSD is considered appropriate because all three cases share a key common denominator, namely problems with international recognition and with fully accessing the international arena. Despite this shared condition, the forms of CSO involvement give rise to different patterns, namely distinct forms of CSO international engagement and outreach. While one of the strengths of MSSD is that it allows for systematic comparison across cases to help analyse different patterns, one of the limitations attached to the model is its limited generalisability. Therefore, additional research is needed to shed light on CSO international engagement across the diverse category of the de facto state, and to discern commonalities and differences with CSOs in full-fledged states. Nevertheless, the MSSD is well suited for identifying patterns across comparable contexts, which is the main goal of my study. To complement the cross-case analysis, the study also conducts within-case comparisons for each case. In general, all three cases in a comparative perspective can shed light on the dynamics of CSO international engagements, due to their contested statehood and struggles for full international recognition, and their respective CSO sectors which may translate into different forms of CSO engagement.

This study covers the period starting from 2008, and it has no end date. I argue that the year 2008 represented an important year for the three cases under study, consequently for the category of de facto states in general. While Kosovo was declared an independent state in February 2008, it was also the year when Kuomintang's Ma Ying-jeou's eight year tenure as the President of Taiwan commenced. Ma's term was characterised by several changes in foreign policy, through the so-called 'flexible diplomacy' of maintaining friendly relations with the mainland while also pursuing multilateral memberships and international participation under different names. This period also marked a period of change in Palestine after the new Fatah government took power in 2007, with Riyad al-

Maliki assuming the post of Foreign Minister. During his term the State of Palestine increased its international acceptance, with a considerable increase in bilateral recognitions, and by joining several international bodies, such as UNESCO (in 2011) and INTERPOL (in 2017), and, most notably, by achieving non-member state status of the UN in 2012.[11] Given such important shifts, it is argued that the chosen timeframe offers a good starting point to investigate how CSOs international actions were adjusted to such internal and external developments in these three cases. The timeframe, with an exact start year, helps to concentrate the analysis into a clearly delineated temporal context. However, since the pre-2008 period is important for the study, another chapter is offered containing background information on the CSO sector on the three cases (Chapter 3).

2.1.1 Selection of CSOs – Criteria and Procedures

This study focuses on 15 registered non-governmental and non-profit organisations each in the three de facto states under scrutiny[12]. A CSO included in the study may also represent a network of multiple registered CSOs operating as a coalition or consortium, provided that the network itself is officially registered. Considering the qualitative research design of this dissertation, selecting 15 CSOs per case offers a manageable and practical sample size, taking into account the unique characteristics of each context. In accordance with the definition presented on the previous chapter, an organisation was considered eligible for this study when it was registered as a non-governmental, non-profit organisation in accordance with the respective framework of the de facto states under scrutiny. The organisation(s) thus had to be registered within the institutions of Kosovo, Taiwan and the Palestinian Authority. In cases where CSOs registered in other countries as part of diaspora and had no registration in the de facto state, they were not included, to ensure the study remains focused on a specific geographic and political context of the de facto state. It is argued that including CSOs registered abroad would introduce inconsistencies due to differing mandates and legal frameworks. Likewise, social movements, epistemic communities or different associations which were not registered as non-governmental, non-profit organisations were not included in the study. Attempting for a comprehensive overview, the current functioning of CSOs does not figure as a criteria or restriction when undergoing the selection phase.[13]

For the case of Palestine, the organisations considered valid for this study were those registered with the Palestinian Authority and operating within territories

[11] Interestingly, Al-Maliki was previously Founder and Director General of the CSO Panorama Foundation for the Dissemination of Democracy.

[12] 'Domestic' in this study entails solely that the CSO is registered and operates in the de facto state.

[13] Only one organization, the Foreign Policy Club (Kosovo case), was not active during the period of this dissertation. However, it was included due to its extensive earlier activity, and because substantial public data on the organization was available for analysis.

recognised by the international community as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), including East Jerusalem. Palestinian CSOs operating primarily in parts of the state of Israel were not included. In the case of Taiwan, organisations that were registered and operated within the territory of the island were considered as valid for selection. In the case of Kosovo, I also included one Kosovo-Serb CSO with the goal to check for alignment or differences in its international engagement, compared to Kosovo-Albanian CSOs. For the sake of consistency, it must be noted that similar CSOs composed of ethnic minorities linked to the former host state, do not exist in the other two cases.

It is also important to note that in 2021 Israel designated six Palestinian organisations as 'terrorist organisations', accusing them of ties with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).[14] This step had to be considered in the selection process. However, it is noteworthy that such decision continues to remain contested by state governments and international donors, including EU member states and democratic regimes. After Israel's October 2021 designation, the EU temporarily froze funding for these CSOs, awaiting further evidence from Israel to substantiate the claims, however, in mid-2022 the EU resumed funding. Moreover, this dynamic may be beneficial for the dissertation, as it exhibits an instance where the adversary state goes after domestic CSOs, in an attempt to shrink their international space. I consider this a dimension which must not be omitted from this study, as it serves to expose an interesting dynamic of the asymmetric international diplomatic battle between the adversary state and the de facto state. Four organisations from that list that have been included in the study.[15]

The selection of CSOs in this study was composed of a two-tier procedure. In the first phase I conducted a general screening exercise, by running a Google search for the words and phrases 'foreign policy', 'foreign relations', 'international', 'global', 'recognition', 'diplomacy', coupled with the terms searched individually 'CSO', 'NGO', 'civil society organisation', and 'non-governmental organisation', and the name of the de facto state. As an illustration, one cursory search was as follows: Palestine NGO foreign policy, Taiwan CSO diplomacy, Kosovo non-governmental organisation foreign affairs. Different results showed up, including the websites of specific organisations, and numerous documents and articles. Then an investigation was initiated by identifying and cataloguing organisations with an explicit international focus. In this phase, a preliminary list of around 60 names was compiled. In this screening phase, the first step was to separate CSOs with relevant keywords in their titles. Here, CSOs that had one of the aforementioned search terms in their title, along with the names of continents or regions (i.e., Europe, Asia, Balkans, Middle East), as well as international organisations (United Nations, European Union, Arab League) were identified. Additionally, organisations with the name of another state in the title were sought,

[14] The PFLP is classified as a terrorist organisation by the United States, Japan, Canada and the European Union.

[15] These are: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International-Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees.

though none were found in this category. Next, I listed these CSOs and manually consulted their websites and the visible public information that was available. As such, I went through their mission and vision; projects and programmes; and activities, checking the quality of website data and public information. Due to this procedure of 'keywords' in titles, as part of this first phase the following organisations were included in the study:

– Kosovo – Kosovo Centre of Diplomacy; European Policy Institute of Kosovo; Foreign Policy Club; Institute of Foreign Relations.[16]
– Taiwan – Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association; Taiwan United Nations Alliance; Association of Foreign Relations; Taiwan Alliance on International Development; Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association; Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation.
– Palestine – Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy; Defense for Children International Palestine.

Following the initial selection produced by the title search of CSOs, the next phase of the search commenced, involving a review of websites and online information. In this phase, I examined CSOs by evaluating five main dimensions of their work: activities, projects and programmes conducted abroad; activities, projects and programmes conducted domestically, but with foreign policy purposes, and preferably with presence of international actors; activities, projects and programmes aiming to reach international actors; organisations that enjoy participation in international networks; and organisations with extensive accessible online information. As the selection process advanced, I discarded CSOs sitting outside of these parameters, i.e. I removed several organisations which became ineligible for the study due to their location. Likewise, some others that did not have the legal status of a CSO or were part of government structures, such as Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD), Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) and Palestine International Cooperation Agency (PICA). I also excluded some entities which had a primarily domestic focus on domestic activities and lacked an international focus, and finally some others that did not have any public information.[17]

By contrast, during the selection process I encountered different organisations with specific international departments and international advocacy units (i.e. Community Action Center). Some organisations had windows on the website showing specific international advocacy work (Al Mezan, Addameer), or a specific foreign policy program (Foreign and Security Policy in the case of

[16] Institute on Foreign Relations and Foreign Policy Club had no active website, but the Google search engine provided information on their work and they were included in this inconclusive list due to their specific international focus, while I searched for additional information.

[17] TAIUNA's website had specific news links which led on Facebook, but was incorporated in the study, as the starting point of the activity was located in the website.

KIPRED). Some of the organisations had a specific window on the website for global activities (Tzu Chi), even showing a specific button for their 'international participation' (such as Environment Quality Protection Foundation). Other organisations simply implemented activities abroad, or activities that were intended to reach a certain international actor. The majority of the selected organisations are part of international networks, and several selected organisations are part of UN networks, such as holding the ECOSOC status. For instance, several selected Palestinian and Taiwanese CSOs maintain a consultative ECOSOC status with the UN. In the case of Palestine these are Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights; Al-Haq, Law in the service of Man; Badil, Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights; Palestinian Centre for Human Rights; Miftah Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Dialogue and Democracy. Three Taiwanese CSOs hold the ECOSOC status – Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF), Garden of Hope (GoH) and Tzu Chi Foundation. The selected organisations are also part of different international conventions – a pertinent example is EQPF, which is part of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conferences of Parties. Some other organisations are part of transnational CSO networks, i.e. the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) is part of the Resolve Network, and Garden of Hope in Taiwan is part of the Global Network of Women's Shelters to mention just a few. Based on such criteria, the full list of CSOs for each case can be found below. The Kosovar CSOs included in the study are:

1. FOL Movement
2. Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS)
3. Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS)
4. Sbunker
5. Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED)
6. Foreign Policy Club (FPC)
7. Balkans Policy Research Group (BPRG)
8. Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS)
9. Institute for Foreign Relations (IFR)
10. Kosovo Centre of Diplomacy (KCD)
11. Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI)
12. IPKO Foundation[18]
13. New Social Initiative (NSI)
14. European Policy Institute of Kosovo (EPIK)
15. Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS)

The Palestinian CSOs included in the study are:

1. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
2. Addameer (Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association)

[18] Renamed the Foundation House in 2024.

3. Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)
4. Miftah – Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy
5. Community Action Center (CAC)
6. Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD)
7. Al-Haq
8. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)
9. Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCIP)
10. Palestinian Human Rights Organisation Council (PHROC)
11. Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC)
12. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
13. Badil – Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights
14. Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS)
15. Stop the Wall

The Taiwanese CSOs included in the study are:

1. Garden of Hope (GoH)
2. Environment Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF)
3. Tzu Chi Foundation
4. Foundation of Medical Professional Alliance in Taiwan (FMPAT)
5. Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA)
6. The Taiwan United Nations Alliance (TAIUNA)
7. Association of Foreign Relations (AFR)
8. Taiwan Alliance on International Development (Taiwan AID)
9. Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association (TDDA)
10. Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF)
11. Taiwan Institute for Sustainable Energy (TAISE)
12. Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC)
13. Zhi-Shan Foundation Taiwan
14. Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps (TRMPC)
15. The Prospect Foundation

2.2 Data Collection

This dissertation relies on two main streams of original data: primary interviews collected for this study and website materials scraped from CSO websites. These two streams of data provide the building blocks of the datasets, compiled exclusively for the purpose of this study. Another third strand of data contains secondary sources that were collected throughout the period of the study and served as complementary materials. This third strand of data is both non-central and smaller in quantity, but it was still important for triangulation. The diverse range of primary and secondary sources enabled both the exclusive use of certain data and

the combination of multiple sources to address specific research questions and apply customised data analysis methods.

2.2.1 Website Data

The first research question of this study is: what is the scope and scale of the international activities of civil society organisations in de facto states (Kosovo, Palestine, Taiwan)? To answer this research question I compiled a dataset with the activities of the selected CSOs from Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan – that is, three separate documents in total. I considered that focusing at the activity level (micro level), allows a suitable way to answer the research question at hand, by gaining insights both into the daily work of the CSOs, as well as their wider goals and strategies. The materials were collected manually from the websites of the CSOs selected for the study, and I excluded additional materials such as social media pages, thus focusing solely on websites of CSOs to collect the data. The focus on website materials ensures consistency and comparability in the data collection process for this part of the dissertation. Websites generally offer more structured information, compared to the diverse and less formal nature of social media, which can vary both in format, depth and frequency of posting. Moreover, website data also allows for the systematic application of coding and analysis, as websites tend to follow more standardised formats. In the end, a total of 2,351 activities for the period 2008–2023 were collected. More specifically, 456 activities were gathered from Kosovar CSO websites, 724 from Taiwanese CSO websites, and 1,171 from Palestinian CSO websites.

The activities were selected through the following procedure. On the website of each CSO the search began by looking for an 'activities' section. If an 'activities' section was absent, I proceeded by searching for the window 'news', and in case this was not found either, I searched for the button 'advocacy' and 'events'. CSOs possess various set-up in their websites, hence they place their activities under different windows. Some organisations, such as Taiwan Root Medical Corps, had a separate window with 'international activities', and some like Al Mezan or Community Action Centre had specific pages named 'international advocacy'. In such instances, I included materials from those pages directly. Yet, in many instances the domestic and international activities were part of the same page.

This raises another important step in the data collection process, that is distinguishing between domestic and international activities. Due to the objectives of this research project, I included only the latter in the study. A CSO activity was considered international when: a) it was conducted abroad, thereby outside the territory of the de facto state; b) it was conducted domestically, but it comprised an objective that relates to foreign relations of the de facto state, assumed as presence or mention of an international actor in the activity; c) when the activity's objective was to reach international actors aiming to highlight a specific view or perspective; d) when the activity was domestic, but it was a hosting, reception and/or meeting with one or several international actor(s), i.e. a delegation or

institution. The CSO website activities were gathered manually in the Summer and Autumn of 2023.[19]

2.2.2 Interviews

In total 40 semi-structured interviews were organised for this dissertation during 2022–2023. The interlocutors were mainly CSO officials, but they were also comprised of some decision-makers, diplomats and scholars. The questionnaire contained 10 key guiding topics based on which the discussion was organised, structured in a rather wide fashion to account for the specificities of the sectors, and the diverse profile of CSOs. The recorded interviews were then transcribed. For Kosovo and Taiwan most of the interviews were conducted in-person through fieldwork stays. I conducted data-collection in Taiwan during September-November 2022, with the support of Dora Plus Fund, where I completed most of 15 interviews through meetings in cities of Kaohsiung, New Taipei City and Taipei City. Out of this pool of respondents, 12 were representatives working in Taiwanese CSOs; one was a Governmental representative, that is a High-ranking Representative of the 'Department of NGO International Affairs' at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; one was a researcher working on the topic; and one was a previous diplomat who was part of Taiwan's diplomatic service. I then travelled to Kosovo, where I organised 15 interviews between November 2022 and January 2023. From these interlocutors 13 were representatives of Kosovo CSOs, and I also met with the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora (serving as of late 2022), and one of the former Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Ten online interviews were conducted for this study focusing on the case of Palestine. Out of these, six interlocutors were active workers of CSOs at the time of the (online) meetings, and one was a previous international member of one of the solidarity movements included in the study. Travelling to Palestine for the purpose of fieldwork was not possible due to practical difficulties, as both the nature of my research questions and political and security challenges in the region made it difficult to conduct research safely and effectively. Not being able to complete fieldwork in the Palestinian Territories certainly did not aid the data collection process. Seeking to mitigate all this, I organised some interviews with researchers who have studied the Palestinian CSO sector and conducted fieldwork in the Palestinian Territories in the past. The insights of researchers who had conducted fieldwork and organised interviews with Palestinian CSOs in the past helped to somewhat mitigate this limitation. Moreover, after October 2023

[19] In the final list, three included CSOs did not have a functional website. Two of these were from the case of Kosovo (Foreign Policy Club and Institute for Foreign Relations). Whilst officials of these organisations were interviewed, offering valuable data, relevant for the other parts of the dissertation, they could not be included in this part of the analysis. The Palestinian Human Rights Organisation Council (PHROC) did not have a functional website at the time of data collection, however, given that it is an umbrella network of different organisations, the activities were shown inside websites of the other CSOs.

it became increasingly difficult to get in touch with interlocutors, and convince them to organise interviews. The majority of interviews were conducted in English, and several of the interviews in Kosovo were conducted in Albanian, in accordance with the wishes of interlocutors. Apart from one instance in Taiwan, where I was accompanied by a local person, the other interviews had no interpreters or facilitators. The goal was to conduct semi-structured interviews, allowing the discussion to generate different sub-questions depending on the organisation or country involved, and the expertise of the interlocutor(s). Some of my interviews were followed up by additional conversation and questions via e-mail and other platforms.[20] The final pool of interlocutors was also influenced by snowball sampling, where initial participants recommended additional individuals for interviews.

In ensuring an ethical approach towards the interlocutors I applied principles of informed consent (for the duration of the interviews); confidentiality (in managing the data solely for research purposes); and anonymity (during the data analysis and writing up stages). Before commencing the interview, I asked the interlocutors for consent to audio record the meeting and informed them that they may wish to ask to stop the recording in case of sensitive information, and that they simply may refuse to answer or stop the meeting at any point. In total, informed consent was not achieved only three times, whereby the interviews were not audio recorded, in accordance with the wishes of the interlocutors. On these occasions, I was still allowed by the interlocutors to take extensive notes. To protect the privacy and anonymity of the participants, all interviews conducted for this research were treated with strict confidentiality and used only for the purpose of this thesis. I informed the CSO interlocutors that in case of direct citations their names or positions will not be used. During the in-text citations I do not make direct reference to the name of the CSO. Likewise, in the citations the respondents' gender is also anonymised and I do not use pronouns to refer to them, instead I apply the term 'my interlocutor'. It is noteworthy that CSOs function as public entities with a permanent staff which is very displayed publicly, indicating their focus – CSOs thus promote their work in different platforms both locally and internationally. To this end, the category of CSOs does not fall under the special social categories or marginalised groups categories, despite the internal and external challenges that might hamper their operations.

Power relations were an important consideration during the direct interactions with the interlocutors. Access to participants in Kosovo was easier, due to my previous professional experience in the sector. As a result, in Kosovo the conversations often reflected an 'insider position'. By contrast, during interviews in Palestine and Taiwan I was faced with an 'outsider position'. This required more contextual sensitivity. Yet, it also meant that in some instances the 'outsider position' instigated curiosity among the interlocutors about my previous experience, even initiating comparative reflections. Another difference during the conversations was the working language, as all interviews with Taiwanese and Palestinian

[20] A full list of interviews can be found at the end of the dissertation.

interlocutors were conducted in English, whilst in Kosovo the majority of the interviews were conducted in Albanian. I am aware of the implications of communicating in mother tongue with some interlocutors, and in a second language with others, and I tried to mitigate this during the interviews with additional clarifications. What was particularly interesting is that my positionality as a Kosovar researcher was mentioned by Taiwanese and Palestinian interlocutors as a topic of common ground, reflecting 'shared struggles' of people coming from contexts of contested statehood. Therefore, a sense of a 'we' community frequently emerged in the conversations, bound by what was broadly framed as 'the shared experience of having a citizenship at risk of being denied'. Such dynamics became part of my field notes and post-interview reflections.

2.2.3 Additional Secondary Materials

As part of browsing for materials, I was able to collect a third strand of data. This additional secondary material was collected from different sources, including media news, reports, and documents. More specifically, the collected data included CSO reports, government press releases, documents, briefings, etc. Over time, through research encounters, this third group of materials was gradually populated with various data points and incorporated into the study, helping to deepen the empirical foundation of the dissertation. All secondary materials were collected from public sources and accessed through official websites, institutional archives, and online repositories during the course of the research. No public documents requiring formal access requests to institutions were sought for the purposes of this research.

Since the data was sourced from publicly accessible platforms, this also helped ensure consistency in the collected materials. While the majority of the documents were in English, some were in Albanian. The materials were systematically organised and evaluated for relevance and credibility and, over time, were incorporated into the study in order to expand the empirical foundation of the dissertation. In addition, the database of the additional secondary materials not only expanded the data pool but also allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the studied contexts.

2.3 Data Analysis

In this sub-section, I explain the data analysis methods used in different parts of this dissertation. This study combines three main data analysis methods, namely two-level analysis, qualitative analysis of interviews, and process-tracing. For the first research question (Chapter 4), I conducted a qualitative two-level analysis based solely on the dataset compiled with website materials. For the second research question (Chapter 5), I used both interviews and website materials, based on which I applied qualitative analysis of interviews, and process-tracing. In addition, based on the findings of these two chapters, the task in Chapter 6 is to

help conceptualise de facto states' CSOs within the broader context of IR research, through making use of findings from these two chapters and conducting a general analysis.

The combination of approaches, comprised of different analysis methods and sources, allowed me to carry out research that is itself comprised of perspectives based on three angles. I term these different angles the 'outside view' (Chapter 4), the 'inside view' (Chapter 5), and the 'zoom-out' exercise (Chapter 6). Initially, the collection and analysis of website data served as an initial step to observe how CSOs portray their activities and choose to present their narratives to the public. Here the goal was to collect data and conduct an analysis from the 'outside', that is through desk-research, without direct interaction with the CSO representatives. The insights gained from this angle of analysis were then complemented with direct conversations with CSO representatives, which allowed me to capture the 'inside' insights of the CSOs under scrutiny. The final exercise represents an attempt to broaden the perspective, and thereby to discuss the complexities of de facto states' CSOs, amidst the latter's interaction with other units that populate world politics. In the 'zoom out' exercise the inside and outside views become blended, and in addition, they are also integrated into existing IR debates, thus coming full circle, connecting the research to the literature debates presented in the theoretical chapter (Chapter 1). This way I start my analysis in Chapter 4 at the level of CSO activities (micro level), and I conclude it in Chapter 6 with discussing CSOs inside the changing UN-centred international order (macro level). To ensure transparency and clarity in the research design, each step of the data analysis process is presented below.

2.3.1 Two-Level Analysis

As noted, Chapter 4, that deals with scope and scale of CSO international activities across the entities under scrutiny, relied solely on website data. Categories such as issue areas (scope) and types of activities (scale) are nominal, and I conducted a two-level analysis for both, in order to inductively come up with typologies for each of the three cases. With consideration to the issue area (scope), in the first level I extracted one to three keywords or phrases from the website materials. The data captured essential features of the respective activity illustrated in the title or in the body text and were extracted in the exact form as they were framed and presented by CSOs. Similarly, for the type of activity (scale), one to three keywords or phrases were extracted as they were presented on the website, attempting to capture the description that CSOs attach to their engagements. In each activity I also coded the primary targets, thus one CSO activity could have more than one general target (i.e. state, international organisation, public). In addition to the type of the targets, the specific name of that targeted actor was also added (i.e. state-France, IO-European Union etc.). Such procedure was followed for each website activity in the dataset as part of the first level analysis. Following this, all possible extracted data on scope and scale were listed, for all three cases separately (Kosovo, Palestine Taiwan). In other words, I compiled

lists of all extracted words and phrases for issue areas (scope) and types (scale) of activities deriving from all CSO activities (of each CSO sector) in the dataset. A general list of extracted data on issue areas and activities for all CSOs in each case was created, then refined by frequency and relevance.

In the second level analysis, the data were clustered based on similarities and differences. Once the data were extracted and grouped, the second level analysis began. The yielded data then opened the way to generating broader, all-encompassing umbrella categories, to highlight the distinctive features of the contexts in which the CSOs of the selected de facto states operate. As the broader two-level analysis is generated by the researcher, it allows for a bigger role for drawing connections between different analytical levels. This procedure allowed the development of six typologies, stemming from a list containing all relevant options found in the materials. It ought to be noted that some issue areas and activity types that were not heavily represented numerically were included, as they were deemed relevant for understanding the international engagement of de facto states' CSOs. Such inductive typologies that start from keywords and end up in general umbrella categories, not only allow a process of conceptualisation from empirical materials (within-case), but also allow the examination of similarities and differences at the case level (across-case). Once the typologies were generated (two per case), the comparison of their findings – identifying similarities and differences – could begin.

2.3.2 Qualitative Analysis of Interviews

The interviews were analysed qualitatively, with the aim to identify patterns that emerged from participants' responses through a thematic analysis. Based on the suggestions deriving from the work of Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) the theme identification process from the data of the interviews was performed through a procedure comprised of six main steps – in addition to the first phase of the familiarisation process, understood as the initial reading of the data, the analysis comprised of: code generation, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme definition, and the writing process. Each of these steps entails a specific form of action. If the data is in audio form, then the first phase involves data transcription, whereby responses of the interlocutors must be transferred into textual data, in the exact form as spoken by interlocutors. As part of the code generation phase, some initial codes are generated inside the textual materials that help to distinguish the data based on encountered patterns. At this stage, the goal was to fit similar responses into similar wider general codes, while the codes themselves can be words and phrases that derive either from interlocutors or existing literature.

In the next phase, the generated codes were gathered into potential wider groups, serving as umbrella categories for the codes, hence for different data. The subsequent phase entailed reviewing and reworking these themes, through an iterative process between data excerpts, generated codes, and newly emerging themes. Following the review process, themes were refined and defined more

precisely, with each theme assigned a clear definition and name. This process could result in the creation of qualitative categories that align with one or more codes generated from the data, ensuring that the thematic structure accurately reflects the dataset. Finally, based on this procedure, the findings were written up and analysed in relation to the dissertation's objectives. This procedure was followed as a step-by-step guide, whilst throughout the process the data was triangulated with the other type of data items. In the following chapters, the analysis is also backed up with different citations from the conversations from the interlocutors, thus integrating not only the generated themes, but also the raw data itself.

In conjunction with the analysis of the interviews, I was interested in different patterns or themes that exhibited across different responses of the questionnaire. This type of analysis made it possible to observe and delve into different qualitative dimensions of the objects under examination, namely the *types of support* that can be identified in the CSO-de facto state relationship, and also the *relationship spectrum* with five categories between these two actors. After these final thematic categories were created, the writing up and analysis could take off. The applied method is apt, as it helps to escape the 'one size fits all' brush, and through interlocutors' responses helps to account for diversity not only on the case level (de facto state), but also on the unit level (CSOs). A similar procedure was conducted in the initial phase with regard to the different trajectories under which CSOs become engaged internationally – with the help of process-tracing four pathways were theoretically reconstructed as mechanisms with continuity and progression within different steps inside the chain, and later also probed empirically with a set of illustrative examples, as the sub-section below will show.

2.3.3 Process-Tracing

In the process of analysing various patterns within the dataset and examining the contexts in which CSOs engage internationally, I identified four theoretical trajectories that help to explain their international involvement. To explore these trajectories in greater depth while adhering to systematic research guidelines, I employed a two-tier process-tracing approach. In the first step, I constructed the theoretical pathways by formulating propositions around distinct mechanisms. In the second step, these theoretical mechanisms were tested using empirical illustrative examples from the dataset, focusing on most likely events. The development of these theoretical pathways followed both inductive and deductive reasoning. They draw from existing literature while also incorporating dimensions that emerged directly from the empirical data. This approach ensured a comprehensive framework that integrates established knowledge with insights derived from the dataset. As the second question of the dissertation is a 'how' question, PT appears a useful method to investigate the matter at hand. By opening the 'black box' that links the trigger and the outcome, based on a deterministic, rather than probabilistic ontology, process-tracing advances asymmetrical claims of causality (Beach & Pedersen, 2016; Collier, 2011; Ricks & Liu, 2018). The onto-

logical foundations of process-tracing require investigating if the mechanism in question holds, namely either there is presence of a link or not. In other words, differently from probabilistic methodological schools, in process-tracing there are no degrees to which a 'cause' contributes to a specific 'outcome'.

Two different process-tracing mechanisms can consist of similar components, but changes in the sequence not only alter the order of events, but also shift our understanding of the roles played by the entities which engage in activities. The order of sequences within a pathway can thus become crucial, as rearranging the order of the very same elements may lead to a different mechanism. The logical reasoning of counterfactuals implies to raise claims that X was the cause of Y, based on studying whether the absence of X results in the absence of Y, all other things being held equal. To this end, the method is useful to study the dynamics and interactive influence of how causal forces are transmitted through a series of interlocking parts of a mechanism, in order to produce a certain outcome.

It is noteworthy that in process-tracing the only causal claims that may be made with a high degree of confidence are for processes that are being investigated, not for the whole population. In other words, as a within-case method, process-tracing does not fare well in respect to external validity. This does not mean that process-tracing mechanisms do not hold in other contexts, but for such a claim to be made it must be tested beforehand. Indeed, the four generated pathways must be read in this light. Further, the fact that there might be several routes that explain a particular process does not impugn the causal claim, unless the causal claim is backed by different theories or causal mechanisms.

At this stage a few clarifications of how different terms are understood in this dissertation are warranted. In process-tracing different mechanisms which contain separate parts may be constructed, linking a trigger and an outcome through continuity and progression within different steps inside the chain. The entities which engage in activities enable productive continuity and the transfer of causal forces. The mechanism is divided into 'parts', and crucially, the parts are linked with one another through empirical evidence. The purpose of applying process-tracing in this particular study might be framed through the following questions: how can Y as an empirical outcome (that is, CSOs engaging internationally in issue areas close to foreign policy) be accounted for through different theorised processes? Do the proposed theorised pathways pass the plausibility probing, namely, does empirical evidence support the claim that they function as theorised under a set of scope conditions? To tackle such questions the study produces a set of theorised processes and probes the logic underlying the pathways through illustrative examples, based on the procedure below:

i. Four broad theoretical pathways were developed to capture various processes through which CSOs in de facto states engage internationally. These pathways were constructed using both inductive and deductive approaches, drawing on patterns identified in the empirical dataset and existing literature. At this stage, the pathways were conceptualised as abstract frameworks, generating within-case claims and establishing clear principles linking separate components

inside each mechanism. While all four pathways ultimately led to the same outcome – international engagement by CSOs in de facto states – they differed in their triggers, components and sequence of mechanisms, as well as roles and activities attributed to different entities. The theorised mechanisms provided a framework for understanding the diverse contexts, events, or venues in which CSOs interacted with various international actors, including states, international organisations, and foreign publics.

ii. In the second step, these four theorised processes were tested against the most relevant events identified in the empirical data, incorporating insights from both website content, interview findings and tertiary empirical materials. The selected typical events were not tied to any specific case but were instead evaluated within the broader context of 'CSO actions' derived from the compiled datasets. In essence, if the plausibility probing exercise yielded positive results, the theorised mechanism was deemed as a valid model.

2.4 Limitations

This dissertation has certain methodological limitations. Although most of the CSOs included in the study publish their activities on their websites in English, a notable limitation concerns the availability of source materials, which could have been expanded with proficiency in languages such as Mandarin or Arabic. While the study did incorporate materials in these languages – articles in Mandarin and Arabic accessed via websites were translated using Google Translate – the ideal scenario of direct language proficiency might have expanded the range of accessible sources and literature. Although this limitation was partially addressed, it could not be entirely overcome during research.

In addition, while increasing the number of cases and units of analysis is generally advantageous in this type of study, the current scope of 45 CSOs across three diverse contexts represented the practical limit given the study's qualitative design, time constraints, resource limitations, and contextual diversity. Given that the primary focus are local (domestic) CSOs registered in de facto states, the study excludes CSOs operating primarily outside of de facto states, such as diaspora organisations, or regional and transnational networks that are often comprised of a mixture between cross-border, uninational, and international affiliates. One such example can be found in the Alliance for Middle East Peace.

While the decision to focus on local-level CSOs was made for purposes of feasibility, namely analytical coherence and keeping the data collection manageable for the purpose of comparison, it must be acknowledged that this omission does not imply the insignificance of these actors. On the contrary, it represents a limitation that signals the need for more detailed academic attention in the future. The case is made, however, that the CSOs examined in this study are not monolithic actors isolated from regional and transnational networks. The interaction with different networks of organisations is also discussed as part of the study.

Future research could complement the findings of this study that focuses on local CSOs by addressing this limitation through research on regional networks of CSOs. Lastly, it ought to be noted that in order to ensure the validity of the results, data triangulation was consistently applied throughout the research process. As such, findings were integrated from multiple sources, including interviews, website data, and supplementary materials, to provide a comprehensive analysis.

CHAPTER 3.
Contested Statehood and Domestic CSOs in Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan

To lay the groundwork for the following chapters, it is important to provide a brief overview of the contestation of statehood and the international footprint of the three cases under scrutiny. Rather than presenting new findings, the goal of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with the three contexts by utilising existing literature and documents. The key political events and legal dimensions pertaining to their de facto statehood will thus be presented, in order to shed light to their struggle for survival and recognition in the international order. In addition, this chapter offers a brief overview on the emergence and key developments of the CSO sectors in the three cases, delving into the legal framework, and societal and political contexts surrounding the CSO functioning. The chapter shall clarify why the role of the CSO sector in the de facto state category can be considered both distinct, and more significant for their international engagements, in comparison to contexts of full-fledged polities, that do not face issues with statehood recognition and representation.

3.1 Kosovo: Statehood Contestation

Kosovo's constitutional status evolved several times during the existence of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992). The most significant change came with the 1974 constitutional amendments, which granted Kosovo the status of a Socialist Autonomous Province within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). The 1974 constitutional amendments expanded the competencies of Kosovo as a federal unit, rendering them similar to those of republics. Nonetheless, the constitutional status was revoked in 1989 with the rise of Slobodan Milosevic in power in Serbia, and the disintegration of SFRJ Yugoslavia soon to follow. In response to the legal status downgrade and repressive civic and political measures that were employed towards Kosovo-Albanians,[21] on 22 September 1991 Kosovo's Assembly declared independence. The declaration was not internationally recognized.[22] In years that followed, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), as a newly formed political party formed in December 1989, led efforts in creating and maintaining a parallel state system, relying on widespread civil disobedience, in which Kosovo-Albanians organised domestic service-providing institutions on their own. The LDK operated as a state-like structure across Kosovo, managing institutions such as hospitals and schools, and provided health and education services for Kosovo-Albanians. The

[21] At that period, the education system in Albanian language became outlawed.

[22] On July 2, 1990, Kosovo's Parliament approved the Constitutional Declaration, referring to the self-determination principle to declare Kosovo a Republic.

process of collecting finances, managing, and delivering services was thus conducted separately from the Yugoslav state, relying heavily on the volunteerism of groups, including individuals and organisations, many of which were unregistered and functioned on the basis of solidarity (Cocozzelli, 2009; Krasniqi, 2010).

At the same time, during the 1990s, the LDK developed a more coherent foreign relations dimension through these parallel institutions for the first time. Inside the parallel state architecture Kosovo created specific institutions, policies, and narratives, guiding interaction with international actors, such as state officials and diplomats, and international organisations. Kosovo's foreign activities during the 1990s were primarily designed to mobilise support from the international community for peaceful secession and independence. The foreign ties at that time were led by Kosovo's institutions in Prishtina and the government in exile, which was located in the German city of Bonn. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1990s the 'no war, no peace' situation on the ground became unsustainable. While human rights violations had been documented by international institutions and organisations for around a decade,[23] during 1997–1998 Kosovo's Liberation Army (KLA) entered the picture, organising guerilla military warfare against the Serbian army and Serbian state-supported paramilitary groups operating in Kosovo. The emergence of the KLA can arguably be attributed, at least in part, to the exclusion of an addressing of the Kosovo-Albanians' future from the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, which had eroded hopes among Kosovo-Albanian leadership for an international-led peace process on Kosovo's political status, and support of their demand for independence.

In 1997 and 1998, the number of Kosovo-Albanians victimised and forcibly displaced from Kosovo underwent a sharp increase, pushing the conflict towards a humanitarian crisis. This situation, coupled with a lack of willingness by the-then President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Milosevic to agree to a peace treaty in Rambuillet (France) in 1999, resulted in a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) led coalition to enforce the peace through military means (Weller, 1999). On June 9, 1999, the Military Technical Agreement (the Kumanovo Agreement) was reached between NATO representatives and Yugoslav officials, announcing the retreat of the Yugoslav army from Kosovo. One day later, on June 10, 1999 the UNSC approved Resolution 1244, authorising the creation of an international civil and military presence in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established, thus becoming the primary administrative governing structure inside Kosovo.

During the first phase of UNMIK's administration, the international community pursued a policy of 'Standards before Status', which obliged Kosovo's institutions to meet several targets before the political status was to be resolved. The main peace process attempts for settling the dispute by means of the inter-

[23] See: UN Yearbook from 1992 onwards, and Amnesty International Reports from 1989 onwards.

national community came with the Vienna Talks (2005–2007), through a series of meetings between senior delegations of Kosovar and Serbian representatives. The Vienna peace talks were widely supported by the international community, and were considered as a way to reach an agreement for Kosovo's future status. However, the talks proved to be of no avail, as the Serbian delegation refused to sign the so-called Ahtisaari Package,[24] which saw (supervised) independence for Kosovo as a solution. On February 17, 2008, Kosovo's Assembly declared independence, based on Ahtisaari's plan, in close coordination with key Western powers (Weller, 2008). Thus far Kosovo has been recognised by over 100 UN member states, whereas Serbia and two permanent UNSC members (China and Russia) continue to pursue a non-recognition policy.[25] At the same time, Kosovo has signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU in 2015, and has joined different multilateral bodies including the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Venice Commission. On 22 July 2010, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the declaration of independence of Kosovo was not in violation of international law.

Since 2011 the European Union (EU) has facilitated talks between Kosovo and Serbia in Brussels for a peace treaty and normalisation of relations, on the basis of an UN General Assembly Resolution adopted on 9 September 2010. The dialogue process has produced several technical and political agreements (with disagreement from the sides on the exact number) but has failed to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding agreement that is fully implemented on the ground. At the same time, the EU-facilitated dialogue has gradually been transformed into the key policy by the international community, led by Western actors, in quest of reaching a comprehensive and legally binding peace agreement. Seen in a historical perspective, Kosovo's contested statehood stands at the intersection between institutions of self-determination and territorial integrity that underpin the UN led post-1945 world order. While it remains one of the contested states with the widest diplomatic recognition, membership, and acceptance, it still lacks universal recognition and UN membership that would permit it to fully join the club of states as an equal member.

3.1.1 CSO Sector in Kosovo

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as a monist state with a communist system, generally prohibited freedom of association and did not permit the registration of CSOs. However, some groups were often affiliated with specific causes,[26] be it for religious, cultural, or social activities, or were established for various community purposes under strict control of the state. In Kosovo during the 1960s,

[24] Formally known as the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, the Ahtisaari Package, outlined a framework for supervised independence.

[25] Since 2017 Serbia has pursued a de-recognition campaign which has seen the number fluctuate.

[26] At that time, the terms CSO and NGO were not used.

1970s, and 1980s there were a myriad of secret organisations, pushing forward the idea of opposing the Yugoslavian state and unification of Kosovo with Albania.[27] These organisations operated covertly and illegally, with the majority being Marxist-leaning. The main activities of these organisations came through implementing actions in the public sphere, for instance spreading prohibited books and manifestos, and placing 'forbidden' items such as Albanian flags in public spaces.[28] A different wave of CSO proliferation in Kosovo emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with grassroots and voluntary associations being established and offices of international CSOs intensifying their operations. From the early 1990s international organisations and international CSOs focused on human rights began to visit Kosovo regularly for fact-finding missions. An important domestic organisation was the Council for the Protection of Human Rights (CPHR) and Freedom, formed in 1989. The CPHR played an important role in documenting the human rights violations during the 1990s, and developed ties with different international actors, including states, international organisations and international CSOs. Another major organisation was Kosova Humanitarian and Charitable Society Mother Teresa, formed in 1990, which in addition to aid and relief, offered medical services and was engaged in facilitating the functioning of maternity hospitals of the parallel state system.

Many other local organisations were not registered, and functioned solely on the basis of solidarity and activism. These grassroot organisations assisted the parallel state functioning through and, as framed by Cocozzelli (2009, p. 33), resulted in a "Kosovo Albanian NGO-based social welfare regime". In addition, these organisations played a role in legitimising and promoting the idea of detachment from Yugoslav state structures, as the first step to a future recognised independence (Krasniqi, 2010). An interesting dimension pertaining to the notion of CSOs and state-creation can be observed in Kosovo's parallel state offices that operated abroad in Western Europe. During the 1990s Kosovo maintained 19 'funds' in different European capitals, that were registered as non-profit organisations (Baze, 2022, p. 181). These funds served as pool funding resources, where the Kosovo diaspora donated money to assist the parallel system operating in Kosovo, namely covering salaries, utilities, and other daily functioning necessities.

Despite their legal status, these offices in fact operated as state structures, and attempted to perform state practices in interaction both with Kosovo diaspora and international actors in their host countries. The main fund was located in Germany, under the name of 'The Fund of the Republic of Kosovo' (Fonds der Republic von Kosova) (Baze, 2022, p. 181). That an entity registered as a 'non-governmental organisation' contains the name 'Republic' in its title, and self-identifies as a state, represents a conflicting logic in its own way. The fund in Germany practically represented Kosovo's government in exile – it became known as the

[27] In public discourse in Kosovo these organisations are still widely referred to as 'illegal organisations' or the 'illegals' (*ilegalja*). The Revolutionary Movement for the Union of Albanians, founded in 1963 and led by Adem Demaçi is one example.

[28] The use of the flag of Albania was prohibited until 1968.

Bonn Government – which was formed in 1991. This process exposes an interesting dynamic where the lines between non-profit associations and entities that self-identify and perform state practices become blurred. The example illustrates how Kosovo's institutions in the diaspora manoeuvred in different legal ways to ensure functioning in host countries in support of the independence movement, and 'putting on the hat' of a CSO was perceived as an effective method in that endeavour.

Following the establishment of the UNMIK administration in 1999, the activity of local CSOs became regulated under Regulation 1999/22, 'On the Organisation and Operation of Non-Governmental Organisations' in Kosovo. This way, a specific legal framework for the CSO sector was put in place for the first time during UNMIK administration. The post-1999 period saw a process of mushrooming of registered domestic CSOs, with 89 organisations registered in 2000, 59 in 2001, and 63 in 2002 (Gardner & Weichih, 2005). During this period, international funding and donor support for CSOs in Kosovo increased significantly, primarily, and almost entirely, from Western donors. At the same time, numerous international CSOs established offices in Kosovo. In the first post-intervention years, the local and international CSO cooperation was mainly focused on reconstruction, relief and aid activities, with their primary engagement being the rebuilding of destroyed household facilities and public spaces throughout Kosovo.

The legal framework, along with increased donor attention, catalysed the transformation of KCSOs and their roles in the public sphere. In the new political and economic system, CSOs came to be considered as important agents in assisting the transition from monism to democracy, and from a closed economy to free market capitalism. The functional dimension of CSO actions changed as well. Following a period of primary focus on service delivery, and then relief and reconstruction, CSOs gradually came to be seen as entities that conduct policy research, engage with the public in raising awareness and bolstering deliberation, participating in regional and international networks, and monitoring the work of public institutions. In other words, from circa 2002 onwards KCSOs came to be known as active agents in state-building and institution-building efforts, through new intervention instruments. After independence was declared in 2008, the legal framework largely transferred UNMIK regulations to Kosovo legislation, without introducing substantive changes. The CSO activity is currently regulated with Law No. 06/L-043 on Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organisations. As of today, Kosovo CSOs comprise an active constituent of public and political life, in their interactions with different actors, such as citizens, government, and international donor community. No policies or legal changes intending to shrink the space of the CSO sector have been recorded thus far, as of 2025.

In conclusion, the history of the CSO sector in Kosovo can be divided into three main segments: 1989 to 1999, 1999 to 2008, and post-2008. The 1990s marked a period where a myriad of voluntary and grassroot organisations surfaced, thus becoming active agents in supporting the functioning of the Kosovar parallel state. During the 1990s, these organisations which functioned primarily in the basis of solidarity, and represented one of the key, and sometimes the only,

service-providers. The period under UNMIK administration, from 1999 to 2008, witnessed the emergence of a legal framework for the first time, which was followed by a proliferation of registered domestic CSOs. After the humanitarian intervention, CSOs in Kosovo underwent a functional transformation, reframing their mission and vision, and types of activities, thus extending beyond service-delivery. In the first phase of the post-intervention era the main focus was on war reconstruction and relief, and in subsequent years CSOs diversified their fields of action, becoming supporting agents in state-building and democratisation efforts.

The post-2008 era after the declaration of independence, which also comprises the focus of this study, represents the third phase of development of the Kosovo CSO sector. The CSO sector came to be further refined, in parallel to the expansion of competences for Kosovo public institutions and the expanding recognition of Kosovo at the international level. Throughout these three phases (and especially in the last two) the CSO sector in Kosovo was heavily engineered by the Western donor community, and moreover the development and sustainability of the CSO sector has ever since depended on Western financial support ever since. Perhaps most importantly, during these phases KCSOs[29] maintained a close association with the idea of state-making, consistently serving as active agents in advocating for its legitimacy, both domestically and internationally.

3.2 Palestine: Statehood Contestation

In 1947 the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) proposed the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly as Resolution 181. Resolution 181 proposed the division of Palestine into two states – one Arab and one Jewish – with Jerusalem designated as an internationally administered city. Jewish organisations, such as the Jewish Agency, collaborated with UNSCOP during the drafting phase, whilst the Arab Higher Committee, as the central political organ of Palestinian Arabs in Mandatory Palestine rejected participation in the deliberations, questioning the legitimacy of this body. The Arab UN member states voted against Resolution 181 on the grounds that it violated the self-determination principle of Palestinian Arabs. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was declared, also marking the beginning of the full-scale 1948 Arab-Israeli War fought between the newly declared state of Israel, and Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. The Arab-Israeli War ultimately resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel on a larger territory than envisioned in the UN Partition Plan, also causing substantial demographic change with the mass forceful displacement of the majority of Palestinian Arabs living in what was Mandatory Palestine – these events are commonly referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba (the catastrophe) (Khalidi, 2007; Morris, 2009).

In 1949 the war came to an end through a series of UN-brokered armistice agreements, signed between Israel and Arab States (Egypt, Jordan, Syria and

[29] Kosovo-Serbian CSOs are excluded from the claim.

Lebanon), establishing new de facto borders that became known as the Green Line. At that time the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remained under the control of Jordan, and Gaza remained under the control of Egypt. The Green Line borders remained intact for nearly two decades until the Six-Day War (1967), fought between Israel and its neighbouring Arab states (Egypt, Jordan, Syria) from June 5 to June 10. The Six-Day War ultimately resulted in substantial territorial expansion for Israel, and once this short war ended, Israeli forces controlled not only the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza, but also the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, and the Golan Heights of Syria (Machairas, 2017). In response, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 242 (1967), calling for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied during the conflict, while also referring to the recognition of Israel's right to live in secure and recognised boundaries.

The Yom Kippur War (1973) marked another important moment in Arab-Israeli relations. The war fought by a coalition of Arab states, led by Egypt and Syria, against Israel in October 1973 did not lead to significant long-term territorial changes (Karawan, 1994). Another important development which occurred around that time was the recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' in 1974 by the Arab Summit.[30] The Arab states' inability to regain territories by force paved the way to the Camp David Accords, also known as the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. The peace and recognition established between Egypt and Israel marked a significant breakthrough in Arab-Israeli relations in 1978–1979, and kickstarted the diplomatic recognition of the state of Israel by the Arab states. In parallel, the transition of representation duties from Arab states to PLO contributed towards the strengthening a distinct Palestinian identity, with the notion Palestinian overtaking the Arab identity as the central discursive point.

A key turning point in the trajectory of events was the First Intifada (1987–1993), characterised by protests, demonstrations, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience by Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. On November 15, 1988, the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the legislative body of the PLO, declared the establishment of the State of Palestine (see: Prince, 1988). In the declaration of statehood, the PNC implicitly recognised the right of Israel to exist within its pre-1967 borders.[31] Effective control over the Palestinian territories was not fully established at the time. Palestine's statehood was shortly after recognised by a number of states, including major ones such as Russia, China, and India.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed their first agreements together in 1993, known collectively as the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords

[30] In 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was founded with the aim of establishing an Arab state over the entire territory of the former Mandatory Palestine, an objective that was later revised.

[31] This culminated with the 'Letters of Recognition' in 1993, which opened the way to the Oslo Peace Process.

recognised the right for the creation of a future Palestinian state, yet they failed to fully materialise in practice, also due to the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 (Hassan, 2011). The peace process continued in the coming years, under the auspices of the US, but without tangible results. The Second Intifada (2000–2005) sparked further unrest in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. During the Second Intifada another dynamic that became visible was the deepening rift between Fatah (PLO) and Hamas, a military organisation born out of the First Intifada and opposition towards the Oslo Accords (Nasrallah, 2013).[32] The two factions were later caught up in a conflict over the sharing of governmental power following Hamas' victory in the 2006 legislative elections, heightened by fundamental disagreements about the strategic goals of the Palestinian cause, and the tactics involved in pursuing them.

The Second Intifada ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza in 2005. The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza left a power vacuum to be filled by Palestinian factions. In June 2007, violent clashes erupted among Palestinian groups, resulting in Hamas taking full control of Gaza, with Fatah retaining control in the West Bank. Israel and Egypt both imposed a closure on Gaza from 2007 onwards. Several clashes occurred in the coming years between Israel and Hamas, through missiles and bombings, imposing a devastating toll on civilians in Gaza, the most serious of which started on October 7, 2023. Despite efforts from various actors, including Palestinian CSOs, for internal reconciliation, such attempts have failed to materialise in practice.[33] Therefore, Palestinian aspirations for the creation of an independent state have also been impeded by geographical and political internal divisions between Gaza and the West Bank, the Hamas and Fatah factions respectively.

Despite an absence of internal sovereignty, Palestine has achieved considerable achievements in international recognition. A significant milestone occurred in November 2012 when the UN General Assembly voted to upgrade Palestine's status from a non-member observer entity to a non-member observer state. As of May 2025, 147 of the 193 UN member states recognise the State of Palestine. Palestine enjoys membership in several important multilateral bodies, most prominently INTERPOL, UNESCO, and the Union for the Mediterranean, and it holds non-member observer status at the WHO. In addition to a wide bilateral diplomatic network comprised of missions and representative offices, Palestine maintains permanent missions at the Arab League (Cairo), the United Nations (Geneva and New York), UNESCO (Paris) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (Jeddah).

In parallel to Palestine's significant strides in international recognition and representation, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to persist, impeding the realisation of the two-state solution in practice, in line with the exercising of the

[32] Hamas has been declared as a terrorist organisation by the United States, and the European Union.

[33] In 2014 there a Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement was reached, however it failed to materialize in a functional government.

self-determination principle, as foreseen in UN resolutions (i.e. UNGA Resolution 3236, adopted in 1974). The Palestinian statehood issue continues to remain one of the most contentious geopolitical challenges, with numerous failed efforts for a peaceful and comprehensive peace settlement. The majority of the international community continues to consider the Palestinian territories after 1967 as occupied and supports the two-state solution along those lines. Nonetheless, achieving and implementing a two-state solution that satisfies the demands of Palestinians and ensures the security of Israel has become increasingly challenging over time.

3.2.1 CSO Sector in Palestine

The existence of Palestinian organisations is not a recent development in Palestinian society. Jarrar (2005) reports that some charity organisations functioned during the Ottoman Empire years. Sullivan (1996, p. 94) maintains that Palestinian organisations began as welfare organisations during the 1920s and 1930s, and expanded after Israel's occupation of territories in 1967. The 1967 Six Day War increased the number of Palestinian organisations, as well as posing changes to their structure, role, and purpose. These diverse community-based organisations became important actors during a period of occupation and political vacuum, thus assuming responsibilities that resembled the daily functions of a national government. The organisations during that period spanned from voluntary groups and community-based organisations to religious ones, such as church groups and Islamic charitable groups, providing a wide range of services and relief in different fields, namely health care, education, agriculture, housing, human rights, and legal aid. Sullivan (1996) argues that as late as in mid-1990s, the Palestinian CSOs in the West Bank and Gaza accounted for the majority of provided services in health care, education and agriculture. A common categorisation in research distinguishes Palestinian organisations of that period into Nationalist (PLO affiliated), Marxist, and Islamic (Challand, 2009).

The general scene of these organisations appears to have been aligned with these broader ideational frameworks, yet was still deeply embedded in the Palestinian liberation cause. In addition to service-delivery, in the pre-Oslo period Palestinian organisations in the West Bank and Gaza played a crucial role in activist resistance and the national struggle, being united under the national liberation umbrella. Yet this is not to say that the work of CSOs was free and unhindered, as larger structural conditions were far from conducive for their operation, due to occupation. The registering and functioning of organisations with a clear nationalist orientation was not possible, thus Palestinians organisations at that time were compelled to manoeuvre in order to maintain their role as crucial social actors. Some important organisations established in those years were the Palestine Red Crescent Society (1968), Al-Haq (1979), as one of the first Arab organisations specialising in human rights, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) (1979) and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) (1983). These organisations were mainly engaged domestically, whilst the PLO

handled the Palestinian cause internationally, however the PLO also provided significant financial support for a large portion of these organisations, as did Arab regional actors. In the 1980s the PLO continued to provide funding to these organisations, while at the same time, a number of organisations began to establish contacts with European donors (Hammami, 2000).

The view that the First Intifada and Oslo Accords reshaped the Palestinian CSOs scene in fundamental ways represents a consensus in the literature, and the events have been depicted as "dramatic structural changes" (Schulz & Suleiman, 2000, p. 433). During the First Intifada (1987–1993) a number of new organisations emerged on the scene, and according to Hammami (2000, pp. 16–17) the grassroot organisations were crucial in the first years of the First Intifada, however "[b]y 1991 many of these popular initiatives had transmogrified into professionally based, foreign-funded and development-oriented centers". Challand (2009, p. 80) reports that during the First Intifada the European donors started to replace Arab regional funding, giving rise to a more systematic experience of Western support to the Palestinian sector. With the creation of the PA in 1994, and the replacement of the Israeli civil administration in the West Bank and Gaza a centralisation process was put in motion, whereby the PA began to overtake governing authority and to establish its authority in service-delivery. In other words, the PA began filling in responsibilities where Palestinian CSOs had been the main, and sometimes also the only, service providers.

In subsequent years, the post-Oslo process contributed to a decline of grassroot organisations, and towards an increase of new donor-dependent organisations. Atia and Herrold (2018, p. 1044) depict this as a process of "professionalization, bureaucratization, and increased upward accountability" towards the donors, which according to these authors, at times even led to patronage. Similarly, several authors agree that the processes of 'NGOisation' and depoliticisation moved the CSOs somewhat away from their constituencies and the national agenda, in parallel to their increased dependence on Western donors (Jad, 2007; Hammami, 2000). This way, the structure and role of PCSOs underwent transformation, reflected with a move away from mass political grassroot movements, towards a Western liberal framework of organisations with a specific emphasis on short-term projects and development. The first phase of the post-Oslo period also produced a wave of conflict resolution and peacebuilding projects, which were regarded as a way to support the peace process. Wildeman and Tartir (2014) noted that the international community invested largely in peace and development in Palestinian territories, designed to support the Oslo Peace Process, although neither peace nor development were truly achieved. Therefore, in the wake of Oslo Accords there was a wave of "peace NGOs" or "love your enemy-projects", facilitated by Western support (Jensen, 2005, p. 5).

In the 1990s another dynamic that became visible was the bipolar relationship between the Palestinian CSOs and Palestinian Authority, which in parallel to cooperation, was marked by a power struggle arose over roles and resources (Schulz, 2012; Schulz & Suleiman, 2000). The newly created PA supported the establishment of new organisations, which also challenged the work of existing

ones. Challand (2009, p. 68) reports that while the number of the newly established organisations between 1990–2006 grew significantly (comprising 300 out of 1,000), the period marked the disappearance of many more others (at least 1,000 out of the 2,000 existing as of 1990). Overall, scholarship suggests that due to both the First Intifada and Oslo Accords, the PCSO sector underwent deep changes during the 1990s and early 2000s. Such changes were reflected across different realms, including structural attributes, types of interventions, and fields of action, and perhaps most importantly, the intensity of attachment to the Palestinian cause.

Jensen (2005) asserts that the CSO community in Palestine reconnected to the national cause in the wake of the Second Intifada. This view holds that by ushering in a new phase of political tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, PCSOs became compelled to rethink their position, which resulted in rejuvenating their attachment to the national cause. Yet, some other authors focus on the difference that the PCSOs played in the First and Second Intifada – such perspective holds that because of the transition from more grassroot formations to more professionalised CSOs, during the Second Intifada the connection with the national movement can be considered as significantly weaker (Hanafi & Tabari, 2003). What is certain is that the outbreak of the Second Intifada signalled the death of the Oslo peace process, and many of the notions that had shaped the PCSO sector during the 1990s required reassessment, both by the donor community and CSOs themselves.

The geographical and political division of the West Bank and Gaza in 2007 brought forth new challenges for the PCSO sector. Consequently, the international donors also readjusted their strategies and funding mechanisms. Geographical division also imposed practical difficulties in PCSO functioning and cooperation. Some Palestinian CSOs shifted focus towards facilitating a reconciliation settlement between the factions, especially in the first few years after the blockade. In this context, the already unique and difficult environment of the Palestinian CSO sector was further complicated by the polarised internal political dynamics and geographical division, in addition to the larger structural conditions of occupation. The situation remains complex in 2025, with the landscape of CSO operations in the Palestinian territories shaped by legal fragmentation and varying degrees of restrictive measures imposed by both Palestinian factions and Israel.

In the West Bank the key law that regulates the work of CSOs is Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations, approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2000, and supplemented by more recent legislative and policy measures.[34] Israel applies its domestic laws in East Jerusalem, although its sovereignty is not internationally recognised, whilst Hamas has imposed strict controls over CSOs in the Gaza Strip. In addition, in recent years Israel has imposed stringent restrictions and regulatory measures against Palestinian CSOs

[34] The law repeals the previous relevant Ottoman and Jordanian laws. See Hammami (2000) and Challand (2009) for a more thorough discussion on the struggle that preceded the approving of the law.

operating in its areas of control. As stated earlier, Israeli authorities have started a campaign to delegitimise and defund major Palestinian CSOs, by designating six of them as 'terrorist' in October 2021, a claim that has been rejected by most of the Western donors that support these organisations, who extended their support and stood by the six Palestinian CSOs. All that has been said thus far supports the claim that the contextual landscape of PCSOs is shaped by an interplay of complex geopolitical, socio-economic, and internal challenges that make their operations far more difficult when compared to the other contexts included in this study (Kosovo and Taiwan).

3.3 Taiwan: Statehood Contestation

During the first part of the 20th century the island of Taiwan was part of the Empire of Japan. In parallel, on the Chinese mainland a civil war between Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had broken out and carried on for around a decade (1927–1937). While Japan's regional power diminished due to its defeat in the Second World War, the Chinese civil war restarted in 1945. The island of Taiwan, however, changed hands – through the so-called Cairo Declaration (between United Kingdom, China, and the United States) in 1943, and the Potsdam Proclamation in 1945, the sovereignty of Japan over the island came to be effectively annulled. When, in 1949, the Chinese Civil War concluded with the takeover of the mainland by the CCP, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the KMT government under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek was transferred from Beijing to Taipei. The KMT continued to maintain both the continuity of the older Republic of China (ROC) state and the accompanying sovereignty claim for both the island and the mainland. Thus began a contest between two governments, the Republic of China in Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China on the mainland (see: Phillips, 2003). In the post-WWII era the dynamics of the Cold War were of great significance for cross-strait relations, given that whilst the ROC maintained strong relations with the US, the PRC was supported by the Soviet Union. When the UN was formed in 1945, the ROC became the representative of the Chinese people at the organisation.[35]

On the island of Taiwan the KMT imposed a one-party rule from its arrival, blurring the lines between the state and the party. In 1949 martial law was proclaimed by the Executive Yuan, the legislative body of the ROC. The constant threat of invasion from the mainland was also used to justify the limitation of rights and democracy at the domestic level (Chou & Nathan, 1987). While on the

[35] Officially, the island was part of Japan until 1952, when the Treaty of San Francisco (Treaty of Peace), which was signed a year earlier, came into effect. Also, two cross-strait escalations occurred during the first years of the split between Taiwan and the Mainland. These became known as the First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–1955) and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958). Despite a considerable number of victims these escalations failed to change the status quo, with both political control lines and sovereignty claims remaining intact.

political front Taiwanese presidential elections were held only in 1996, on the economic front the island's industrialisation intensified owing to domestic determinants, as well as US foreign aid (Liu, 1969). To this end, during the Cold War years Taiwan enjoyed a period of economic growth, and built an export-oriented economy based on private business, emerging as one of the biggest economies in Asia.

On the diplomatic front, the pre-1970s years were marked by frozen conflict, political stalemate, and international diplomatic competition over governmental recognition and legitimacy. The US policy of rapprochement with the PRC under the Nixon administration caused a major shift in Taiwan's international posture, whereby as part of endeavours to counterbalance the Soviet Union, the US sought closer ties with the PRC.[36] As a result, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 2758 on October 25, 1971, recognising the PRC as the sole representative of the Chinese people at the UN. Consequently, the ROC withdrew from the UN, and the PRC took its seat at the UN Security Council. What followed in subsequent years was a recognition switch, whereby countries began to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC government, while the ROC gradually lost international recognition, and its representation was downgraded from the level of embassies to economic and cultural offices. The UN switch began a process of gradual derecognition of Taiwan that continues to this day, leaving the island outside of the main multilateral body, and with limited official diplomatic opportunities at its disposal (Huang, 2003).

As of May 2025, Taiwan maintains formal diplomatic relations with 11 UN member states. Below formal state-to-state diplomatic relations, many countries maintain missions or offices in Taiwan. Taiwan has not formally declared independence from the PRC, which continues to claim sovereignty over the island. In 1992 a semi-official meeting was held between the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) of the PRC, and the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) of the ROC. This became known years later as the '1992 Consensus'. The PRC continues to claim that the meeting resulted in an acceptance that there is one China (including Taiwan), with the PRC as its sole legitimate representative, a view which is not shared on the island. The KMT interprets the 'consensus' as implying a maxim of 'one China, different interpretations', whilst the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) does not endorse any sort of One China principle or consensus with Beijing. During the 1990s a series of meetings were held as part of an opening of cross-strait relations.

In 2000 the DPP won elections and took power for the first time under President Chen Shiu-bian. Chen's administration sought to reshape relations with the PRC seeking larger UN participation, while persisting in its bid for full UN membership in the organisation (Wang, 2006). After KMT assumed power in 2008 under President Ma Ying-jeou, cross-strait relations underwent a significant

[36] The Joint Communique on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China was issued on December 15, 1978, and official recognition was made on January 1, 1979.

shift, marked by a period of opening and improved engagement, and the employment of "one ROC, two areas" policy (D. P. Chen, 2013, p. 24). Between 2008 and 2015, high-level talks were held led by the semi-governmental organisations the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) of the PRC and the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) of the ROC. This series of meetings culminated in a presidential-level meeting between Ma and Xi that was held in 2015.

Since 2016 under the leadership of the DPP Taiwan has been pursuing the implementation of the New Southbound Policy, a regional policy designed to expand engagement and exchange with 18 countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Australia, and to diminish reliance on the PRC (K. C. L. Lee, 2024). Concurrently, across the strait the rhetoric has evolved and harshened, instigating fears that the course of collision, and the forceful 'reunification' (in Beijing's parlance) have become irreversible. Seen in a historical trajectory, it comes to light that that government rotation in Taiwan represents one of the drivers behind (non)engagement with the PRC. More generally, the Taiwan contestation issue has also been heavily shaped by the balance of power and great power politics calculus, most notably pertaining to foreign policy choices and global ambitions of the US and PRC.

3.3.1 CSO Sector in Taiwan

As noted, the ruling party in Taiwan, KMT, imposed martial law between 1949 and 1987, which produced restrictions of association in the public sphere, including CSO formation. The pre-democratisation era in Taiwan is often referred to as the White Terror, in order to depict the repressive measures that were implemented as part of martial law. International CSOs began opening branches in Taiwan in the 1980s, which served as a foundation for the explosion of local CSOs later in the decade (Lin et al., 2005). Although some local grassroot organisations did emerge, such as Tzu Chi, which was formed in 1966 as a charity organisation with Buddhist origins, the state control for all forms of association remained strong in the pre-democratisation era. According to Tak-Wing (1993), in order to control civic organisations, the KMT's strategy was to involve party members in grassroot organisations (i.e. labour organisations, farmers' associations, Buddhist associations etc.), whilst banning those organisations that were outside of KMT control. Tien and Shiau (1992, p. 60) note that the party-state "served as the principal arbitrator that directed organisation and activities of various civic groups". As democratic reforms began to take shape in the 1980s, different local CSOs came to be established. The lifting of martial law in 1987 produced dramatic changes in political and civic life, including forms of association, thereby the post-1900 period proliferated and diversified the CSO sector in Taiwan.

Despite being outside of the United Nations, Taiwan is generally considered as a free and democratic polity,[37] with a conducive environment for CSO functioning. Based on the existing legal framework, the organisational forms are civil associations (occupational, social and political), and are regulated by the Ministry of Interior under the Civil Associations Act, and foundations, regulated by the Ministry of Interior under the 2018 Foundations Act. Since 2000 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains the Department of NGO International Affairs (previously named the Department of NGOs), mandated to enhance cooperation between the MFA and Taiwanese CSOs, and to assist in enhancing the international participation of Taiwan. In this context, the Department of NGO International Affairs manages cooperation with domestic CSOs, namely by supporting their participation in different international networks and platforms.

In addition to the government-CSO cooperation which is facilitated through a specific department, Taiwan's state structures (be it its government or the Executive Yuan) have also formed different mechanisms that in many ways resemble CSOs. For instance, in 2003 the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TDF) was founded with the support of the MFA and all major political parties, seeking to fund and implement projects that focus on democracy and human rights. Earlier in 1996 the Taiwanese government had established the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF), which according to its stated mission seeks to enhance "international cooperation, and to advance the ROC's diplomatic interests" (ICDF, 2010, p. 1).[38] An official development assistance policy has been pursued by Taiwan since the late 1950s, with the aim of providing economic support to partner countries. In this context, both the ICDF and the TFD serve as state tools of official development assistance by implementing projects in foreign countries across a wide range of fields, from democracy to international development. In parallel to the official development assistance, the international role and importance of Taiwanese CSOs increased from the 1990s onwards (W.-C. Lee, 2012). In 2017 the number of estimated registered CSOs was 50,000, of which around 3,000 had regular overseas activities (Chung, 2017).

There is evidence that links the increase of the number of CSOs in international activities to Taiwan's international footprint. T.-C. Lin and Lin (2017) have demonstrated how the emergence of CSOs in international projects has affected the geographical distribution of aid – namely, while during 1988-1997 under the ICDF more projects were implemented in partner countries, the involvement of CSOs resulted in increasing foreign aid projects in non-diplomatic allies. These authors hold that there has been a transition from official development aid (ODA) to a civil society approach to development aid and that this is important as the "integration of a civil society approach in aid to regions without diplomatic ties demonstrates the maneuvering of a small state to stay relevant internationally, but at the same time it fills a niche that its big state competitor

[37] See different indexes such as Freedom House, Democracy Index, V-dem etc.

[38] Its predecessor was the International Economic Cooperation Development Fund (IECDF), formed in 1989 by the government to assist friendly developing nations.

ignores, since China has no civil society organizations (CSOs) conducting foreign aid at the moment" (T.-C. Lin & Lin, 2017, p. 472). Recent findings challenge the second claim, as the increasing role of Chinese CSOs in international actions has also been documented (Ketels, 2023), therefore with the change of international strategies, the CSOs in the PRC appear to also have gained international relevance. Nevertheless, it remains accurate that for several decades Taiwanese CSOs enjoyed global reach, while Chinese CSOs lacked such engagement. In addition, more recent state-created entities such as the ICDF and the TFD play a vital role in assisting Taiwan to overcome its diplomatic recognition deficit and limited diplomatic reach, with CSOs also being important agents in such endeavours.[39]

3.4 Conclusion

By utilising established academic research, Chapter 3 has offered an overview of the contestation of statehood, and the emergence and key developments of the CSO sectors in the three cases. The chapter highlighted different historical and political paths that underpin the three contexts under scrutiny. Contextual conditions have led to differences in how each case is framed in the literature regarding questions of contested statehood. For example, in the case of Kosovo, the literature has prominently focused on the state-building process under international supervision, taking into account the post-war context (Skendaj, 2014; Visoka, 2019). In Palestine, the literature has extensively examined the dimensions of a stalled state-building process under conditions of occupation and failed international peace initiatives (Bouris, 2014; Persson, 2018; Turner, 2013). In Taiwan, scholars have examined the US policy of strategic ambiguity, which has enabled Taiwan to function as a de facto state despite the One China policy, the loss of its UN seat, and bilateral de-recognition (Chang-Liao & Fang, 2021; Zhongqi, 2003).

The chapter pointed to both similar and distinctive features across the cases. Although Taiwan transitioned to democracy in the 1990s, there is a longer historical trajectory of civil society groups extending back to the 1960s, which operated under strict state control (Tien & Shiau, 1992). This, along with a larger history of official foreign aid, may help explain why Taiwanese CSOs today maintain a wider global reach in foreign aid, a feature recognised in the literature (T.-C. Lin & Lin, 2017) which also renders it distinct in comparison to the other two cases of the study. The CSO sector in Taiwan has another specific characteristic, by having developed over a longer period of time within a context of full territorial control, and stronger conditions of economy and higher levels of democracy.

Literature on the CSO sectors elucidates that before declaring independence (Kosovo in 2008 and Palestine in 1988) solidarity groups and community-based organisations were involved in both domestic service provision and in contributing

[39] Interestingly, one of the first international assistance activities by a TCSO (Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps) was directed to Kosovo refugees in a North Macedonia camp in 1999.

to the legitimation of statehood claims (Sullivan, 1996; Cocozzelli, 2009; Krasniqi, 2010; Schulz & Suleiman, 2020). In Palestine, CSOs have performed these roles over a longer period, and continue to do so today. Further, another parallel can be drawn between the CSO sector in Kosovo and Palestine regarding the liberal framework which was put in place in the 1990s, marked by the emergence of Western donors as primary funders, following the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo in 1999. This donor-driven model not only increased the organisations' dependency but also positioned civil society actors as agents in peace-building and conflict transformation under the auspices of Western donors (Challand, 2011; Visoka, 2017). This was valid, at least for a period of time. The funding sources of the CSO sectors continue to differ to this day, namely, in Kosovo and Palestine, Western donors remain the main providers, while in Taiwan the sector relies on membership fees and private donations.

CHAPTER 4.
The International Activities of CSOs in De Facto States: Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan

In this chapter I will address the first research question of the dissertation, that is: what is the scope and scale of the international activities of civil society organisations in de facto states (Kosovo, Palestine, Taiwan)? To fully understand the foreign relations of entities with limited diplomatic relations, we must look beyond governmental interactions and consider CSO-driven side channels. Based on this, the chapter seeks to contribute towards better comprehending what occurs in the international engagement of de facto states outside of official engagements and interactions. For the sake of clarity, it is important to define what is meant by the scope of activities, the scale of activities and the targets of these activities. The scope of activities entails the primary issue areas or fields of the CSO activity. For example, CSO activities may fall under issue areas such as human rights, climate change, combating corruption etc. The scale is defined as the range of different activities that CSOs implement. Based on type, an activity thus may be an open letter, protest, online petition, meeting etc. Whereas the scope seeks to locate the issue areas under which the CSOs implement international activities, scale aims to unpack the form that these activities take. The target is defined as an object of CSO attention (i.e. state, international organisation, international CSOs, local CSO, citizens), that results from the interaction of scope and scale of activities.

Here are some examples. An activity may be a written submission, in the field of human rights, with the target being United Nations (more specifically, the United Nations Human Rights Council). Likewise, an international aid activity may fall under the issue area of poverty or global health, while the targets are citizens of a state, let's say Nepal, which in this study is primarily coded as 'public'. A target entails the main point of interaction of the international activity, thereby the actor with which the CSO held a meeting or attended a conference. A target is also the actor that CSOs aim to influence via their activity, for instance, if Kosovo CSOs sent a public letter to EU, then the EU is considered as the target, despite the absence of meetings or physical interactions between the actors. Such definitions of the scope and scale of the activities, focusing on the issue areas and types of activities, as well as the targeted audiences offers a viable approach to answer the research question at hand.

The chapter delves into the three cases in alphabetical order (Kosovo, Palestine, Taiwan). It proceeds by discussing CSO activities in each case, delving into how they are directed to different targets in separate sub-sections. The chapter then presents sub-sections on typologies representing the scope and scale for each case (within-case comparison), before concluding with a comparative sub-section that lays out similarities and differences between the international engagement of CSOs in Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan (cross-case comparison).

4.1 The International Activities of Kosovar CSOs (2008–2023)

In the following I present examples of different forms of international engagement of Kosovo CSOs. The scope and scale of engagements are presented separately for different target audiences, which in this case are the following international actors: states, international organisations, local CSOs and international CSOs, businesses, and the international community at large. Through these engagements Kosovar CSOs implement activities that aim to tackle a wide range of objectives, from human rights, democracy and anti-corruption, to advocating for Kosovo's international recognition and improving the domestic foreign policy cycle.

STATES

Several CSOs under scrutiny participated in KStalksEU, that was a public diplomacy initiative in the period 2013–2015.[40] The goal of the project KStalksEU was to increase interaction with state and non-state actors in the five EU non-recognisers (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Spain), and intensify exchange through what was termed as 'cooperation without recognition'. Among others, the project was comprised of visits and receiving delegations of these countries encompassing state officials, CSO representatives, and journalists in Prishtina.[41] KStalksEU can be understood in the wider context of an ice-breaking phase with non-recognising states, a milieu where non-state actors such as CSOs in both states are considered as necessary to kickstart the processual trajectory of recognition.

The project KStalksEU came on the back of another CSO-led initiative by Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) to improve relations with non-recognisers. In 2009 KFOS (in cooperation with the Foreign Policy Club) organised a series of activities targeting countries of the Arab World, such as research activities and study visits. In August 2008, around six months after Kosovo declared independence a conference was held in Prishtina, named 'Kosovo and the Arab World', with participation of Kosovo's then-President and Foreign Minister, while guests of the event included political and civil society representatives from the following Arab countries: Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan. Interestingly, among the representatives was one of the advisors of the then-Prime Minister of Lebanon Fouad Siniora (KFOS, 2009), which remains a non-recognising country to this day. As such, in the first few years after 2008, KCSO activity became more pronounced in targeting non-recognising (Arab) states through CSO-led campaigns. Among others, this also corresponds to Kosovo's priorities, namely in the first

[40] KStalksEU (Kosovo talks to EU) was a public diplomacy initiative supported by Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK, Kosovo MFA and Norwegian MFA, implemented by British Council Kosovo.

[41] For instance, Kosovo Centre for Security Studies organised different events with Slovak Foreign Policy Association in Bratislava, where Slovak state representatives were present.

decade after independence bilateral recognition represented one of the main pillars of Kosovo's foreign policy, a priority which has weakened in recent years.

Another form of interaction found in the materials comprises direct 'bilateral' meetings between KCSOs and states representatives, such as officials and diplomats (direct CSO-S format). Here the most frequent formula contains regular meetings with diplomatic missions accredited in Kosovo. Moreover, KCSOs also serve as a stop-off point for state delegations during their visits to Kosovo. Interestingly, the materials showed that in some instances KCSOs carry the potential to create linkages opportunities for meetings between Kosovo officials and foreign delegations. Creating linkage opportunities refers to enabling a state-to-state interaction to take place through CSO facilitation. KCSOs in Prishtina organise roundtables and discussions attended by diplomatic missions and Kosovo officials, bringing together state and non-state level representatives. One such example is the Kosovo, Peace and Democracy Summit, organised by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), Sbunker and the New Social Initiative (NSI), an initiative which brings together local and international guests, with participation of different groups, including state representatives and foreign diplomats accredited in Kosovo. Through organising events and bringing guests, the KCSO activities serve to create venues for additional interaction between Kosovo officials and other state representatives, at times unintentionally.

Another way in which KCSOs interact with state officials, including those from non-recognising states, is through attending the same events, and being part of the same venues abroad. Such events (conferences, workshops, seminars) are typically organised by other actors, such as local CSOs or international CSOs, and they offer possibilities for CSO-state interactions, including with non-recognisers. For example, as part of both EU, and EU member state programmes, KCSOs participate in Western Balkans Six[42] events, that include non-recognisers Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. In 2012 the KCSS participated in an event in Nepal, a non-recognising country, to offer the expertise to Nepalese officials in the process of drafting a National Security Strategy, and in 2015 the KCSS was invited by the US Department of State to participate in a summit in the US, focused in countering violent extremism, with different state and non-state representatives. Therefore, international events hosted by international actors provide KCSOs opportunities to engage with CSOs, officials, and diplomats from non-recognising states.

Empirical materials also demonstrate that KCSOs reach out directly to states, in quest of raising awareness on a particular issue, or urging them to consider a certain course of action pertaining to their foreign policy. Through lobbying and advocacy activities, such as open letters, Kosovo CSOs attempt to influence state decisions, and these open letters generally attempt to increase external support for Kosovo's state-making project. For instance, in 2009 FOL Movement wrote a letter to James Steinberg, the US Deputy Secretary of State, requesting more

[42] Western Balkan Six is comprised of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia, and Republic of Serbia.

support for the EULEX mission in Kosovo. In 2021 a group of Kosovo CSOs wrote a joint statement directed to US state officials, urging an invitation for Kosovo to participate at the Summit for Democracy. Lobbying and advocacy can be conducted through meetings, however open letters and statements offer a common way of targeting specific states to transmit specific demands, and exerting bottom-up pressure from one or more KCSOs towards respective states.

Researching and analysing bilateral relations of Kosovo with other states represents another lane of CSO activities with focus on Kosovo's diplomatic engagements. The majority of KCSOs under scrutiny possess a think-tank component in their work, and utilise resources to produce research regarding Kosovo's relations with other states, also offering policy recommendations to aid rapprochement with non-recognisers. With reference to thematic focus, most research on bilateral state relations focuses on Kosovo's relations with EU member states, including recognising member states and the five non-recognisers. A significant part relates to the normalisation of relations with Serbia through the EU-facilitated dialogue. Various events in Prishtina, such as roundtables and publication presentations, are attended by diplomatic missions in Kosovo, including non-recognising states. Through research production on Kosovo's bilateral relations, CSOs attempt to contribute to recommendations on increasing the quality of state-to-state relations.

In sum, there is a diverse array of engagements that can be observed with consideration to the interplay of Kosovo CSOs and foreign state representatives, both at home and abroad. These may be grouped into the following categories: direct meetings in Prishtina with missions or serving as stop-off point for state delegations visiting Kosovo; creating venues for interaction for de facto state officials; interactions in different events; lobby and advocacy activities for a specific issue, mainly through open letters; and research and analysis on bilateral relations. Engagement with state officials from recognising countries appears more intense, however, the analysed materials also demonstrate that CSOs engage with state representatives from non-recognising countries, via a CSO-NS (non-recognising state officials) formula. Finally, the external support that non-UN member states receive is paramount for their survival and recognition endeavours. Seen more widely, funds that come from state governments or agencies for the CSO sector, can also be understood as a way of support, from these confirmed states towards Kosovo's citizens, but also its state-making project.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

KCSOs engage with IOs where Kosovo lacks full membership in various ways. First, Kosovo CSOs are registered to attend IO events as representatives and participants. Representation refers to instances where a CSO is the sole representative in the venue, as no state officials are present in the IO event. Participation means that CSOs attend IO events where Kosovo lacks full membership, but where Kosovo officials are also present. On the subject of representation, the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) enjoys established cooperation with

NATO, and one website activity in 2017 claims that the KCSS was invited to *represent* Kosovo in a 'clear-house' meeting in Brussels.

Similarly, PIPS represented Kosovo in CoE events with member states organisations and officials, due to being part of the Schools of Political Studies network of CoE, where it continues to be the only CSO from a non-UN member state. For several years in the post-2008 period, PIPS had more access to CoE events and officials in Strasbourg than Kosovo officials. In fact, Kosovo officials were capable of accessing some events in Strasbourg as participants of the study-trip that was organised by the CSO in question.[43] PIPS took advantage of the affiliation with the CoE for lobbying campaigns supporting Kosovo's membership inside the venue, such as disseminating research on Kosovo's membership credentials, and most importantly, organised a meeting with the CoE Secretary General in 2014 to discuss eventual membership for Kosovo. Interestingly, with the shifting of the CoE's stance towards Kosovo, namely when Kosovo officials began to participate in Parliamentary Assembly events in 2016, and were granted the right to speak in 2022, the role of the CSO changed, thus from being a representative it became a participant.

The CSO's participation in IO events allows them to present perspectives from the CSO sector to international organisations audiences, alongside narratives presented by state officials. In this context, CSO participation can be utilised to promote positive aspects of de facto states with a different voice. Activities of Kosovo CSOs such as 'addressing' and 'meetings' at EU institutions in Brussels might serve as other illustrations of this stream of CSO actions. Outside of representation and participation in international organisations' events, KCSOs are also registered to lobby and advocate for different (non)decisions to be considered by IOs, namely by either voting for or against on certain issues. Throughout the years open letters have represented a common way for Kosovar CSOs to attempt to influence the positions of IOs. For instance, in a joint letter sent to the EU in 2018 it was stated that 'the EU has failed to pave a clear European membership path for Kosovo', whereas FOL in 2014 sent a letter to the EU regarding visa liberalisation. Lobbying and advocating also takes other forms, i.e. in 2008 FOL organised a protest in Prishtina against the UN 6-point proposal,[44] whilst in 2015 KFOS organised a petition directed to the EU regarding visa liberalisation for Kosovars. In their activities KCSOs also produce regular research on membership procedures and accession odds to different international organisations, from EUROPOL to UN. Whereas in certain instances the research is focused on discussing areas for improvement at the domestic level, it also underscores Kosovo's readiness to join these multilateral bodies, highlighting the added value that Kosovo's potential multilateral accession provides for the international community. The CSOs' research is commonly presented in roundtables or discussions

[43] This event, World Forum for Democracy, is designed primarily for activists and CSOs of member states.

[44] The UN 6-point plan was presented in a report of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

with participation of international organisations and diplomatic representatives accredited in Kosovo.

Another interesting dimension concerns CSO advocacy directed at their own institutions to apply for membership in specific multilateral bodies. This occurred in 2012 when FOL sent a letter to the then-Kosovo President urging her to apply for membership in Open Government Partnership (OGP), as well as offering co-operation and assistance for the accession procedure. Interestingly, shortly after the letter Kosovo's officials began procedures for membership in this body, although the extent to which the letter made an impact remains unclear. Finally, another lane of work pertains to implementing watch-dog activities towards domestic institutions, where regular monitoring and evaluating reports are produced, delving on the fulfilment of criteria from Kosovo institutions. For instance, KCSOs have conducted regular monitoring of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU and the European Reform Agenda (ERA).[45] By implementing research activities, Kosovo CSOs appear to make attempts to ameliorate the implementation of EU standards at the domestic level, and engage in knowledge production in the quest of contributing to future accession.

The EU comprises a vital donor of Kosovo's CSO sector. However, seen from a bottom-up approach for KCSOs the EU (and other IOs) represent more than donors, as they also comprise an object of attention, in attempts to increase Kosovo's presence, representation, and chances for future accession. In this vein, the objects of attention of Kosovo CSOs, with the targets being the EU, NATO, and the CoE, both in research activities and participation and representation in their headquarters. The UN, INTERPOL and EUROPOL comprise an object of attention regarding membership interest and research activities, but there is minimal participation of Kosovar CSOs in events organised in their headquarters.[46] Some other multilateral bodies such as the WTO and the Adriatic Charter also come to the surface more rarely. As of May 2025, Kosovo is not a full member of any of these multilateral bodies. Figure 2 shows the key IOs of interest to Kosovo CSOs.

[45] SAA represents the first contractual agreement between Kosovo and EU, which entered into force in 2016. ERA represents a set of documents with reforms in priority areas.

[46] In December 2023 the KCSS participated in the Annual CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding organised by DPPA's Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

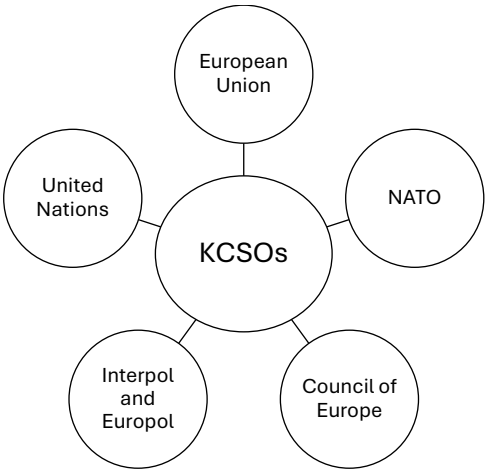

Figure 2. IO targets of Kosovar CSOs in their international activities.

In general, the empirical activities illustrate that KCSOs engage with IOs where Kosovo enjoys no membership in several lanes of action, which may be grouped as follows: representing the state by being the sole Kosovar representatives; participating in different IO events where Kosovo is not a member; organising lobbying and advocacy events from open letters, to petitions and protests to influence decision-making of IOs; producing research to support multilateral memberships; shaping a multilateralist agenda, by proposing membership in a certain multilateral body to Kosovo's institutions; and finally, monitoring the fulfilment of obligations by their own government, as a way to bring them closer to the respective organisation and contribute to future eventual membership.

LOCAL CSOs AND INTERNATIONAL CSOs

The engagement of KCSOs with foreign local CSOs displays a predominant regional focus, through collaborations with CSOs from the Western Balkans (Albania, BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia). These activities come mainly as a result of joint regional projects and programmes funded by Western donors. Regional venues offer KCSOs possibilities to interact with CSOs from Bosnia and Hercegovina and Serbia, two regional non-recognising countries. One example on how joint CSO regional cooperation unfolds is the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). The establishment of RYCO was signed by the Western Balkans' six Prime Ministers at the Western Balkans Summit held in Paris in July 2016, and is supported by bodies such as the EU, the UN, the OSCE and different EU member states. Moreover, CSO-CSO engagement was also part of the aforementioned KStalksEU project. In 2015, as part of KStalksEU, the KCSS received a Greek Cypriot delegation comprised of CSOs and university and media representatives. The delegation lacked political level representatives, and the meeting was focused on cooperation avenues at the level of CSOs. As Kosovo's MFA was one of the stakeholders in the initiative, this can also be seen

as an attempt to open new channels of communication and enhance Kosovo's acceptance in the eyes of the Cypriot public, thereby engaging in a process of processual recognition through CSO engagement.

Interestingly, a significant degree of interaction can be observed between Kosovo and Serbian CSOs. Again, most of these activities are funded by EU member states and other Western donors and countries. On the subject of scope, the dominant focus is on the normalisation of relations dialogue, including more specific themes such as reconciliation, dealing with the past and interethnic relations. An illustration worth mentioning is the formation of the Kosovo-Serbia Policy Advocacy Group (KSPAG) in 2018,[47] with the participation of eight Kosovar (both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb CSOs) and Serbian CSOs. The initiative was founded to support the EU-facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations through CSO engagement and organised events in Kosovo and Serbia, interacting both with the political level and the general public. In broad strokes, this can also be explained as a strategy of the wider international community to support the peace process and normalisation of relations through CSO engagement.

The interaction of Kosovo-Albanian CSOs and Kosovo-Serbian CSOs is present in issues of reconciliation and dealing with the past, however empirical materials show that Kosovo-Serbian CSOs are absent from the joint CSO attempts to support Kosovo's foreign relations. While the types of activities of Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serbian CSOs in connection to international actors appear similar, the scope of action exhibits differences. Kosovo-Serbian CSOs, therefore, refrain from participating in activities – either individually or collectively – that might contribute to enhancing Kosovo's international legitimacy, however, the pair are registered to cooperate in what could be considered as non-political themes, such as human rights, reconciliation and dealing with the past.

The aforementioned examples showed instances where CSO-CSO cooperation becomes visible through wider frameworks of support and facilitation, either from the international community or specific state governments. In addition, KCSOs also interact and cooperate with local CSOs from recognising and non-recognising states in the absence of these wider permissive frameworks, thereby creating linkages and partnerships on their own. Regarding geographical coverage, in addition to local CSOs from the region, partnerships and networks are also developed with EU member countries. For instance, in 2014 the KCSS participated in an event for professionals organised by Centre for European and North-Atlantic Affairs (CENAA) in Slovakia.

Another type of actor with which Kosovo CSOs engage and create linkages are international CSOs, that can be understood as CSOs that operate in numerous

[47] Balkans Policy Research Group (BPRG), Democracy for Development Institute (D4D), Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) and NGO AKTIV from Kosovo, and Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE), Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP), European Movement in Serbia (EMinS) and Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM) from Serbia.

countries. The dataset showed that some of these organisations with which Kosovo CSOs interact are the Open Society Foundation, the Aspen Institute, and the Berghof Foundation. The cooperation spans across different issue areas from violent extremism, democracy, and peacebuilding to EU enlargement. Interestingly, cooperation with local CSOs from other countries can also represent a route to meetings and interactions with other actors. For instance, in the past the Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) has participated in different events with the Aspen Institute in Germany, under the presence of German state officials. In such instances the access to state officials is reached through cooperation with an international CSO. In a similar vein, participating in such events also means increased interaction with local CSOs from non-recognising countries. For instance, in 2012 the KCSS participated in an event organised by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) in Spain, thus having the opportunity to interact not only with EU officials, but also with representatives of the Spanish Armed Forces and Spanish CSOs. Therefore, international CSOs represent not only an important donor and partner for Kosovo CSOs, but also provide an avenue for increasing exchange with global actors.

These examples demonstrate KCSOs' interaction with local CSOs and international CSOs in different ways: first, such interaction is a by-product of larger particular government policy, such as KStalksEU, to reach out to non-recognising states via CSOs. Second, CSO-CSO interaction also appears as a consequence of wider developments, such as regional dynamics or the international donor community, which consider CSOs as useful actors to be included in themes such as regional cooperation or conflict resolution. Third, the CSO-CSO engagement in the case of Kosovo also appears as the result of partnerships created by domestic KCSOs during their work and participation in different international networks. Finally, cooperation of KCSOs with international CSOs is frequent, and it also allows additional opportunities for interacting and networking with various actors, including local CSOs from non-recognising states.

BUSINESSES

The business sector does not represent a principal object of attention for KCSOs, however the CSO-B formula provides one interesting example that pertains to the IPKO Foundation's efforts to enhance state recognition in the digital landscape. In 2012, the Digital Kosovo project was launched, as an initiative aiming to promote and secure recognition in the digital domain, namely from internet platforms and tech companies. The project was developed by IPKO Foundation, with the backing of the Kosovo's MFA, the British Council and the Norwegian Embassy. The project Digital Kosovo sought to support the integration of Kosovo in the digital world and enhance its online presence, by sending letters and requests to different entities, most of which were tech MNCs. In addition to tech MNCs, the platform also reached out to airports, internet properties, universities, and other institutions thus seeking to ease the online surfing of Kosovars but also to increase Kosovo's presence in the digital world. Digital Kosovo was an open initiative,

thus private citizens enjoyed opportunities to be included, by offering references on which entities needed to be contacted. The route looked as follows: a Kosovo private citizen writes to the implementing CSO to flag Kosovo's digital absence from the online list of a tech MNC; the CSO then writes to the MNC outlining arguments on why Kosovo is a state and should be added on the list; this (potentially) results in Kosovo being added in the list as a separate state. During the implementation of the project, the Digital Kosovo platform sent thousands of requests to companies and institutions that reside in recognising and non-recognising states. While the exact number is not clear, in general terms the project resulted in an increased online presence for Kosovo.

The example of the Digital Kosovo platform designed by the IPKO Foundation reveals several important dynamics that pertain to recognition practices. First, it represents an example where domestic CSOs in cooperation with the foreign policy institutions, make efforts to enhance digital state recognition from non-state actors, such as (tech) MNCs. While it speaks of the importance that inclusion on digital platforms carries for states and citizens, it also shows that existing legal and political aspects of state recognition, which are predominant in the literature, may be insufficient to explain practical aspects of recognition, that also stem from MNCs and digital properties (Berisha and Kursani, 2025). Another interesting aspect is the inclusion of non-state actors, namely CSOs, in demanding state recognition from MNCs. The inclusion of non-state actors in seeking recognition can be comprehended as another development enabled by the technological evolution and the digital age, and more generally as a transformation of diplomatic practices in the 21st century, where non-state actors have acquired new tools to project their international actorness (Berisha and Kursani, 2025).

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

A noteworthy practice in the empirical dataset are processes of support provided by KCSOs to domestic foreign policy institutions, as part of attempts to improve Kosovo's foreign policy cycle. One form of codifying this cooperation is through signing agreements, namely memorandum of understandings (MoU) or memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) which have been designed to advance Kosovo's relations with the international community. The notion international community in this context can be understood as the sum of all the actors of international society, including state governments, IOs, businesses, CSOs, general publics etc. As shown in Table 2, the dataset reveals a mix of agreement types and cooperation aims, between various foreign policy institutions and domestic KCSOs.

Table 2. Cooperation between KCSOs and Kosovo institutions.

CSO	Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS)	Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI)	Balkan Policy Research Group (BPRG)	IPKO Foundation	Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS)
YEAR	2012	2016	2021	2022	1. 2019 2. 2022
TYPE OF AGREEMENT	Mandate-giving	Agreement	Memorandum of Under-standing	Memorandum of Cooperation	Memorandum of Under-standing(s)
INSTITUTION	Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament	Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament	Prime Minister Office	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora	1. Foreign Affairs Com-mittee of the Parliament 2. Diplomatic Academy (MFAD)
COOPERATION AIMS	'identify key features and failures in Kosovo's Foreign Service and will propose policy solutions to help strengthen Kosovo's foreign policy mechanisms'	'provide expertise, support, facilitate and organise public hearings, research, surveys, site visits and meetings for the Committee'	'engaged experts provide expertise, professional and substantive support for the dialogue process, and support the prime minister, his cabinet, and the deputy prime minister for European integration, development, and dialogue'	'developing and strengthening public diplo-macy and citizen diplo-macy of Republic of Kosovo'	'research, trainings and seminars, organising forums and roundtables, and also joint lobbying and advocacy'

In 2022 PIPS signed a MoU with the Academy of Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, and this came in addition to a previously signed MoU with the Committee of Foreign Affairs in 2019. The Balkan Policy Research Group (BPRG), with the support of the Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo (and currently with the support of the Swedish Embassy) offers technical policy expertise to public institutions across different fields, including foreign policy, regional cooperation and EU agenda. In 2021 the BPRG signed a MoU with the Prime Minister Office, as a means to support Kosovo's negotiating teams in the dialogue for normalisation of relations, by facilitating and covering salaries of individual consultants and experts – this agreement signed in 2021 built on a previous similar MoU that the BPRG had signed with the previous government.

In 2022, the IPKO Foundation signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the MFAD in the fields of citizen diplomacy and digital diplomacy. In 2016 the KDI met with the Committee of Foreign Affairs, where it was agreed that the CSO would provide expertise and assistance, as well as engage in organising events for the Committee on the subject of the EU-facilitated dialogue process of normalisation of relations with Serbia. One notable form of cooperation that was identified was framed as a form of cooperation that entails 'mandate-giving'. This occurred only once, when in 2012 the GLPS received a mandate by the Committee of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo's Parliament to assess the performance of Kosovo's Foreign Service. As part of the agreement the GLPS was tasked to identify key features and failures, and generate recommendations regarding Kosovo's Foreign Service.

These examples demonstrate that the institutionalised inclusion of local CSOs in Kosovo's foreign policy implementation process has occurred several times. CSO engagement in official foreign policy processes appears to emerge during all phases of policy-cycle, namely policy-making, policy-implementation, and performance evaluation. While delegating foreign policy tasks to CSOs, and including them in the official foreign policy process, Kosovar institutions themselves appear to gain some benefits, such as access to CSOs resources, expertise and technical assistance. Such a context where Kosovar CSOs become actively engaged in foreign policy process through institutionalised and codified agreements ostensibly stems from a combination of factors that include the short tradition in implementing an official foreign policy, and maintaining a diplomatic service and network abroad, coupled with a lack of sufficient resources as a developing upper-middle-income economy. As observed, this wider context contributed to producing a so-called non-conventional inclusion of KCSOs in the foreign policy cycle.

SCOPE AND SCALE

Figure 3 shows a two-level typology analysing KCSOs' issue areas. Certain activities and notions pertain exclusively to issues of statehood, legitimacy, membership in IOs and state recognition. Indeed, notions such as 'digital recognition', 'membership', 'joining United Nations' relate to Kosovo's attempts to integrate with the international society and join the club of fully recognised states. If one tries to place such notions into issue areas of global governance dynamics, one may struggle to find a suitable existing category, as they exclusively resonate with Kosovo's statehood battle.

In contrast, issue areas such as democracy, good governance, energy efficiency and violent extremism tend to resonate with wider global governance challenges, thus in essence being issues of a transnational nature. Based on the extracted data, the following categories were generated as part of the second level analysis: 'statehood and legitimacy', 'multilateralism', 'EU Affairs', 'non-recognising states', 'normalisation with Serbia', 'democracy, rule of law and good governance', 'peace and security', 'regionalism', 'energy and environment' and 'radicalisation and extremism'.

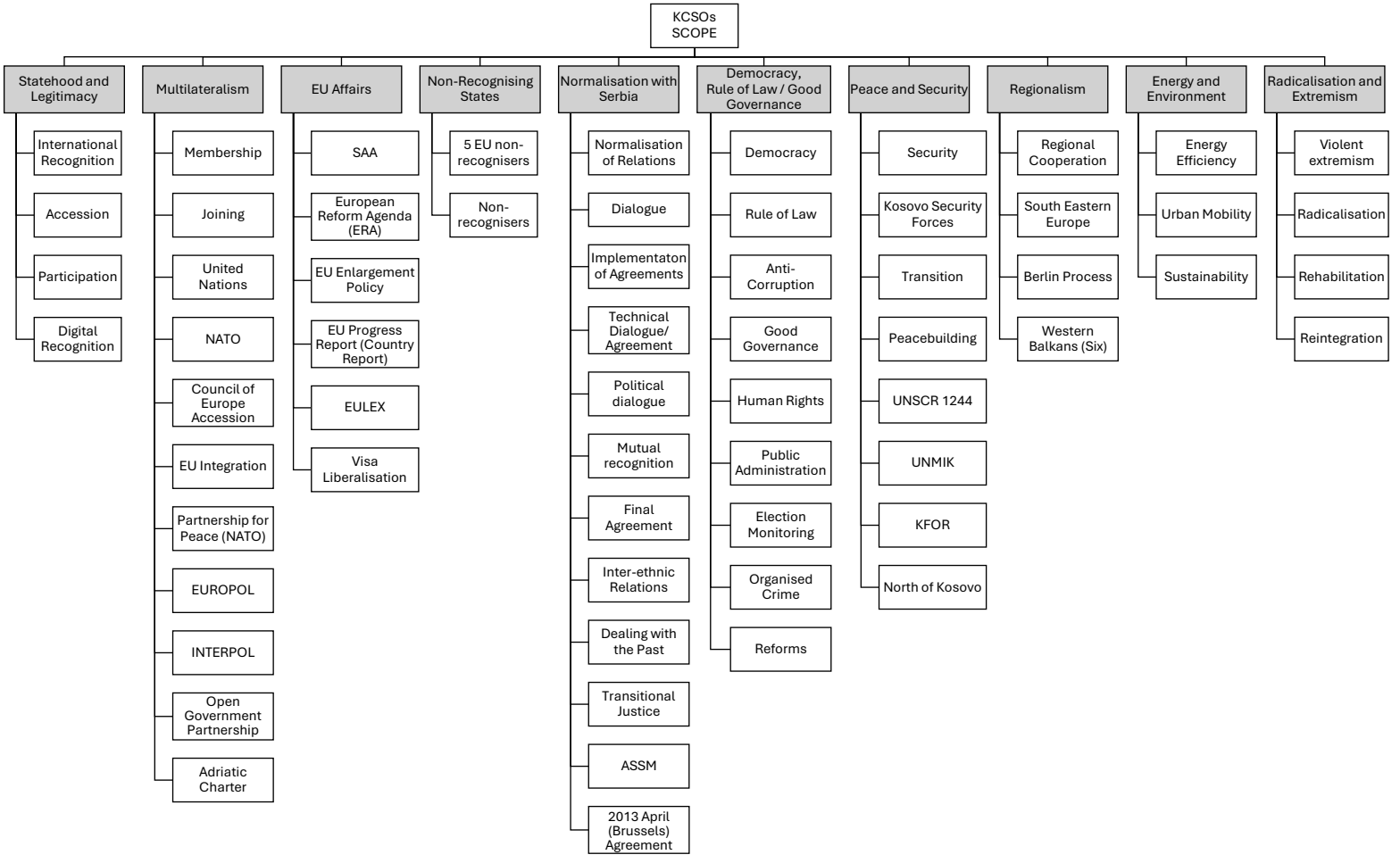

Figure 3. A two-level typology of issue areas of KCSOs.

In regards to the first level categories it becomes possible to observe a three-tier distinction that is comprised of: themes of interest for international donors, stemming from global governance issue areas ('human rights', 'democracy', 'anti-corruption', 'democracy', 'rule of law' etc.); political and diplomatic dimensions that contribute to Kosovo's contested statehood ('UNSRC 1244', 'final agreement', 'political dialogue', 'normalisation of relations'); and finally, ultimate goals of full membership in the international society exemplified through notions such as 'international recognition', 'accession', 'participation', 'membership', 'joining', 'EU integration', and 'digital recognition'. The intertwining and balancing of three dimensions – global governance issues and donor interests, Kosovo's contested political and diplomatic profile, and the ultimate goal of full membership in the international community – stand out in the typology above.

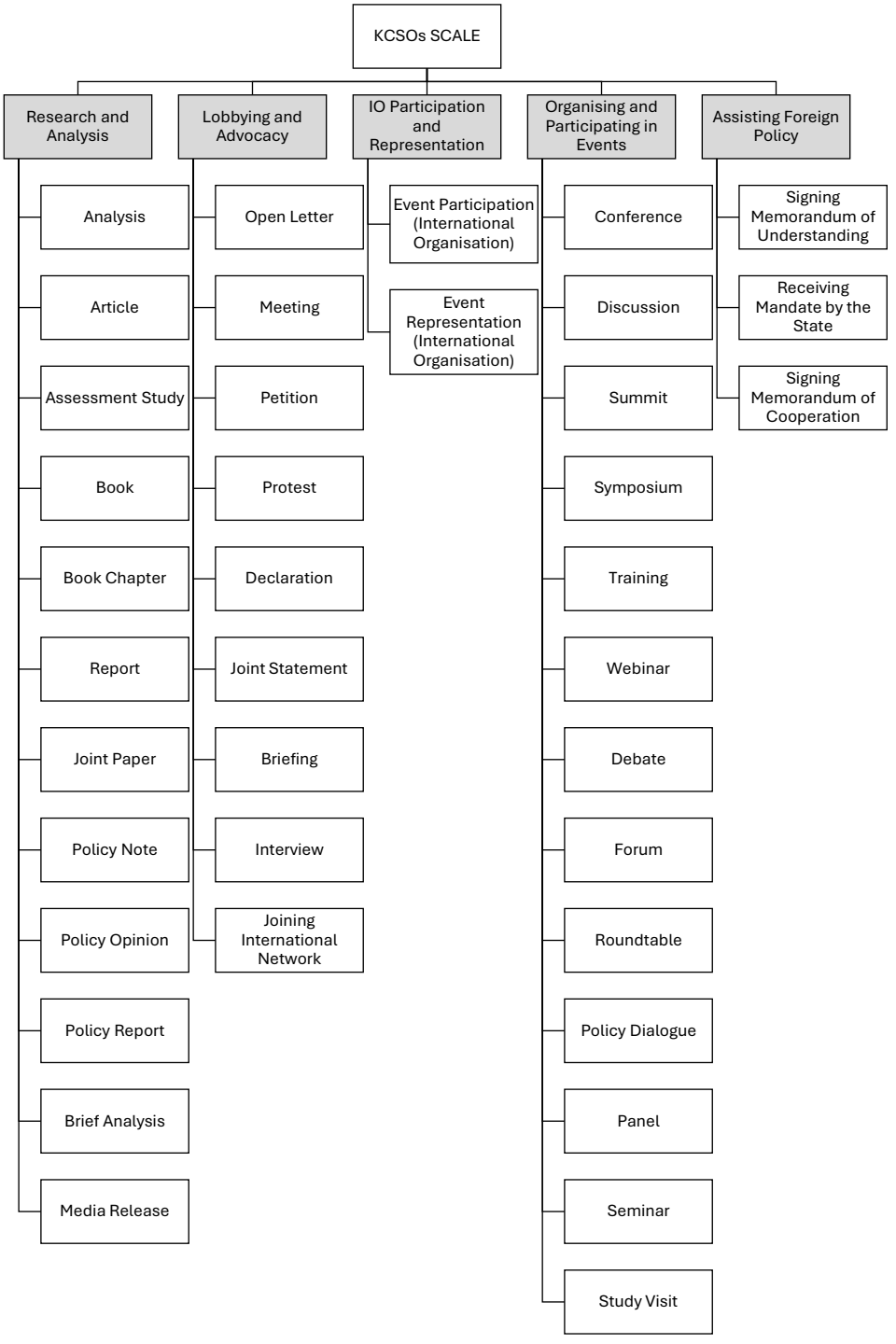

Figure 4. A two-level typology of activity types of KCSOs.

Figure 4 shows a two-level typology regarding the type of activities of KCSOs. Based on the extracted data, the following second level categories have been generated: 'research and analysis', 'lobbying and advocacy', 'international participation and representation', 'organising and participating in events' and 'assisting foreign policy'. In general terms, the activity types can be considered largely similar to how the literature depicts the activities of CSOs from full-fledged states, however, some specificities also emerge, namely 'international participation and representation' represents a specific category that resonates with statehood contestation, thus highlighting processes where CSOs draw the de facto state nearer to respective multilateral venues. While activities such as 'lobbying and advocacy', 'organising and participating in events', and 'assisting foreign policy' are not unique to de facto states, as they are common across full-fledged states, they must also be understood within the context of contested statehood. In this regard, in the process of implementation such activities take on specific characteristics that reflect the challenging international environment surrounding the de facto state's 'right to exist'.

4.2 The International Activities of Palestinian CSOs (2008–2023)

In the following I present examples of the different forms of the international engagement of Palestinian CSOs. The scope and scale of engagements are presented separately for different target audiences, which in this case are the following international actors: states (central and sub-state level), international organisations, local CSOs and international CSOs, businesses, and the public. The materials demonstrate that PCSOs conduct a range of engagements, from raising international awareness about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to facilitating fact-finding missions and sharing data they collected from the ground themselves, also relating to more general aims of contributing to ending occupation, and realising the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people.

STATES (and Sub-States)

The engagement of Palestinian CSOs with state officials encompasses various forms of interaction, and one common method involves holding meetings with diplomats and representatives of states that are accredited to serve in Palestine. PCSOs regularly organise meetings with diplomats and representatives of states, which are sometimes framed on CSOs' websites as 'diplomatic briefings'.[48] Similarly, Palestinian CSOs interact and meet with official delegations visiting Palestine, including Parliamentary delegations and those at the ministerial level. Palestinian CSOs accompany these delegations on field tours, commonly

[48] For instance: Al-Haq, Al Mezan, MIFTAH and Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR).

comprised of a set of on-site meetings, that serve to transmit to foreign state officials views about the situation on the ground, and also facilitate their interaction with Palestinian citizens. PCSOs also organise trips abroad, often labelled on CSOs' websites as 'advocacy missions', that are typically comprised of meetings with state and non-state actors in visiting states. For illustration, in 2019 the Defense for Children International Palestine jointly organised a briefing regarding the situation of Palestinian children's rights under Israeli occupation with the participation of around 60 US congressional offices. It is important to note that the materials show that interaction of PCSOs with other state officials rarely, if ever, contains representatives of the PA.

Open letters or public statements represent a frequently utilised intervention for PCSOs to get their message across in attempts to influence the official foreign policy of states, or as sometimes they are referred to: 'third states'. Open letters or statements are published on websites in English, and are crafted with the aim to not only reach states, but also to reach general publics and international media outlets. As this form of action represents one of the most crucial ways for international engagement, in Table 3 I have selected examples of one of the PCSO's included in the study (Al-Haq's) directed letters to states across different issues.[49] The table thus demonstrates how Al-Haq targets different countries, such as the UK, the US, Brazil, and Australia with various foreign policy requests and demands, namely state recognition of Palestine, UN admission, the normalisation of relations of these states with Israel, and arms embargos. The aim of such open letters or written statements can be divided in four general categories: lobbying for recognition, be it bilateral or seeking to secure votes for UN membership; advocating and reminding states to frame an issue differently; and condemning or expressing appreciation for a state's decisions. In this context, Al-Haq's open letters are implemented through a CSO-S configuration, focusing on fundamental questions of the international order and state foreign policy such as statehood, sovereignty and territoriality.

[49] Titles are shown in the exact form as in the website activity news.

Table 3. Open letters and written statements of Al-Haq directed to states.

Lobbying for Statehood Recognition	**Advocacy**	**Condemnation**	**Appreciation**
2020 – Al-Haq Sends Letter to An Taoiseach of Ireland, Micheál Martin, Urging Support for Occupied Territories Bill and the Recognition of the State of Palestine	2020 – Open Letter: UAE and Bahrain's Normalisation with Israel Incentivises Continued Colonisation of Palestine	2018 – Al-Haq Condemns Australia's Recognition of West Jerusalem as Israel's Capital	2023 – Al-Haq Welcomes the Adoption of a New Position of Australian Labour Government Recognising Israel's Continued Occupation of the Palestinian Territory, as Aligned with International Law
2011 – Open Letter to the UK Foreign Secretary urging the UK to recognise Palestinian statehood and vote in favour of Palestine's admission to the UN	2020 – Open Letter to the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on the Need to Impose a Comprehensive Two-Way Arms Embargo on Israel	2019 – Al-Haq Condemns US Decision to Recognise Israeli Sovereignty over the Occupied Syrian Golan	2022 – Al-Haq Welcomes the Recognition by the Catalan Parliament that Israel is Committing Apartheid against the Palestinian People and Thanks Catalan Parliamentarians

Al-Haq also pursued a strategy that sought to influence the foreign policy of another state by pursuing legal action in a court. In 2009 Al-Haq initiated a judicial review case before the High Court of England and Wales, contesting the UK Government's alleged failure to meet its obligations under international law concerning Israel's actions during Operation Cast Lead.[50] The case presented claims that UK was complicit in Israel's violations of international law, including an effective denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination. The Divisional Court in the High Court of Justice of England and Wales refused to consider the case, stating that a CSO from another country is not allowed to bring a claim on the UK's foreign policy for judicial review.

Despite the refusal of both the Divisional Court and the Court of Appeal to consider the suit, Al-Haq's attempt represented an interesting symbolic strategy, as it brought into focus the challenge of seeking judicial review on the grounds of international law, in a foreign jurisdiction. In November 2023, Defense for Children International, Al-Haq and Palestinian individuals in Gaza and US filed a lawsuit (through the Center for Constitutional Rights) in a federal court in California. The lawsuit argued that the Biden administration violated customary international law, codified in the 1948 Genocide Convention and the Genocide Convention Implementation Act passed by Congress in 1988. Indeed, these two examples highlight an interesting form of symbolic action, where local CSOs

[50] Operation Cast Lead was launched by Israel in December 2008, which featured the bombardment of the Gaza Strip followed by a full ground assault.

attempt to hold other states accountable for their foreign policy (in)actions, through utilising the respective states' legal systems.

Interestingly, in addition to governments, parliaments, and diplomatic services, local governments and municipal-level bodies represent an important target audience for Palestinian CSOs. Forging linkages at the local level as a form of CSO-Ss (CSO-Sub-state) interaction is commonly conducted via interaction with the municipal councils, mayors, and regional governments. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement regards local governments as one of its activity targets, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) represents another example of engagement with local governments. During 2023 there were several developments in this direction, where different cities such as Verviers and Liége (Belgium), Oslo (Norway), Barcelona (Spain), and Bélem (Brazil) severed or cut ties with Israel, in support of the Palestinian cause. While a direct link of causality cannot be claimed, the engagement of BDS with local governments is well documented, also through seeking to convince local governments to pass resolutions in support of Palestinian cause.

While diplomacy has traditionally and primarily involved interactions between sovereign nation-states, the importance of local governments is also recognised in scholarship, particularly through research on sub-state para-diplomacy (Criekemans, 2010). In this context, for Palestinian CSOs engagement with local governments arguably helps to mobilise a form of international support, given that sometimes local governments enjoy more freedom and willingness to take certain decisions (i.e. recognising the terminology of 'apartheid') in comparison to central governments. The interventions by Palestinian local CSOs made to local entities appear to forge a rare formula in world politics, thus transforming the city unit and city diplomacy as principal targets, pertaining to statehood and sovereignty questions. In the case of Palestine, the CSO-Ss (CSO-Sub-state) formula is widespread.

Overall, the materials have shown that PCSOs engage with other states through a multifaceted approach involving a combination of strategies, at home and abroad. CSO-S engagement represents an important avenue for the international engagement of PCSOs, including interactions with sub-state actors. The CSO-S dynamic in the case of Palestine includes hosting meetings at home and undertaking advocacy missions abroad, where CSOs meet and interact with state officials, as well as diplomatic services, but also officials representing cities, sub-state regions and local governments. Additionally, PCSOs regularly issue open letters and written statements directed at a specific state or group of states, for which a four-level categorisation was presented (lobbying for bilateral and multilateral recognition and accession, advocating specific decisions, as well as condemning or appreciating state decisions). In attempts to impact the foreign policy of respective states, submitting files to their courts has also been utilised. Little to no signs of PA involvement in the implementation of CSO-S activities can be found, be it in the form of support, joint event organisation, or even participation in activities.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The empirical materials show that the interaction of PCSOs with IOs and multilateral bodies is comprised of a diverse scope and scale of activities, including: lobbying and advocating for Palestine's membership in multilateral bodies; assisting the work of these IOs through documentation and delivering submissions; reacting against IO policies on their approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and counter-lobbying against Israel's presence in different multilateral forums. The main target organisations of interaction are the United Nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC)[51] of the Rome Statute (which is both distinct from the UN and affiliated to it) and the EU – see Figure 5.

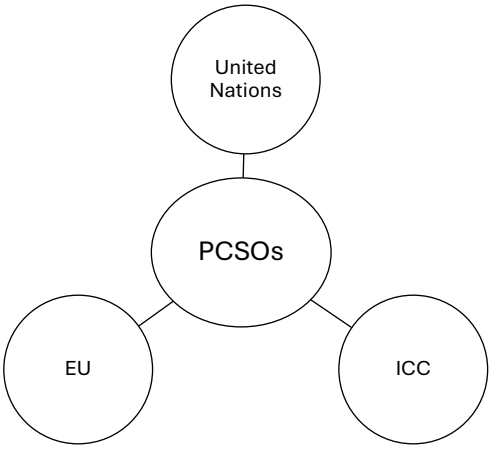

Figure 5. The main multilateral targets of PCSOs in international engagements.

PCSOs conduct a wide range of activities in interacting with the UN System, encompassing all constituting parts of the UN organisational chart, namely principal organs, subsidiary bodies, treaty bodies and specialised agencies.[52] The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) has a mandate from the UN General Assembly to cooperate with, and support Palestinian PCSOs.[53] The Division for Palestinian Rights in the UN is part of the UN Secretariat, and was established to support its work. The empirical materials show that PCSOs regularly interact with different temporary and per-

[51] The ICC is not a UN organ, but its relationship with the UN is outlined in the preamble of the Rome Statute.

[52] Some of these are: principal organs (e.g., the UN Security Council, General Assembly, International Court of Justice), UN Subsidiary bodies (e.g., the UN Human Rights Council), treaty bodies (e.g., the UN Human Rights Committee), and specialised agencies (e.g., the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

[53] It is comprised of a network of more than 1,000 CSOs from all regions of the world.

manent bodies and entities of the UN such as UN Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups or fact-finding missions, with a predominant focus on human rights.[54] The engagement of PCSOs with the UN was present even in the pre-2012 period before Palestine was accepted as a UN non-member observer state, albeit to a lesser degree.

The UN Human Rights Council[55] represents one of the most frequent points of interaction for PCSOs. PCSOs participate in UNHRC meetings in Geneva, where they give oral statements and conduct a variety of documentary research, such as written submissions, written statements, and alternative reports. The submissions are commonly conducted in the form of a coalition of several Palestinian CSOs, that are framed as 'joint submissions', focused primarily on the human rights situation on the ground. PCSOs are also recorded to conduct submissions on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Israel, a mechanism utilised by the UNHRC to monitor the human rights records of UN Member States. In the oral and written statement and submissions, PCOs not only present documentary data from the ground, but also offer recommendations directed towards the UN and its member states (as well as the ICJ, the ICC and the EU), including explicit interventions to build support for the exercising of the right to self-determination for Palestinians.

Due to Palestine's recognition from the majority of UN member states, the existing UNSC Resolutions that favour the two-state solution, and also Palestine's status upgrade in 2012, PCSOs enjoy considerable space to participate in events organised within UN structures. Some authors have framed the involvement of CSOs, academics, consultants, experts, independent commissions, and other groups of individuals that are not formally part of the UN, as the 'Third UN' (Jolly et al., 2009; Weiss et al., 2009). According to this view, the first UN is composed of member states, the second is composed of the secretariats, and a third layer is comprised of actors that are closely associated with the organisation, yet not formally part of it, such as non-state actors which are increasingly participating and contributing in UN events – indeed, the PCSOs engagement with the UN can also be interpreted in light of such framing.

The relationship between PCSOs with the EU represents a complex network of engagements and interactions. As part of their activities PCSOs conduct regular meetings with EU officials and institutions in the Palestinian Territories, and they also organise 'advocacy tours' in Brussels (as framed in the websites).

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[54] These include: the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territories; the UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel; the UN Committee against Torture; the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the UN Human Rights Committee; the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect; various UN Special Rapporteurs; and several fact-finding missions.

[55] UN human Rights Council is the main intergovernmental body within the United Nations for human rights. It has 47 UN members which are elected by the General Assembly.

At the domestic level, such meetings offer the chance to organise field tours and visit different areas of the Palestinian Territories. The EU also stands out as one of the largest international donors, providing substantial financial aid to support Palestinian CSOs. Nonetheless, despite this ongoing collaboration, through their activities Palestinian CSOs continuously demand policy change from the EU and its member states, by expressing condemnation for EU decisions, and advocating towards the EU to take a stronger stance against Israel.

Table 4 shows selected activities from one or more Palestinian CSOs that are implemented with the aim of influencing the policy of the EU towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the period 2008–2023. The activities range from addressing the EU institutions in Brussels through meetings, to letters sent or statements issued in their websites. The activities encompass a diverse variety of raised issues or demands, pertaining to respect for human rights; appealing to the EU for a stricter foreign policy; clarifying the EU's stance on certain issues; advocating towards the EU to endorse certain decisions (i.e. the UN Database on businesses related to settlements, or arms embargos against Israel); and supporting the rights of Palestinians, including realisation of the self-determination principle. In essence, the examples illustrate how PCSOs attempt to influence the policy and decisions of the EU through public activities, to bring into the spotlight respect for international law, all this while also enjoying a donor-beneficiary relationship on another level.

Table 4. Examples of PCSOs advocating various issues to EU institutions (2008–2023).

YEAR	TITLE	MAIN ISSUE/DEMAND FOR THE EU	ACTIVITY TYPE	IMPLE-MENTING CSO(S)
2008	RE: European Union Announcement to Upgrade Bilateral Relations with Israel	"in the process of developing a closer EU-Israel partnership, Israel's obligations under international law towards the Palestinian population are made central to this process"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs
2009	EU must condition its upgrade process with Israel upon Israel's compliance with its international legal obligations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory	"to condition its upgrade process with Israel upon Israel's compliance with its international human rights and humanitarian law obligations in the OPT"	Statement	Al-Haq
2010	Open Letter to EU High Representative and Foreign Affairs Ministers ahead of the Foreign Affairs Council on 26 July 2010	"take concrete and consolidated political action in order to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international and to pressure Israel to end its illegal closure, without delay"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs
2011	Vanishing East Jerusalem: EU Must Use Association Council To Ensure That Israel Respects International Law	"EU's current policy of "empty words" challenges the Union's ability to positively impact the human rights situation in the OPT and to contribute to a "comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs
2012	PCHRO LETTER TO MAMA/COHOM ON EU'S HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY FOR ISRAEL	"we strongly believe that the EU will seriously address Israel's human rights and humanitarian law obligations, including those towards the OPT, in the strategy for Israel as well as prioritise Palestinian right to self-determination"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs
2013	Al-Haq Submission to the EU on its 2013 ENP Progress Report on Israel	Recommendations to the EU on its 2013 progress report on Israel	Submission	Al-Haq
2014	Human Rights Council Special Session on Palestine: the EU must not repeat past mistakes regarding Israeli military attacks against the Gaza Strip	"actively participate in the 21st HRC special session with a view of bringing violations of international law to an end, including by supporting the establishment and dispatch of a UN independent commission of inquiry"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs

YEAR	TITLE	MAIN ISSUE/DEMAND FOR THE EU	ACTIVITY TYPE	IMPLE-MENTING CSO(S)
2015	Letters Sent to European Union Member States and the European Union Repre-sentative to Individually and Publicly Clarify Positions on the Relocation of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem; and the European Union to take action against Czech Republic, Ro	"asking for a Clarification of the European Union position on the Relocation of United States Embassy to Jerusalem in light of the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary support"	Letter	Al-Haq
2016	ADDAMEER'S DIRECTOR SAHAR FRANCIS ADDRESSES EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	"called upon the European Union to address the protracted occupation and its violations against the Palestinians"	Addressing European Parliament	Addameer
2017	Al Mezan Raises Issue of Gaza Humanitarian Crisis with EU and US Consulate General in Jerusalem, and USAID	"urged the EU representative to immediately appeal to EU member states for concrete steps to stop further settlements expansion in the West Bank, lift the Gaza closure/blockade, push for Palestinian internal reconciliation, and ensure protection, safety and dignity of civilians"	Meeting	Coalition of CSOs
2018	Three reasons why the European Union should support the United Nations Database on businesses activities related to Israeli settlements	"supporting the United Nations (UN) Database on businesses operating in Israeli settlements (the Database), as a necessary and proportionate measure to promote greater transparency, accountability and respect by both states and businesses of international law"	Joint Position Paper	Coalition of CSOs
2019	Al-Haq Calls on the European Union to Withdraw its Recent Statement on Gaza and Apologize to Palestinian Victims	"the statement raises serious concerns as to the genuine commitment of the EU, including that of a number of its Member States, towards the realisation of Palestinians' inalienable rights"	Statement	Al-Haq
2020	Al-Haq Calls on the EU to Uphold a Consistent Policy and Impose an Arms Embargo on Israel	"calls on the EU to recom-mend to its Member States, ending all trade in weapons with Israel through a two-way arms embargo and ending military-security cooperation"	Statement	Al-Haq

YEAR	TITLE	MAIN ISSUE/DEMAND FOR THE EU	ACTIVITY TYPE	IMPLE-MENTING CSO(S)
2021	Al-Haq Sends Letters to EU Member States Calling for Immediate and Effective Measures to Ensure that Israel Respects the Democratic Process of the Palestinian Elections	"stressing that these attacks are conducted against all Palestinians, and their right to self-determination, the letters urged states to reaffirm their commitment to the protection of human rights and the rule of law in the State of Palestine"	Letter	Al-Haq
2022	55+ organisations demanding EU officials review decision of renewal of EU-Israel Association Council	"undersigned Palestinian and European civil society orga-nisations address this letter to you to express our deep concern regarding the decision to renew the EU – Israel Association Council (hereinafter "Association Council"), which seeks to resume formal dialogue and strengthen cooperation with Israel and mainstream the very problematic "Abraham Accords".	Letter	Coalition of CSOs
2023	Palestinian Civil Society Organisations Submit Recommendations for the European Parliament Motion for a Resolution on Palestine	"organisations call for a cease-fire and demand Israel comply with its obligations under international law, to stop its deliberate targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including with white phosphorus"	Letter	Coalition of CSOs

Empirical materials also show that Palestinian CSOs have supported the accession of Palestine to multilateral bodies. PCSOs conducted some lobbying for Palestine's bid for UN membership in 2012 through open letters to member states. Another illustration is the process of the Rome Statute accession and supporting Palestine's accession to the International Criminal Court (ICC), culminating in Palestine becoming a state party to the Rome Statute in 2015. PCSOs lobbied and advocated for accession, both towards the PA (to advance with accession steps) and towards the ICC and its state parties (to admit Palestine), through meetings and research activities. For example, in October 2013 Al-Haq and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) held a meeting with the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor to personally present a legal opinion, providing 'legal justification for the Prosecutor to move forward on a declaration submitted by the Palestinian leadership in 2009'.

In May 2014 PCSOs together with international human rights organisations wrote to PA President Abbas encouraging him 'to ensure that Palestine pursues the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by promptly acceding to the Rome Statute and/or filing a further declaration accepting the Court's jurisdiction over crimes committed on Palestinian territory'. Therefore, in the period between Palestine's accession in the UN in 2012, and the Rome Statute (ICC) accession in 2015, PCSOs appear as active participants in these campaigns, by presenting arguments for admission, and mobilising international support for Palestine's accession. Additionally, PCSOs' interaction with the ICC appears active in subsequent years, both through submission reports with information on the situation in Palestine, and regular participation at ICC events in the Hague.

In addition to supporting Palestine's admission in IOs and multilateral mechanisms, PCSOs are also recorded performing some sporadic counter-lobbying activities against Israel's multilateral accessions. In 2021, Al Mezan along with 19 Palestinian and African human rights organisations wrote a letter to representatives of the African Union, expressing concern over Israel's accreditation as an observer state. In 2020, Al-Haq submitted a legal position paper to the EU objecting to the membership of President of the Federation of Local Authorities of Israel and Mayor of Modi'in-Maccabim-Re'ut in the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM). These instances represent an interesting dynamic, where CSOs of a non-UN member state implement activities in quest of restraining the space of the adversary state in multilateral venues. While rare in terms of frequency, this form of activities may be depicted as 'CSO counter-lobbying' against the adversary state.

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CSOs

The materials display diverse engagements of PCSOs with domestic CSOs in other countries, and international CSOs, as part of wider global campaigns to amass support for the Palestinian cause. For instance, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement engages with local CSOs, grassroot movements

and solidarity groups in different countries.[56] While CSO-CSO engagement can be exclusively part of bilateral partnerships, it can also be facilitated as part of wider networks, due to the fact that PCSOs enjoy membership and partnership with different international networks. These transnational networks allow for interaction with local CSOs and international CSOs residing in countries which do not officially recognise Palestine as a state.

A case in point is Al-Haq, as an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists based in Geneva, a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). The membership, presence and participation in such networks offers a wide range of opportunities for PCSOs to create linkages, access venues comprised of different actors, and amplify Palestinian narratives in front of different constituencies. Finally, membership of these networks also grants PCSOs the possibility to assume leadership roles, i.e. the General Director of Al-Haq was elected Vice President in 2013, and later Secretary General, of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in 2016, an international CSO based in France. The materials reveal a limited amount of partnership with Israeli CSOs. Some Israeli human rights CSOs (such as B'tselem) have forged partnerships with PCSOs and implement joint activities, among others advocating for ending occupation and condemning human rights violations. In 2018 Al-Haq and B'tselem even received a joint prize by the French Republic, the 2018 Human Rights Award, for their efforts.

International CSOs such as Amnesty International, Caritas, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Oxfam, and Save the Children represent some of the most important partners and donors for PCSOs. While these ICSOs operate globally, the headquarters of some are located in non-recognising states, such as the UK and the US. The cooperation of PCSOs with these organisations includes documentary activities, organising meetings and field missions in the OPT, conferences, and joint submissions and statements. Notably, this cooperation also extends to the realm of multilateralism. For instance, joint submissions to UN bodies and treaty mechanisms have been recorded, with Palestinian CSOs, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Amnesty International (AI) joining forces in advocacy efforts aimed at the creation and regular updating of the UN database of Israeli businesses involved in settlements (more on this below). Similarly, PCSOs organise side-events in cooperation between states, PCSOs and international CSOs. For example, one such event was organised at the ICC Assembly of State Parties in Hague in 2022.

Through their activities, PCSOs attempt to influence the language and terminology of international actors and influence how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is framed and presented to foreign audiences. In 2021 both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released reports where they utilised the word 'apartheid' for the first time, in order to describe certain Israeli policies and practices on

[56] Some of these might be formalised and registered as CSOs in their countries, and some others might be more loosely organised.

Palestinian territories.[57] Prior to this PCSOs had employed extensive use of the word 'apartheid' in their activities and research, while also appealing to the international community to follow suit. At the political level, the adoption of the term has had little political support, as aside from some local governments, central state governments have been hesitant to adopt it. Nonetheless, in the realm of international CSOs, the reports of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch represented a significant shift. A causal link is difficult to be claimed, however it is certain that the adoption and proliferation of the notion 'apartheid' amongst international CSOs follows campaigns of advocacy by PCSOs and the PA. In this context, ICSOs appear to represent important objects of attention for PCSOs, due to their potential to affect global audiences narratives, and how debates are framed in different societies pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

PUBLIC

Increasing solidarity amongst foreign publics represents a central avenue of Palestinian CSOs' international activities. PCSOs such as Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), the Palestinian Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD), and Stop the Wall implement different approaches to communicate directly with foreign publics, aiming to build international support for the Palestinian cause at the level of citizens and grassroot associations. For example, the Palestinian Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD) undertakes a variety of activities designed to reshape the discourse surrounding Palestine, targeting influential actors such as international media, trade unions or citizens in other countries. Among others, PIPD has developed comprehensive guidelines for international media, offering insights on responsible reporting about Palestine. In addition to activities targeting the international media, PIPD also conducts interviews in regional and international media outlets, addressing the citizens of those countries. PIPD also produces digital content tailored for internet users across different social media such as Tik Tok, as well as specifically designed digital platforms, aiming to contribute to efforts to shift global public perceptions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To this end, PIPD provides a blueprint example of a PCSO-P (public) dynamic, through a diverse toolbox intended to reach out to the general publics of other societies.

PCSOs such as BDS and Stop the Wall target various foreign societal actors, and reach out to student unions and universities, advocating for academic boycotts, thereby seeking to build support amongst academic circles to sever ties with Israeli universities. Additionally, these PCSOs actively discourage international artists and art institutions from performing in Israel, thus advocating for cultural boycott. While the general aims appear to be raising awareness and building international support, the specific goals of BDS campaigns include placing military

[57] AI's report was titled "Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: A Cruel System of Domination and a Crime against Humanity," and HRW's report was titled "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution".

embargos against Israel, as well as to enable a discursive recognition of apartheid. These targeted initiatives focus on specific circles, and aim to influence the perception of foreign publics regarding the Palestinian cause and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In such instances, PCSOs appear as narrative amplifiers, ensuring that their Palestinian perspective is heard by the public in foreign societies, even presenting foreign citizens with arguments that in essence run counter to the official foreign policy stance of their state. Through attempts to amass support across these various circles, PCSOs also seek to forge pressure points at the societal level, thus attempting to affect the framing of narratives and debates, and the policy-making and decision-making circles. For example, on their websites, some PCSOs (such as BDS and Stop the Wall) provide 'sample letters' intended for global activists and organisations. These sample letters which are fully drafted and even include headers, are ready to be sent to local or central governments (upon filling in the names of their senders) as advocacy tools in quest of inducing policy change towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by adopting specific resolutions or documents.

BUSINESSES

The examination of empirical activities demonstrated diverse ways in which PCSOs' target both Israeli and international businesses. A considerable number of CSOs employ individual and collective efforts to increase support for boycotting Israeli or non-Israeli companies that are considered to be violating the human rights of Palestinians, by maintaining links with settlement enterprises in the Palestinian Territories. One important advocacy campaign was designed to lobby for the creation of the UN Database for Israeli businesses linked to settlements. In their contributions to the UNHRC, PCSOs actively advocated to build support for the UN Database for Israeli businesses related to settlement areas. The UN database was intended to list companies that contributed to, or were associated with, Israeli settlements which are considered illegal under international law.

In 2016, the UN Human Rights Council passed Resolution 31/36 requesting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to create a database listing companies involved in activities related to Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.[58] The first report under this mandate was released in 2018, presenting an outline of the methodology for the database. Two years later, in 2020, the database itself was first released, while new updates were published by the Office of the High Commissioner in June 2023. Consonant with this, one lane of work of PCSOs targeting businesses can be spotted in advocacy activities for the regular update of the UN Database.

[58] The Resolution focused on businesses operating in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.

Second, PCSOs activities appear directed towards amassing international support from different international actors to boycott different Israeli businesses. BDS runs global campaigns urging consumers at the global level to boycott Israeli companies that support settlements or profit from the occupation. Third, another business sector target of BDS are multinational companies that are considered complicit in the occupation and war crimes of Israel through their operations and links to settlement areas. For example, Puma (a German multinational corporation) or the Carrefour Group (a France-based multinational retailer) can be used as examples out of a larger number of international brands targeted by BDS for boycotts at the global level. Sending direct letters to these corporations to flag these issues and urge them to reconsider their operations also represents another course of action. In this context, the PCSO-B (CSO-businesses) configuration displays three main avenues of interventions that pertain to establishing and updating the UN Database of Israeli businesses; amassing international support of international actors to boycott Israeli businesses complicit in the maintenance of the settlement enterprises, or profiting from the Israeli occupation; and raising awareness to boycott multinational enterprises that are considered complicit in occupation and settlement enterprises.

SCOPE AND SCALE

Figure 6 shows a two-level typology of issue areas of CSO international activities in the case of Palestine, as a result of a two-level analysis. Based on the extracted data, the following second level categories were generated: ‘statehood’, ‘occupation’, ‘refugees’, ‘corporate responsibility’, ‘human rights’, ‘arrests and prisoners’, ‘international law and justice’. Understandably, because of the wider conditions of occupation, the scope of PCSOs appears the least diverse of all three cases, and the majority of categories lean towards addressing the issue of occupation and human rights violations, which represent predominant themes across PCSOs’ international engagements.

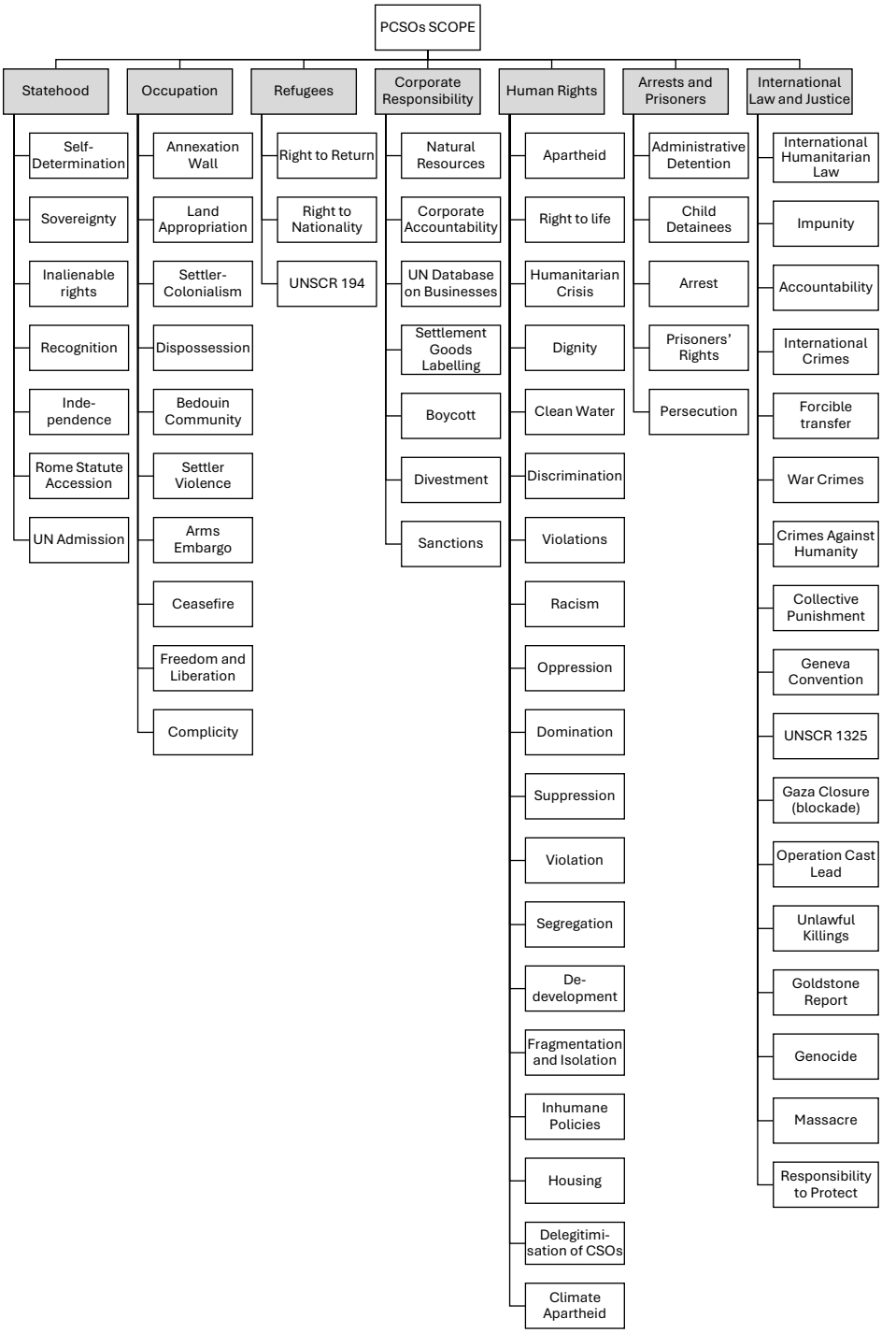

Figure 6. A two-level typology of issue areas of PCSOs.

As can be observed, a group of first level categories extracted from the website data, such as 'UN admission', 'self-determination', 'sovereignty', 'inalienable rights', 'recognition', 'independence', 'Rome Statute Accession', resonate more closely with the idea of establishing and recognising a Palestinian state – for this reason they have been grouped under the second-level category of 'statehood'. In this context, the categories can be divided into two broad sets: challenges on the ground (occupation related notions) and desired solution (statehood related notions). Categories that are linked to challenges on the ground represent inputs that PCSOs transmit to the international level (bottom-up). Addressing these challenges requires an output that must come from the international community (top-down). In other words, if categories such as 'occupation', 'settlements', and 'human rights violations' represent PCSO appeals that are made to the international society, their ultimate solution ideally must come by actions to be undertaken by the international community – namely ending occupation, and realisation of the self-determination right that ultimately leads to the recognition of a full-fledged Palestinian state.

Seen more broadly, the categories in the typology highlight how larger contextual conditions shape the international engagement of CSOs. The typology thus reveals that PCSOs' engagement is directed not only at reinforcing Palestine's international legal status but also at advancing claims towards international actors to support territorial control and empirical statehood on the ground, by ending the occupation. The typology demonstrates that the international engagement of PCSOs incorporates demands for both complete legal recognition and practical efforts to establish governance and authority across the territories. As noted in Chapter 2, the struggle to establish empirical statehood and effective control of territory represents a distinctive feature of the Palestinian case.

Figure 7 illustrates the types of CSO international activities in the case of Palestine, based on a two-level analysis. Based on the extracted data the following second level categories have been generated: 'research and documentation', 'field activities', 'submissions to IOs', 'lobbying and advocacy', 'organising and participating in events', and 'judicial review against a State'. Inside the 'research and documentation' category, activity types such as 'field tour', 'field visit', 'field updates', and 'briefing fact-finding mission' highlight how PCSOs work to convey to international actors the situation on the ground, thereby facilitating transmission of information from local contexts to international audiences. Perhaps the most case-specific type of activity that was found in the typology is the 'judicial review against states', as a method to seek to utilise the legal frameworks of other countries for the purpose of placing into scrutiny their foreign policy decisions. As expected, the conditions of occupation strongly influence the activities of PCSOs, which are deeply engaged in the legal and judicial dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

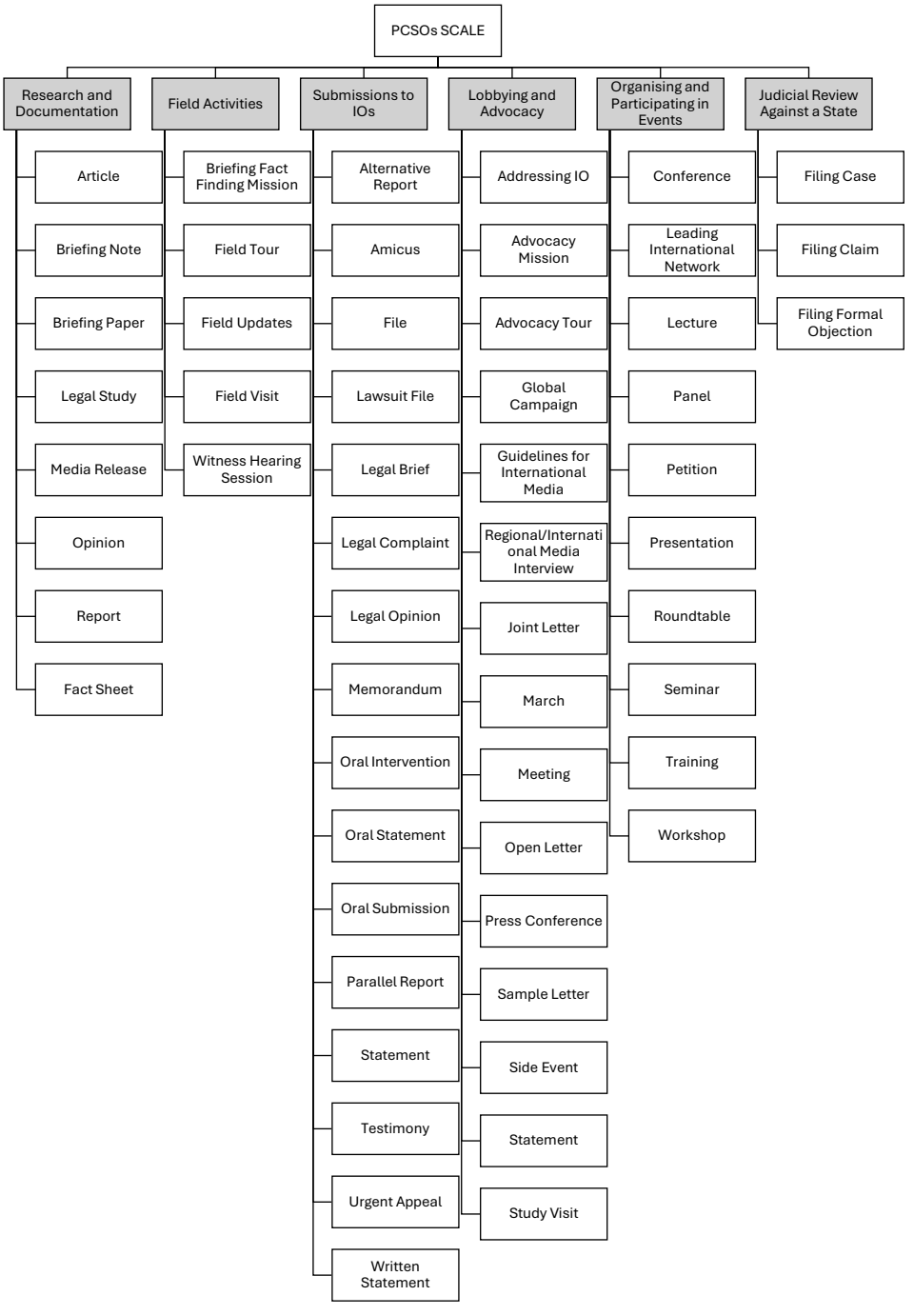

Figure 7. A two-level typology of activity types of PCSOs.

4.3 The International Activities of Taiwanese CSOs (2008–2023)

In the following I present examples of the diverse international engagements of Taiwanese CSOs. The international engagements are presented separately for different target audiences, which in this case are the following international actors: states, international organisations, local and international CSOs, businesses, and publics. As the materials show, TCSOs implement a wide range of international activities that relate to increasing Taiwan's international participation and visibility, contributing to international humanitarian assistance globally, helping Taiwanese businesses access international markets, and ultimately, bringing Taiwan closer to the UN system, particularly by aligning with global governance standards set in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

STATES

The collected data exhibit a diverse array of engagements between TCSOs and state institutions of both diplomatic and non-diplomatic allies. An avenue through which this interaction is materialised is by hosting meetings in Taiwan. Of particular note, in 2019 the Honduran Vice President visited the Garden of Hope to gain insights into gender-related concerns and women's shelters. Similarly, in 2018, a Canadian Parliamentary Delegation engaged in an exchange on energy sustainability issues at the Taiwan Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (TAISE). These meetings in CSO offices are often a by-product of official visits of these state delegations, which had earlier met with Taiwan state officials (who are sometimes present in the meetings). The presence of Taiwanese officials in such meetings is an indication of the collaboration between domestic CSOs and Taiwanese institutions as a form of maintenance and expansion of relations with these countries.

Another facet of interaction involves meetings and collaboration with diplomatic missions and offices located in Taiwan. In their activities Taiwanese CSOs nourish an extensive cooperation with offices of non-diplomatic allies in Taiwan. For instance, the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) organises bilateral economic cooperation conferences and trade missions to enhance economic trade and exchange with different countries, in collaboration with accredited missions in Taiwan. Similarly, the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), organises trade delegations and business seminars to enhance mutual exchange and business collaborations, through cooperation with both foreign diplomatic missions in Taiwan, and Taiwan state officials. In these instances, CSOs not only interact with diplomatic missions in Taiwan, but partake in wider cooperative arrangements that involve Taiwan state officials, and private businesses from both sides.

In addition to hosting state delegations and interacting with diplomatic offices and missions in Taiwan, which embody two prominent modes of CSO-S interaction, a third avenue involves the implementation of international development

and foreign aid activities abroad. Most notably, activities such as aid and relief distribution entail the participation of foreign state officials, be they at the local or central level, despite the primary beneficiaries of activities being citizens of those countries. The execution of foreign aid projects by Taiwanese CSOs such as Tzu Chi, the Zhi Shan Foundation, or Taiwan AID, typically necessitates approval and engagement with foreign state institutions. Foreign aid may also reach countries where Taiwan maintains no official links and offices, thereby no formal diplomatic representation. An illustration is the example of Tzu Chi volunteers delivering aid to North Korea several times since the 1990s. Although citizens remain the focal point of foreign aid projects by Taiwanese CSOs, the interplay of TCSOs with foreign state institutions is instrumental in facilitating project implementation. A noteworthy illustration of how CSO-S relations are furthered is an example in 2016 when the President of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III, conveyed a direct letter to the Head of Tzu Chi after Taiwan was hit by during Typhoon Haiyan, expressing gratitude for the CSO's past support provided to the Philippines.

Furthermore, a distinctive collaborative arrangement occurs in multilateral venues – for instance, at the 20th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC – COP 20) in 2014 in Peru, where the Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF) collaborated with Belize officials, a diplomatic ally of Taiwan, to organise a side event. The thematic focus of the side event encompassed security, climate adaptation, and public participation in small island countries. Despite the fact that Taiwan is not a signatory party of UNFCCC, due to being outside of the UN and objections from the PRC, this cooperative endeavour enabled the sharing of Taiwan's policy framework and jurisdiction in climate change in front of different UN member state representatives. Such a CSO-S dynamic serves to augment Taiwan's international presence and facilitate experience sharing in front of the UNFCCC audience on climate issues, which represents an important thematic pillar of Taiwan's official international engagements.

One of the noteworthy facets characterising the endeavours of TCSOs is their role in implementing the New Southbound Policy.[59] A prominent illustration is exemplified by the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF). TAEF was established in 2018 with the purpose to contribute to the implementation of the NSP, a policy which aims to redefine Taiwan's regional relations by fostering deeper connections with 18 Asian countries and societies, thereby mitigating economic dependence on the PRC. Among others, TAEF is positioned as the "signature think-tank for the NSP" (Hsiao & Yang, 2022, p. 41), and plays a key role in co-organising one of the key regional events of the NSP, which is the Yushan Forum. The Yushan Forum is held annually in Taiwan as a platform for dialogue and exchange between regional state leaders and non-state representatives. The active participation of TAEF in NSP implementation, and co-

[59] The NSP is a policy is implemented since President Tsai of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power in 2016.

organising the Yushan Forum brings into surface the involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue, also indicating the interchange between Taiwanese state institutions and TCSOs in expanding interactions with regional state officials. Finally, interaction in different events organised by other entities, as well as research produced on the bilateral relations of Taiwan, also represent additional avenues of TCSOs activities that target states.

Overall, these examples illustrate various dynamics of interactions among Taiwanese CSOs and state institutions or officials both from diplomatic and non-diplomatic states, both domestically and abroad. Such interactions span across different issue areas from gender-based violence, to economy and trade, dialogue and cooperation, and climate change. The engagement between Taiwanese organisations and other state officials appears to come as a result of Taiwanese state officials' involvement, which takes the shape of S-S-CSO; or conversely, it indicates the absence of Taiwanese state officials' involvement, thus underlining a clear CSO-S configuration. The engagements of TCSOs with states can be categorised as follows: engagement through meetings with visiting delegations representing states; collaboration with foreign offices based in Taiwan; involvement with state institutions in the implementations of activities abroad, particularly in international development and aid; joint organisation of side events in the margins of multilateral gatherings; and collaborative efforts in hosting events in Taiwan, featuring the participation of foreign state officials. Through such diverse channels TCSOs are able interact with the officials of states, be they diplomatic allies or not, within the broader context of limited diplomatic representation and presence.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

To comprehend how TCSOs engage with international organisations, one must delve into Taiwan's official multilateral participation strategy, which is affected by the state of cross-strait relations. A shift in diplomatic strategy transpired when President Ma from the ranks of KMT won elections and assumed office in 2008. Taiwanese foreign policy under Ma's administration marked a departure from the so-called 'confrontational diplomacy' towards the PRC that was observed during President Chen's tenure (2000–2008), to a more pragmatic approach that became known as 'viable diplomacy'. Coming from the ranks of the DPP, President Chen's administration had been marked by a proactive foreign policy, including efforts to secure membership in the UN and the WHO, which provoked strong opposition from Beijing. By contrast, upon assuming power in 2008, President Ma induced a policy-change, by being primarily focused on a so-called diplomatic truce. During Ma's tenure Taiwan opted to pursue a flexible approach, by agreeing to participate in multilateral events under different name tags, such as Chinese Taipei or Taipei Representative Office. The warming up of cross-strait relations allowed for larger official participation in that period in the IOs of interest, such as the World Health Assembly, UNFCCC, and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). In other words, Taiwan's multilateral

participation largely depended and continues to depend on the scale of PRC objections. The PRC is wary that more international participation for Taiwan means increased promotion of independence narratives for Taiwan.

These dynamics shifted in 2016 when the DPP's President Tsai assumed office, seeking to implement a decoupling policy from Beijing, and rejecting the '1992 Consensus'. President Tsai's election prompted an intensified diplomatic offensive from the PRC, in quest of diminishing Taiwan's diplomatic footprint, ultimately resulting in reduced IO presence at the official level. Due to its diplomatic clout, the PRC has demonstrated its capabilities to block Taiwan's international participation. However, scholarly consensus regarding the ultimate impact of the warming and cooling of cross-strait relations on Taiwan's international posture during the tenures of presidents Ma and Tsai remains elusive. Some argue that President Ma's efforts to pacify Beijing resulted in increased official-level participation in international organisations (Kwei-Bo, 2018). Other authors infer that President Tsai's approach post-2016, despite less multilateral participation, breeds more agency and serves Taiwan's global interests and engagement over the long run (Thornton, 2021). While both camps agree that the PRC is important in relation to Taiwan's international participation, different ideas exist on how it should be approached, namely whether it should occur through avoidance or appeasement of Beijing.

Two concepts are helpful to analytically comprehend Taiwan's participation in international organisations and the role of TCSOs in such endeavours. The first is the notion of 'meaningful participation' which has been embedded not only in official documents and political discourse in Taiwan, but also in the discourse of its diplomatic and non-diplomatic allies, especially since 2008 (Glaser, 2013). Kwei-Bo (2018, p. 254) suggests that despite its ambiguity, meaningful participation may be understood "as allowing Taiwan to join international bodies under a mutually acceptable, although not necessarily satisfactory, official title". To this end, meaningful participation does not equate to full membership, but it entails some form of participation in multilateral bodies, ranging from observer or associate membership, and to unofficial formulas of participation through government-related institutions, or even independent CSOs. Taiwan's meaningful participation also requires adaptability in accepting various formal names. The second concept is 'international space', which became ingrained in Taiwan's political discourse during the 1990s and onwards, and continues to represent a key notion in the analysis of Taiwan's international footprint. Kwei-Bo (2018, p. 250) defines international space as: "the sum of the activities of Taiwan's central and local governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), and individuals in the international arena, including IGOs, INGOs, and other multilateral forms of international collaboration, and such activities are influenced and sometimes determined by the formal and informal bilateral ties with other actors, especially major powers such as the United States and Mainland China". To this end, the concept of 'international space' provides a comprehensive perspective on Taiwan's foreign relations and connections beyond official state relations, also allowing room for the inclusion of CSOs.

Seen more widely, both concepts of meaningful participation and international space have emerged from the unique situation and challenges faced by Taiwan in engaging with the international society, and have permeated both political discourse and literature debates. These two concepts essentially capture a diverse range of international interactions that occur without universal recognition and in the absence of UN membership. To this end, the engagement of Taiwan's CSOs at the international level, particularly with international organisations, may benefit from an analysis that is placed inside these frames of thinking.

The question becomes: how do Taiwanese CSOs engage and interact with international organisations through their activities? One lane of activities encompasses lobbying campaigns for Taiwan to join the WHO and the UN. The Foundation of Medical Professionals Alliance in Taiwan (FMPAT) has since the 1990s implemented the campaign 'Taiwan join WHO', that is comprised of a wide range of activities, including meetings with state officials, protests in Geneva, organising events, and participating in domestic working groups. When allowed, FMPAT delegations participate in events in Geneva in annual meetings, and express Taiwan's intention to join WHO, through activities such as protests and materials distributions. As stated, since 2016 Taiwan is not allowed to participate even as an observer in WHO events, which FMPAT seeks to correct through efforts of lobbying and advocacy. Another CSO, Taiwan United Nations Alliance (TAIUNA), has organised extensive lobbying for Taiwan's full membership at the UN. TAIUNA even advocates and lobbies the Taiwanese government to submit a new application for membership under the name of Taiwan, therefore ditching attachment to the sovereignty claim on the Republic of China (RoC). TAIUNA also organises trips to New York, where different events are organised in front of the UN headquarters, and materials presenting arguments for Taiwan membership are distributed. Protests are also organised, in cooperation with Taiwanese diaspora in the US. Furthermore, TAIUNA also conducts lower intensity campaigns for WHO membership.

In the context of meaningful participation, the significance of CSOs' role is salient in UNFCCC events, as Taiwan is not allowed to participate in an official capacity. Taiwanese officials participate in UNFCCC events as an 'NGO observer', under the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI), a research agency affiliated with the Ministry of Economic Affairs. In this context, some Taiwanese officials might participate as CSO representatives in UNFCCC events (with a non-political status) while being excluded from official negotiations that are conducted between member states. As the label 'NGO observer' does not compensate for the lack of official participation, the role of CSOs becomes even more significant. In this context, TCSOs participate in UNFCCC events in large numbers, and also take advantage of the meetings to organise side events which are sometimes, though not always, organised in partnership with diplomatic allies. The side events inside UNFCCC represent an avenue to represent Taiwan's policies and legal framework on climate change. Interestingly, in 2013 Taiwan's MFA gave an award to one of the TCSOs (EQPF) which regularly participates in UNFCCC events, for its work at the international level. Another piece of evidence

on the significance that participation at the UNFCCC has for Taiwan is the UNFFCCC NGO Forum, organised by Taiwan institutions as a forum to promote exchanges between TCOs and their international counterparts.

The participation of CSOs at the UNFCCC can be considered part of the wider context of Taiwan's pledge to play a positive role in combating climate change at the global level. DeLisle (2011, n.p) calls this "as-if" participation, that is to be understood as unilateral commitments to abide by the UN system's regulations and goals. Through the implementation of this strategy, Taiwan is reported to showcase attempts to act in accordance with the other members of the international society. As deLisle (2011, n.p) stresses: "much of the point of "as if" participation is about the question of Taiwan's international status… the more Taiwan can walk and talk and act like a member of a regime that is open primarily or exclusively to states, the more hope it has of securing the benefits of state (or nearly state-like) status in the international system".

In this context, the as-if participation represents an instrument for Taiwan to demonstrate its credentials and merits in front of the international community, and the engagement of Taiwanese CSOs with multilateral bodies represents one of the means to enable it. Taiwan's exclusion from the UN system has been met with voluntary commitments from the island to mimic UN member states actions on global governance standards. Officially, Taiwan has expressed a commitment to abide both with the Millennium Development Goals (presented in 2000) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (presented in 2015). In parallel to this commitment, Taiwanese institutions also implement different policies and programmes to ensure and increase the international exchanges of CSOs. Taiwan's MFA (MOFA, 2021, p. 1) also offers financial subsidies for CSOs engaged in international exchanges and activities, linked to:

> "(1) protecting or vying for Taiwan's rights and interests in international organisations; (2) acting in concert with government policies to promote multilateral or bilateral relations, resulting in diplomatic benefit; (3) attending or organising international exchange activities that help advance friendship toward and mutual understanding of Taiwan among other countries, as well as Taiwan's presence and visibility in the international arena".

Furthermore, in 2018 the Alliance for Sustainable Development Goals (ASDGs) was formed as a collaboration between academics, businesses, CSOs, and government agencies. Different CSOs included in the dataset have also adopted a similar stance, as they promote UNSDGs as one of the key pillars of their work, and mention it in websites and documents. TAISE established the Asia-Pacific Sustainability Action Awards (APSAA) in 2022, intended to reward "organizations and individuals that have dedicated themselves advancing sustainable development and sharing our sustainable growth with the international community" (TAISE, 2024, p. 3). In this example the dynamic appears flipped, thereby instead of travelling abroad to participate in events, thus seeking to bring Taiwan into the UN (or a UN related) venue, TCSOs implement actions aimed at

bringing international guests to Taiwan and showcasing Taiwan's domestic achievements in fulfilling UN goals.

The TCSOs engagement with IOs was also documented by registering as parties or observer entities or achieving some other form of consultative status. Some examples from the CSOs under scrutiny include: the EQPF holds the status of an observer at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as to the so-called BRS Conventions – composed of three United Nations chemical conventions the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, and the Stockholm Convention. The Garden of Hope participates at UN Commission of Women meetings, also hosting parallel events. In alignment with this, Taiwanese CSOs appear agile in identifying spaces and channels that they can utilise to gain access to various parts of the UN system, from central bodies and networks to more marginal ones. The UN system composed of the UN, World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Framework for Combating Climate Change (UNFCCC), represents the main object of attention for the CSOs included in the study (see Figure 8).

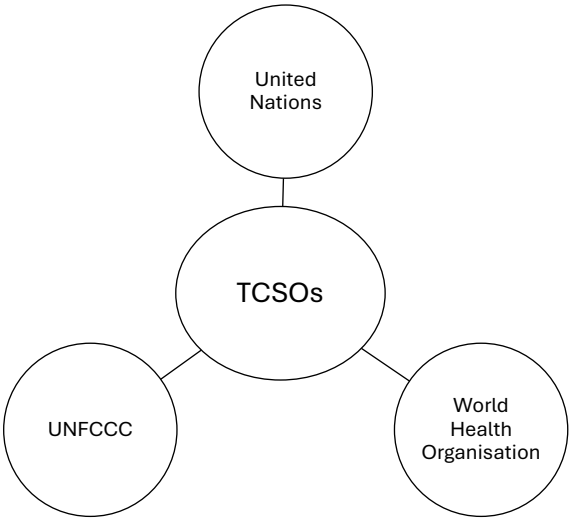

Figure 8. IO targets of Taiwanese CSOs in their international activities.

Among others, engagement strategies encompass lobbying efforts for full membership or some form of participation in the UN and the WHO. The CSO campaigns are manifested in the dataset through various activities, including formal meetings, advocacy initiatives, and protests organised in diplomatic cities, such as New York and Geneva. Notably, TCSOs leverage opportunities to participate in events where Taiwan is not a party at the official level, by identifying forms of joining and registering, to enable their participation. This engagement is perhaps best exemplified by the involvement of TCSOs in UNFCCC, where TCSOs participate regularly, hosting side events, and interacting with various actors including

member state representatives. In parallel, Taiwan's MFA offers different forms of support (i.e. training and financial subsidies) to boost CSOs' international exchanges with IOs, through the Department of NGO International Affairs, which is considered as one of the avenues to channel multi-sector efforts with the objective to improve Taiwan's international posture.

LOCAL CSOs and INTERNATIONAL CSOs

As it has been noted, the NSP represents a key channel for TCSOs to channel collaboration with local CSOs in regional countries, as the policy foresees CSO-CSO engagement as a crucial way to enhance the relations between Taiwan and non-diplomatic allies. The implementation of the NSP is based on the P-P-P-P Configuration – an acronym describing Partnership linkages involving the Public Sector, Private Sector, and People (it is here that CSOs and civil society sectors can be found). The Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), as the main TCSO engaged in the implementation of the policy arranges activities that serve to forge cooperation with a wide range of regional local CSOs and think-tanks in Asia. For instance, the Asia Engagement Consortium (AEC) that is organised by TAEF comprises various member institutions, think tanks, and research centres both from Taiwan and different NSP countries, with a mission to "facilitate synergy and multifaceted partnerships among leading think tanks, NGOs, and institutions in Taiwan and neighboring countries in Asia" (Hsiao & Yang, 2022, p. 3). However, the local CSO-CSO engagement facilitated through NSP does not represent the whole range of activities encountered in the empirical inquiry. Empirical materials demonstrate that TCSOs have engaged frequently with CSOs from non-diplomatic allies, before the NSP implementation began. For instance, TCSOs represent a means to share or export successful experiences or practices of Taiwan across different fields through interacting with local CSOs, via trainings, visits, workshops etc. The Garden of Hope enjoys extensive cooperation with CSOs in other countries, such as Asian countries, in the sharing and exchange of experiences, focusing mainly in the fields of gender-based violence and women shelters. The CSO-CSO cooperation occurs also on more practical levels, namely during the implementation of humanitarian assistance projects (international aid, relief and development) TCSOs also team-up and cooperate with local CSOs in those countries.

The collected materials demonstrate that conflict resolution activities are essentially non-existent in the work of TCSOs. Some TCSOs, such as Tzu Chi or Zhi Shan, have implemented activities in Mainland China, mainly focused on charity, education and poverty. In fact, Tzu Chi was one of the first organisations responding to the Sichuan Earthquake in mainland China in 2008. However, conflict resolution dynamics are largely absent, and this can be also explained based on the fact that the political system on the mainland discourages the functioning of independent CSOs. The difference in political systems certainly does not appear to help such CSO-CSO engagement between China and Taiwan. Given the harshened policies of Beijing against Taiwan (especially since the DPP

came to power in 2016), it is hardly plausible that the PRC regime would permit CSO-to-CSO engagement outside of its control.

Interestingly, most of the cross-strait dialogue since the 1990s has been developed in a fashion that resembles CSO-CSO engagement, although it is led by state structures. The Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) from the ROC, and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) from the PRC are two organisations that have been authorised in the past to handle 'unofficial' cross-strait dialogue. In fact, both SEF and ARATS are set-up, funded and function as part of state institutions of the ROC and the PRC, representing another example of the thin lines dividing official and unofficial dialogue, respectively CSOs and state structures. Differently from empirical examples where CSO-CSO participation has elements of a state-to-state relationship, the SEF-ARATS contains the opposite, namely, it shows how state structures frame official state dialogue as unofficial, presenting it as a CSO-to-CSO interaction.

The affiliation of TCSOs with international CSOs represents an important pattern of international engagement. As international CSOs tend to have a looser threshold for access and participation in comparison to IOs, they offer wider opportunities for equal representation for TCSOs. Affiliation with international CSOs allows TCSOs to network and forge partnerships, but also assume responsibility to organise events and bring guests to Taiwan. In addition, affiliation with ICSOs also permits TCSOs to assume leadership roles, i.e. in 2018 the Garden of Hope CEO was elected Chair of the Global Network of Women's Shelters. Leading such a global network also offers a platform for the GOH to share the Taiwanese policy experience in the area of gender-based violence, and claim a form of global leadership in this sectorial area.

The Taiwanese MFA[60] values this formula of interaction, thus it offers grants intended to boost linkages between TCSOs and international CSOs. One of the grants has to do with instruments to support sending CSO leaders and executives to complete internships at ICSOs. Another grant supports young people to build their capacities by conducting internships at ICSOs. These mechanisms of support for different categories are considered to establish and expand partnerships with CSOs operating internationally. Finally, Taiwan's central and local institutions (including the MFA) are implementing a specific program to invite ICSOs to locate in Taiwan and open overseas offices to increase international exchange. For this purpose, in 2018 the first INGO Center was opened in Taichung. To this end, ICSOs appear to be considered as low-hanging-fruits for Taiwanese institutions and CSOs, as they provide easier access and participation routes, with relatively high rewards, such as network and visibility opportunities. In this context, the TCSO-ICSO engagement which can be seen as a way to enhance meaningful participation and expand international space, appears salient throughout the empirical materials.

[60] In Taiwan the acronym for Ministry of Foreign Affairs is MOFA, rather than MFA. However, the used term MFA is used to capture the three cases under study.

In conclusion, TCSOs and Taiwanese institutions see merit in interacting and forging partnerships both with local CSOs in other countries, and ICSOs. Taiwanese institutions tend to optimise the CSO channel by drawing local CSOs into the official foreign policy orbit, in order to reach out to local CSOs and international CSOs abroad – this has been institutionalised with financial schemes to bolster the exchange between TCSOs and ICSOs. When it comes to CSOs this has been recognised in the NSP, and organisations such as TAEF have forged partnerships with regional CSOs, as a way to deepen Taiwan's ties with these countries. Outside of the NSP, TCSOs were also recorded to have forged partnerships with local CSOs in non-diplomatic allies, as a means to share and exchange experiences, and also to assist in implementing foreign aid projects in those countries. Finally, interaction with ICSOs also represents one avenue of international engagement for TCSOs, where they might also assume leadership roles, namely by chairing them and participating in leadership structures, that offers rare opportunities to forge a link between Taiwan's policy solutions and global leadership on sectorial areas.

PUBLIC

One of the most important facets of the international engagement of TCSOs relates to humanitarian assistance activities, stretching to international aid, international relief, and international development. As noted, TCSOs have played an increasing role in international development aid since the 1990s, although this engagement has been built upon an older foundation of Taiwan's official development assistance policy that has been implemented by Taiwanese institutions since the late 1950s. Whilst Taiwan was a recipient of aid in the wake of WWII, in subsequent years it began the process of transformation to becoming a donor of assistance (Cheng et al., 2015). The first Taiwanese aid mission was sent to Vietnam in 1959, with the financial backing of the US Government (MOFA, 2009). As part of Operation Vanguard, established in 1960, Taiwan began sending agricultural missions to Africa, seeking to enhance support for the ROC's representation in the United Nations (MOFA, 2009). Since the 1960s official foreign aid has spread to different regions and continents, such as Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Island and Caribbean states.

As noted, since the 1990s an increasing number of Taiwanese CSOs have engaged internationally to offer different forms of humanitarian assistance projects in parallel to the official state-led projects. The empirical materials show that the humanitarian assistance of TCSO projects encompasses a diverse range of fields such as education, disaster relief, poverty, health and hygiene, human trafficking, environment, climate change, and community development. In addition to aid distributions, TCSOs also conduct service-delivery, technical assistance, trainings, volunteer work, and facilitate and support the building of infrastructure. For instance, the Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation focuses on social welfare, disaster relief, education and recycling, and has implemented projects in around 60 countries. Tzu Chi has also opened offices in different countries, therefore it can

now also be considered an international CSO. In 2011 the Garden of Hope started Garden of Hope-Cambodia for the victims of human trafficking. Differently from the other two cases (Kosovo and Palestine), the international engagement of Taiwanese CSOs also entails opening offices in other countries, thereby going international.

Although there are instances of cooperation with the government, most of the Tzu Chi activities are organised, managed, and financed independently.[61] Furthermore, the Zhi Shan Foundation (childhood development) and Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps (medical assistance) represent two other major CSOs engaged in international activities, with a rich portfolio of engagements that encompass countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To unite the efforts of these CSOs, Taiwan AID was established in 2013 as a coalition focused on international aid, development, and relief. Taiwan AID is comprised of nearly 30 Taiwanese CSOs that work in different countries, and facilitates cooperation not only between TCSOs, but also between TCSOs and Taiwanese institutions. The UNSDG emerges as a driver behind the humanitarian assistance of both government- and CSO-led projects and initiatives.

The collected website materials suggest that most activities of TCSOs are implemented on the territory of non-diplomatic allies. Indeed, this builds on previous findings in the literature which dealt with the geographical distribution of CSO-led assistance (T.-C. Lin & Lin, 2017). Whereas the primary target and beneficiary of these activities are the citizens (public), these TCSO activities can also be understood in the wider framework of relations between Taiwan and other states, especially non-diplomatic allies. A publication by Taiwan AID (2016, p. 2) with recommendations for the government in approaching international aid concurs with this claim, by stating that TCSOs represent:

> "vitally important partners for the government in promoting international cooperation and development in non-diplomatic allies. NGOs not only engage in a greater variety of international cooperation programs, but are not limited to working with diplomatic allies, so can promote international cooperation in more flexible ways".

The notion of 'flexibility' is relevant in order to comprehend how CSO-led assistance offers Taiwan an opportunity to extend its international reach, beyond the limits of official diplomacy. Simply put, TCSOs are likely viewed as more receptive amongst some non-diplomatic allies' political and diplomatic elites in comparison to official Taiwanese institutions. While Tzu Chi functions more independently, the other TCSOs engage in more frequent cooperation with the government. While there is cooperation between TCSOs and public institutions in international aid, mainly through joining forces with ICDF, this is not to say that government-

[61] Tzu Chi started as a local independent initiative in 1966. It gradually grew through charity activities in Taiwan, and developed an international scope along the way. Today it represents one of the most important charity organisations globally.

led and CSO-led assistance projects are always coordinated or directed by the government. Some activities are cooperative, thereby materialised with the funding or support of Taiwanese institutions, however there are ample CSO-led parallel activities, meaning that they are organised, funded and implemented exclusively by the CSOs. In parallel to existing government subsidies, the funding of TCSOs mainly relies on sources such as private donations, philanthropy, and membership fees. At the same time, there is no empirical support to the claim that the independence of TCSOs transformed into an antagonistic dynamic with the Taiwanese government regarding foreign aid and development assistance.

Table 5 highlights differences between the Taiwanese institutions-led humanitarian assistance and CSO-led humanitarian assistance abroad. Note that the recipients and focus of the approaches are mixed. This simplification shall offer more clarity on the main actors and processes that guide Taiwan's reach to other states and their citizens via humanitarian assistance. The list of CSOs is non-exhaustive, as the number of Taiwanese CSOs that engage in international humanitarian assistance is higher; the list, therefore, represents solely CSOs that are part of this study.

Table 5. Government-led Humanitarian Assistance and CSO-led Humanitarian Assistance. Based on the original materials gathered, and T.-C. Lin and Lin (2017).

Approach	Government-led Humanitarian Assistance	CSO-led Humanitarian Assistance
Timeframe	1950s onwards	1990s onwards
Main Entities	– International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF), which is part of MFA International Economic Cooperation – Development Fund (IECDF) created in 1989 – ICDF predecessor – Committee of International Technical Cooperation (CITC) in 1972 – incorporated in ICDF in 1997 – Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (founded in 2003, at the initiation of Tawian's MFA)	– Taiwan AID (coalition of around 30 CSOs) – Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation – Zhi Shan Foundation – Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps – Garden of Hope – (Other TCSOs)
Primary Recipients	Diplomatic Allies	Non-Diplomatic Allies
Primary Focus	State-centric (also publics)	Public (also state governments)

BUSINESSES

Some TCSOs in the dataset were found to engage with businesses in other countries to varying degrees, most notably the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA), the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), and to a lesser extent, the Taiwan Institute for Sustainable Energy (TAISE). The activities of these CSOs are focused on fostering business opportunities for Taiwanese enterprises in global markets. As their primary scope relates to the economy and trade for Taiwanese businesses, they are sometimes depicted as 'business CSOs'.

Website materials showed that CIECA regularly organises so-called Joint Business Council Meetings or Economic Cooperation Conferences that are comprised of delegations of states and business, including non-diplomatic allies of Taiwan. These gatherings primarily function as forums for interaction among the private sector, and offer sites to promote bilateral exchange and expand economic, trade, and investment relations. The delegations encompass a diverse array of states, including regional countries, EU member states, and Latin American countries. During these meetings, Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs is regularly present, similarly to political representatives from non-diplomatic allies. In this sense configurations of four-actor dynamics come to surface, comprised of CSOs, two state governments, and other businesses enterprises.

The Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC) represents another organisation specialised in trade and economy, focusing mainly on the industrial and commercial sectors. CNAIC nurtures extensive interaction and cooperation with state missions and offices that operate in Taiwan.[62] In addition to organising trade delegations and business seminars with international counterparts, CNAIC actively partakes in global conferences and events associated with entities such as the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC), Asian Business Summit (ABS), and the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI). Participation in these events provides CNAIC with additional avenues for interaction with diverse stakeholders, and opportunities to promote Taiwanese companies in front of these audiences. Similarly, TAISE represents another TCSO which targets private businesses in its activities.

The role of these business CSOs in deepening relations with non-recognising states is worthy of a more detailed illustration. Both CIECA and CNAIC have been involved in the process of enhancing of relations between Taiwan with Lithuania from 2020 onwards. When political circumstances started to change, these two CSOs were quick to create linkages and forge partnerships with counterparts on the Lithuanian side. In September 2022, the Taiwan Lithuania Business Club Launching Event was held to create a platform for exchange, trade, investment, and communication between the government and private sectors. In fact, CIECA was commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan

[62] Some of these are the French Office, Indian Taipei Association, Japan Taiwan Exchange Association, South Africa Liaison Office.

for the purpose of establishing this mechanism. In 2023 CNAIC signed an MoU with Lithuanian Federation of Industrialists, a ceremony which was witnessed by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan, and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania. Seen more widely, the international engagement of these CSOs with the business sector is ostensibly influenced by two parallel dynamics that pertain to Taiwan's developed export-oriented economy and diplomatic exclusion at the global level, which hinders government's capabilities to fully support Taiwanese businesses. In this context, it is argued that the specificities of the Taiwanese setting create conditions conducive to the emergence of 'business CSOs', vesting them with unique functional roles. Whilst the main object of attention of these organisations is the private sector, the overarching goal sits in facilitating and aiding Taiwan to enhance bilateral economic cooperation with non-diplomatic allies, and non-recognising states. Revisiting the earlier discourse on the concept of expanding the international space might represent a useful way to conclude this part, given that the expansion of Taiwan's business presence at the global level emerges as one of the tangible avenues pursued in attempts to achieve this objective, thus pointing to the specificity of the role of business CSOs in the Taiwanese context. Table 6 shows a historical trajectory of the opening of Taiwan-Lithuania relations, and the role of business CSOs as supportive agents in this process during the period 2020–2023.

Table 6. Events showing the Taiwan-Lithuania warming of relations since 2020, and the role of CIECA and CNAIC in the process, with commission and support by Taiwan Ministries.

Breakthrough in official Lithuania-Taiwan relations.	2020
Taiwanese Representative Office opens in Vilnius.	November 18, 2021
Taiwan Lithuania Business Club Launching Event is held. CIECA is commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan for this process.	September 15, 2022
Lithuanian Trade Representative Office opens in Taipei.	November 7, 2023
CNAIC receives in a meeting the Representative of the Lithuanian Trade Representative Office.	November 10, 2023
CNAIC and Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists and Chinese of National Industry (CNAIC) sign MoU under the witness of Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan, and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania.	February 21, 2023

SCOPE AND SCALE

Figure 9 shows a two-level typology of the issue areas of Taiwanese CSOs' international activities. Based on the extracted data from website materials, the following second level categories have been generated: 'accessions and legitimacy', 'relations with the adversary', 'foreign assistance', 'security and dialogue', 'climate change', 'environment and sustainability' and 'global health'. What stands out is the general category of 'accessions and legitimacy', that was comprised by first level data points such as UN and WHO Membership, 'Taiwan relations', 'international participation', and 'cooperation'.

To this end, while other second level categories resonate with global challenges that are strongly linked with UNSDG and thereby transcend concerns of the island, the 'accessions and legitimacy' category is comprised of activities inside the Taiwanese CSO sector that relate directly to its diplomatic challenges and contested international posture. Another specificity that emerges from the typology is that, in accordance with Taiwan's official foreign policy, which seeks to give back to the world, as exemplified by the campaign 'Taiwan can help', TCSOs appear heavily invested in connecting with the international community by offering aid and assistance. Indeed, categories such as 'experience sharing', 'give, spread', 'support, help', 'poverty', 'foreign aid', and 'prosperity' seem to prove this area of focus.

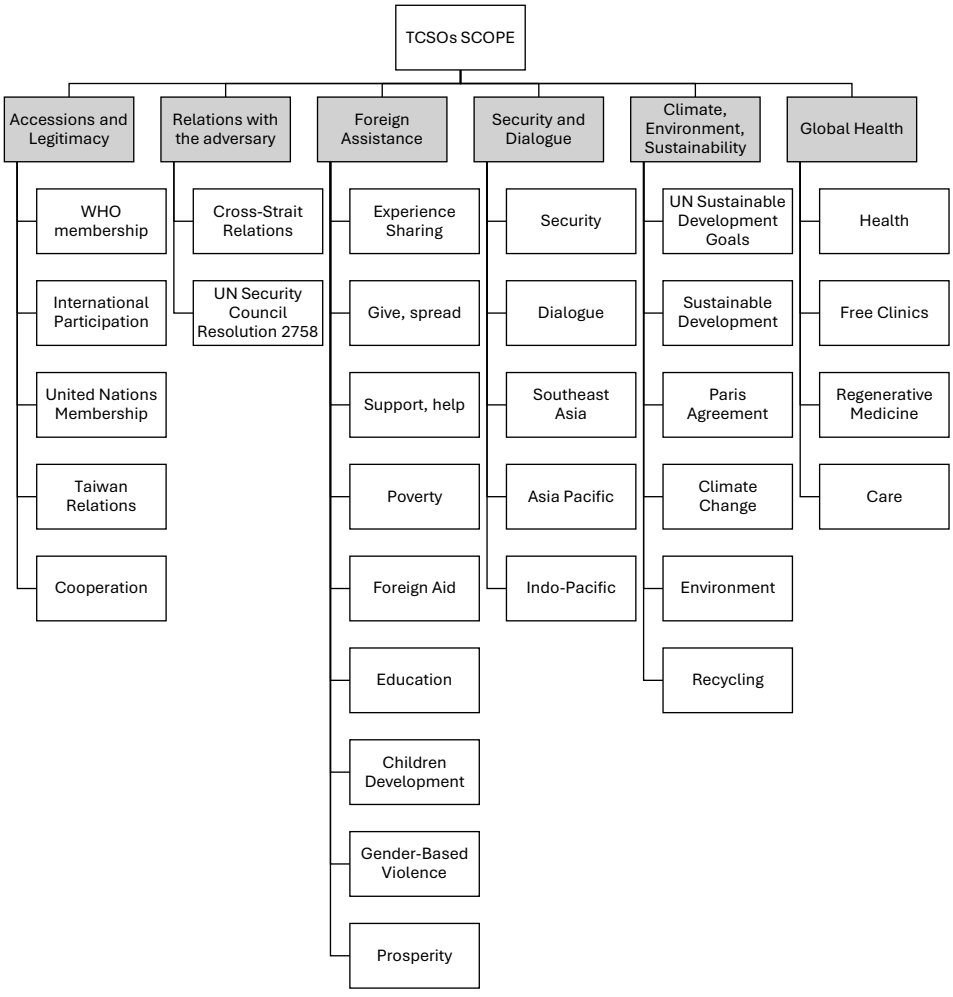

Figure 9. A two-level typology of issue areas of TCSOs.

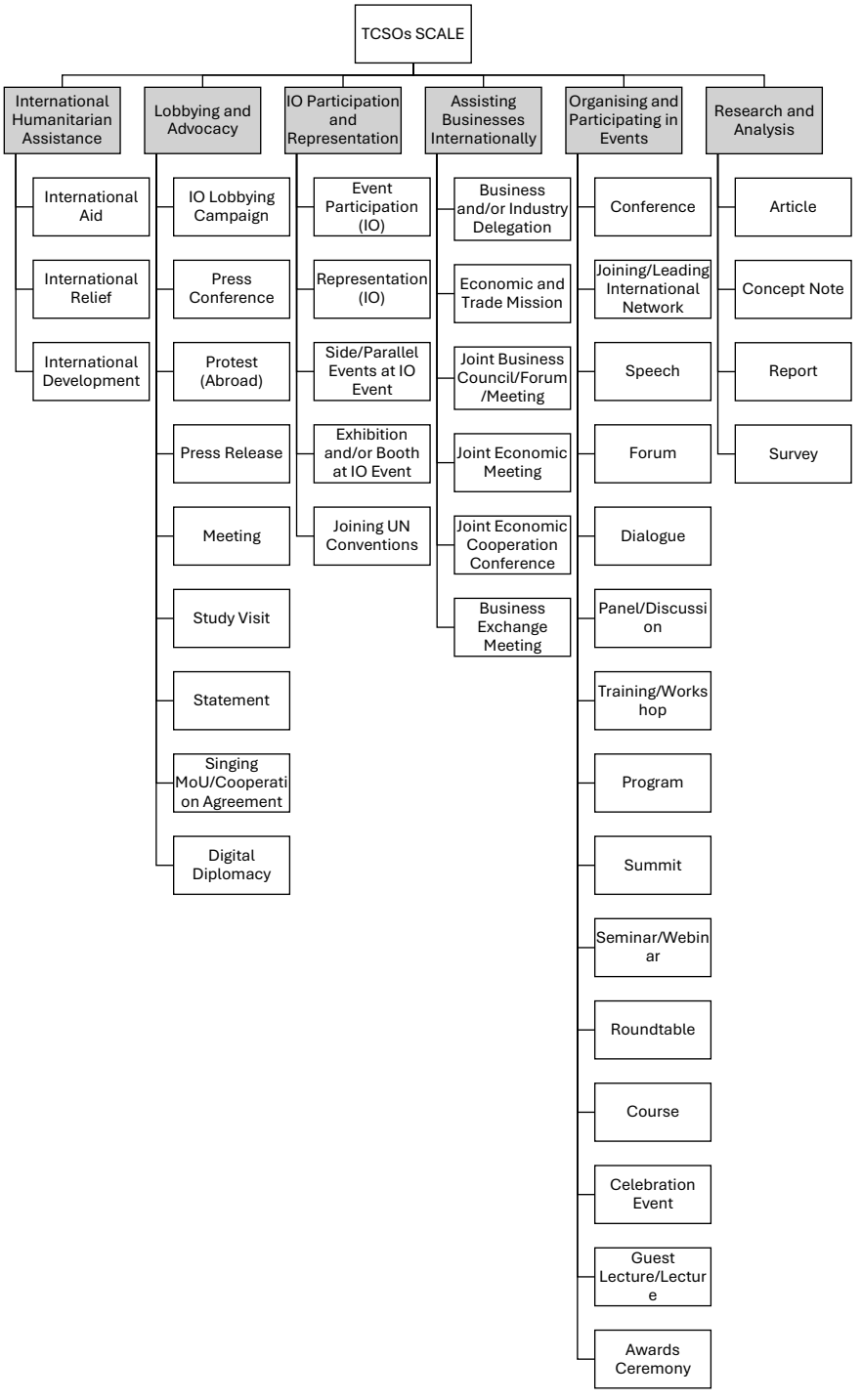

Figure 10. A two-level typology of activity types of TCSOs.

Figure 10 illustrates a typology of TCSO activities, based on a two-level analysis. Based on the extracted data the following second level categories have been generated: 'international humanitarian assistance', 'lobbying and advocacy', 'international organisations participation and representation', 'assisting business internationally', 'organising and participating in events' and 'research and analysis'. Undoubtedly, the most case-specific type of CSO activity can be found in the category of 'assisting business internationally', whereby under this category CSOs are observed to interact with the Taiwanese government, the governments of non-diplomatic allies and local and foreign businesses. Through interventions that frequently follow the TCSO-S-NDS-B formula (involving TCSOs, the Taiwanese state, non-diplomatic state officials, and businesses), TCSOs work to create synergy between the public, private, and non-governmental sectors in an effort to help Taiwanese institutions overcome the diplomatic deficit.

The typology on the scale of activities of TCSOs also lends support to the claim that for de facto states CSOs' participation in IO events can easily evolve into a form of representation. In the case of Taiwan, CSOs claim a role in representing the state in international organisations despite its lack of official membership – a specific trait that can be observed in other contexts as well, as the case of Kosovo showed. Whilst CSOs from de facto states seem to engage differently with IOs where their state lacks full membership, in the case of Taiwan, this is commonly conducted by setting up booths and organising side events as a way to showcase Taiwan's achievements in relation to sectorial policies and alignment with UNSDG.

4.4 International Engagements of CSOs in Kosovo, Palestine, and Taiwan: A Cross-Case Empirical Comparison

Thus far, I have presented separate sections for each of the three cases (Kosovo, Palestine, and Taiwan), providing various examples on the scope, scale, and targets identified at the level of CSO activities (within-case comparison). In this sub-section, I will compare key patterns across the case level, in quest of identifying similarities and differences (cross-case comparison). In order to examine areas where commonalities and differences lie, it is important to revisit the typologies that were presented at the case level.

As expected, there are more differences than similarities in the scope (issue areas) of CSOs' international activities. Even when some similarities are identified, such as relations with the former host state or adversary state, they take place in conditions of contextual specificity. For instance, in Kosovo a higher volume of CSO activities could be identified in the spirit of supporting the normalisation of relations under the EU-facilitated dialogue, while in Taiwan relations with the adversary state were spotted as part of efforts to keep security dialogue alive, to support economic exchange with the mainland, and to extend foreign aid. By contrast, in the Palestinian sector the encounters with the former host (adversary) state are heavily dominated by activities focused on the flagging of the wrong-

doings of Israel in relation to human rights violations, and combating the conditions of occupation.

In the case of Palestine categories such as 'arrests and prisoners', 'corporate responsibility', 'human rights', 'international law and justice', 'occupation and refugees' speak to the context-specific conditions of occupation, which largely pre-determines the issue areas in the international engagement of CSOs, also rendering the sector less thematically diverse. In the case of Taiwan, themes such as 'global health', 'climate', 'environment and sustainability', and 'foreign assistance' are primarily intended to forge alignment with universal concerns, and represent activities that allow TCSOs to become stakeholders in global issues. The engagement of TCSOs in exporting expertise from Taiwan to assist in solving global governance challenges represents a recurring theme throughout the inspected activities. These activities of TCSOs contain congruence both with the official Taiwanese foreign policy orientations and international treaty mechanisms and programmes, most notably the UNSDG.

An important similarity that stands out between the three sectors is that in each case there are international activities that do not fall into any issue area or global problem, and relate exclusively to ideas of statehood, recognition, and legitimacy. The themes of such activities therefore are not primarily linked to global issues, but rather seek to push the idea of supporting the existence and upgrade of their polity status, as 'the appropriate solution', or as the 'right thing to do' morally, legally and politically. In the case of Kosovo these have been grouped under 'statehood and legitimacy', 'non-recognising states' and 'multilateralism'. In the case of Taiwan these have been grouped under 'accessions and legitimacy'. In the case of Palestine under the category of 'statehood'. By definition, CSOs are commonly depicted as actors that are primarily driven by universal objectives, rather than statist and national goals. However, the collected materials show that CSOs in these three sectors attempt to marry these two objectives together.

Therefore, despite differences concerning the scope of activities across the three cases, the findings also show that supporting the existence, statehood and recognition of their de facto states internationally goes hand in hand with work on sectorial fields which are considered as part of global governance issues. One can notice that the international activities of de facto state CSOs are accompanied by different discursive frames. They might be placed at one end of the spectrum, which is fully embedded in 'global issues', or at the other pole of the spectrum, that is fully entrenched in national questions of statehood and sovereignty, or through a mixture between both, which would place them somewhere in the middle. As a recurring theme during the analysis of the materials, this dynamic may be termed a 'duality of commitment'. The duality of commitment helps to comprehend processes under which de facto state CSOs balance and integrate their international engagements between global universalistic goals and national questions of statehood, sovereignty and recognition. The notion of 'duality of commitment' aligns with Wiseman's (2010) distinction between transnational engagements and diplomatic interactions within the broader category of polylateral diplomacy, as outlined in sub-section 1.4.

In discussing the international actorness of what he calls 'non-central governments (NCG)', Hocking (1999, p. 19) argues that "international activity needs to relate domestic to international forces and the interactions between the two". While Hocking's (1999) focus is on substate entities, his analysis of actorness can be utilised to draw a parallel in debating the international actorness of CSOs from de facto states. Hocking (1999, p. 34) warns against viewing international actorness as necessarily detaching actors from their domestic contexts, noting that: "[t]oo often it is suggested that internationalization is a one-way street whose ultimate goal and result is the detachment of the region from its national setting. The available evidence suggests that this is far from the case". In a similar vein, the duality of commitment can be considered to reflect a form of CSO actorness that is both embedded and shared across levels of governance, whilst incorporating both sets of interests simultaneously, although not symmetrically. In other words, the duality of commitment represents a form of CSO actorness that is operationalised through their capacity to engage diverse issues and interact with diverse actors, across multiple scales of authority.

Existing scholarship laid out in the theoretical section showed that the participation of CSOs in the business of diplomacy and in the foreign policy issue area is not unique to de facto states. However, what serves to make it distinctive are the implications stemming from statehood questions, under conditions of the duality of commitment. In other words, while domestic CSOs in full-fledged states might also be prone to similar two-tier commitments, it is argued that CSOs' international engagements in de facto states are characterised by increased intensity and weight, driven by the urgent need to address their specific political realities revolving around membership in international society. In other words, the duality commitment also makes reference to the right to statehood. To increase legitimacy in their efforts, CSOs commonly frame their goals within international norms, such as human rights or self-determination, which resonate with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Such strategy helps CSOs to forge their interventions for changes in sovereignty and statehood with a higher degree of credibility.

Table 7. Cross-case comparison of second level categories of issue areas of CSO activities, derived from the materials.

KCSOs SCOPE	**TCSOs SCOPE**	**PCSOs SCOPE**
• Democracy, Rule of Law and Good Governance • Energy and Environment • EU Affairs • Multilateralism • Non-Recognising States • Normalisation with Serbia • Peace and Security • Radicalisation and Extremism • Regionalism • Statehood and Legitimacy	• Accessions and Legitimacy • Relations with the adversary • Foreign Assistance • Security and Dialogue • Climate, Environment and Sustainability • Global Health	• Arrests and Prisoners • Corporate Responsibility • Human Rights • International Law and Justice • Occupation • Refugees • Statehood

On the subject of scale, based on the second level categories, CSOs in three cases were shown to share similarities in activity types such as 'lobbying and advocacy'; 'organising and participating in events'; and 'research and analysis'. Whilst these categories can be found in the three cases it might be argued that such similarities across the three contexts stem from their alignment with the Western notion of CSOs, and CSO sector. Yet the empirical analysis of activities displayed categories that could be classified as 'one-case only'. For example, categories such as 'regular field activities', 'submissions to IOs', 'judicial review against states' are specific for the case of Palestine. Likewise, 'international humanitarian assistance' and 'assisting businesses internationally' are specific for the case of Taiwan. 'IO participation and representation' can be found in the cases of Taiwan and Kosovo, however 'assisting foreign policy' (through public signed agreements) can be found in the case of Kosovo. Seen more broadly, the 'one-case only' categories also resonate with the nature of contestation and the contextual setting at play.

Table 8. Cross-case comparison of second level categories of types of CSO activities, derived from the materials.

KCSOs SCALE	**TCSOs SCALE**	**PCSOs SCALE**
• Research and Analysis • Lobbying and Advocacy • IO Participation and Representation • Organising and Participating in Events • Assisting Foreign Policy	• International Humanitarian Assistance • Lobbying and Advocacy • IO Participation and Representation • Assisting Businesses Internationally • Organising and Participating in Events • Research and Analysis	• Research and Documentation • Field Activities • Submissions to IOs • Lobbying and Advocacy • Organising and Participating in Events • Judicial Review Against a State

Some CSOs' international activities directly promote the 'national interest' of de facto states, seeking to offer a distinct voice to non-recognising societies and governments, separately from their government. Consonant with this, CSOs emerge as active participants in the battle of de facto states to be heard, accepted and 'normalised' by different international audiences, namely non-recognising states and non-diplomatic allies. Table 9 shows instances where the governments of Kosovo and Taiwan have included CSOs in official state policies and programmes designed to deepen ties with non-recognising states and non-diplomatic allies. In the case of Kosovo this occurred most notably through the KStalksEU project, targeting the five EU-non recognisers in the period 2013–2015, and the most notable example of TCSO inclusion is the New Southbound Policy, the strategy aiming to deepen ties with 18 Asian countries outside of relations with China. Interestingly, there are a myriad of activities that might be observed between PCSOs and local governments (sub-state level) and cities in other countries, thereby implementing CSO-C (CSO to city), and CSO-Ss (CSO to

Sub-state) formulas of engagement. As noted, no visible traces of the PA in the PCSOs' interaction with other state officials can be found.

Table 9. The role of CSOs in deepening ties with non-recognising states, in cooperation mechanisms or policies with their Governments.

	KOSOVO	**TAIWAN**	**PALESTINE**
CSOs included in Government-led projects/policies	YES	YES	NO
Title	KSTalksEU	New Southbound Policy	/
Period	2013–2015	2016–ongoing	/
Focus	**Five EU-non recognising states** (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Spain)	**18 Asian countries** (Brunei, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam)	/
Primary role of CSOs	Expanding relations with non-state actors	Expanding relations with non-state actors	/
Types of CSO Activities	1. Forming Partnerships with non-state actors (through study visits and receiving them) 2. Interacting with state representatives	1. Forming partnerships with non-state actors 2. Organising the Yushan Forum (with the support of MOFA) 3. Conducting Research	/

CSOs from de facto states implement various activities to bring their states closer to IOs where they lack full-fledged membership. In all three cases CSOs result as actors which can expand the multilateral presence of de facto states, by representing de facto states in the absence of state officials; participating in different multilateral events, in parallel to de facto state officials; and implementing lobbying and advocacy campaigns for membership inside and outside of venues. CSOs have also utilised presence and membership in different networks to advocate for and amplify narratives designed to support the existence, acceptance, and multilateral accession of de facto states. In the case of Palestine, CSOs conduct documentation that supplies the work of IOs (i.e. UN Human Rights Council and the ICC) building available public data on Israeli actions, flagging human rights

abuses and occupation, and also transmitting appeals that create a nexus with the Palestinians' exercising of the right of self-determination. In the case of Taiwan, CSOs represent a channel to bring Taiwan closer to the UN system, namely by being one of the representatives of Taiwan in UNFCCC events.

Furthermore, through attempts to bring Taiwan closer to the UN system, TCSOs represent a channel to illustrate Taiwan's legal and political practices (i.e. in climate change, global health, sustainability) and share Taiwan's experience and know-how internationally. The UN represents a common target, as CSOs from all three cases have organised activities either through research or lobbying for their state's membership in the organisation – although it must be noted that KCSOs displayed significantly less interest towards the UN compared to the other two sectors. Additionally, materials showed PCSOs have implemented actions to decrease the space of Israel in some multilateral forums, which was framed as CSO counter-lobbying against the adversary state. Therefore, another commonality encountered regularly in the sectors are specific activities designed to target the former host (adversary) state in front of international audiences, while generally attempting to increase communication of the de facto state with the UN and key multilateral institutions of the international order.

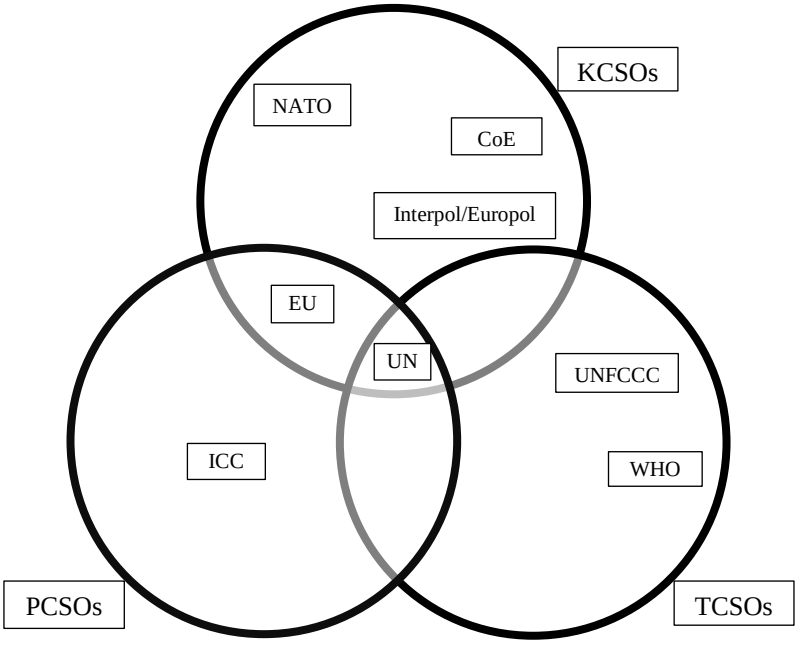

Figure 11. The IO Targets of KCSOs, TCSOs, and PCSOs.

The targeting of publics in other states appears frequently in the activities of TCSOs and PCSOs. TCSOs engage in international aid projects in non-recognising states, including in some states where Taiwan maintains no official representative office or any form of formal diplomatic representation. Regarding foreign aid, TCSOs are considered to have more flexibility in penetrating certain settings where Taiwanese institutions face difficulties in operating, due to non-recognition and absence of formal diplomatic relations. In this context, CSOs represent one of the channels through which Taiwan is able to 'give back' to the international community. The empirical materials have also shown that PCSOs implement various digital and non-digital campaigns, attempting to increase solidarity and influence the frames of thinking of general publics in other countries' regarding the Palestinian cause and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In certain interventions PCSOs' activities also seek to amass support of citizens and activists in other countries for action against their governments, namely by providing sample letters to be filled and sent to their respective governments, in quest of influencing foreign state policies.

CSOs across the three cases can be identified with issue areas pertaining to businesses and trade, and also interacting with businesses directly, however they appear to do so with different objectives. Through the project Digital Kosovo, the IPKO Foundation in cooperation with Kosovo's MFA, implemented a project that sought to increase Kosovo's digital presence and digital recognition from MNCs (2013–2015). In the case of Taiwan, business CSOs such as CIECA and CNAIC were observed to promote Taiwanese businesses abroad and assist their institutions in deepening business ties with non-diplomatic allies. By contrast, the activities of PCSOs such as BDS, Al-Haq and Stop the Wall seek to amass support for boycotting both Israeli and international businesses considered to be complicit in settlement enterprises. The engagement of PCSOs with businesses appears to revolve around goals of increasing the awareness of costumers, to spur change in these businesses' operations, or to shrink their international markets. Table 10 shows the engagement of CSOs from Kosovo, Taiwan, and Palestine, with the business sector, and as it is seen, the CSO sector's interaction with businesses is shaped by different objectives and demands across the three cases.

Table 10. CSO-B (CSO-Business) interactions in the three cases, exemplified with the main organisations and their international aims and demands.

CASE	KOSOVO	TAIWAN	PALESTINE
ORGANISATION(S)	1. IPKO Foundation	1. Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) 2. Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC)	1. Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (ongoing) 2. Al-Haq
PROGRAM AND TIMEFRAME	Digital Kosovo (2013–2015)	Ongoing projects	Ongoing campaigns and activities
OBJECTIVES AND DEMANDS	– Add Kosovo on online lists of tech businesses and platforms – Increase digital recognition from tech businesses (local and multinational)	– Create business opportunities for Taiwanese businesses/industries abroad – Promote trade and economic cooperation for Taiwanese businesses	– Boycott, divest and sanction Israel businesses – Creation and regular update of the UN Database for Israeli businesses in settlement areas – Boycott certain foreign firms (i.e. Carrefour, Puma etc.)

An important difference lies in the approach of CSOs in conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding measures. TCSOs such as Tzu Chi and Zhi-Shan Foundation have implemented activities of distributing aid in mainland China, nonetheless no activities on conflict resolution or peacebuilding can be identified. In the case of Kosovo there is involvement in conflict resolution and the normalisation of relations with Serbia, through joint projects with Serbian CSOs in wider frameworks funded and supported by Western donors. Normalisation of relations, a process that is now considered as intertwined with the European integration trajectory, emerges as one of the main avenues of KCSOs' work from 2011 onwards. In the case of Palestine there are some Israeli human rights CSOs which work together with PCSOs, the most prominent of which is B'tselem, although this is more of an exception rather than a rule, and Palestinian and Israeli CSO engagement appears low in general terms. While peacebuilding initiatives, supported by Western donors, became predominant in the wake of the Oslo Accords, their importance appears to have waned.

CSOs (especially in Taiwan, but also in Kosovo) appear as agile actors in organising international events and bringing guests from different recognising or non-recognising states in their capital cities. CSOs take advantage of transnational networks to make visible positive aspects that the existence of de facto states offers to international society. Events such as conferences and workshops

allow CSOs to bring guests that range from state decision-makers, IO officials, non-state actors and ex-politicians. In line with this, CSOs in Kosovo and Taiwan were also recorded to assist the work of their government through what can be called 'network-sharing' and 'resource-sharing', that is making their organisational networks and resources accessible to foreign policy institutions. In the case of Kosovo this was empirically encountered through codified agreements for cooperation (MoUs and MoCs) between CSOs and different foreign policy institutions, agreeing to share their expertise and resources with the MFA and the diplomatic services as part of efforts to improve foreign policy implementation. In Taiwan's case, this mainly involved increasing international exchange by bringing guests to the island, as activities of The Prospect Foundation show – a task CSOs are well equipped for and an effective way to combat 'political loneliness'. Some Palestinian CSOs maintain specific international advocacy units or offices, which are meant to focus on their international interactions with other actors. Since 2000 Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains the 'Department of NGO International Affairs' that is responsible for enhancing cooperation and coordination between Taiwan's foreign policy institutions and local CSOs. Taiwan's MFA also offers training and financial subsidies to enhance international participation and exchange. In their activities, several TCSOs express commitment to support the fulfilment of the unilateral commitments of Taiwan in implementing UN targets, thereby assisting Taiwan's aim to implement international agreements and standards despite being formally outside of the bodies that produced them.

To conclude this chapter, an abstract categorisation of what CSOs in de facto states aim to achieve through their international activities will be presented in Table 11. In their international activities CSOs in de facto states attempt to influence how international actors think about the de facto states (thoughts); how international actors speak about the de facto states (words); how international actors behave towards the de facto states (decisions); and how international actors interact with the de facto states and their officials (playing field). In broad strokes, these four features help determine the treatment that de facto states receive at the international level, thereby the more positive thoughts, words, and decisions towards them, and the larger the playing field, the more it is likely for the de facto states to acquire, and maintain, survival, acceptance, and recognition. Likewise, the smaller the playing field and the more negative thoughts, words, and decisions with which de facto states are debated and discussed in international conversations, the more challenging their environment is likely to become. The extent to which CSOs are able to substantially influence these dynamics is examined in more detail in Chapter 6 (sub-section 6.1).

Table 11. An abstract categorisation regarding the aims of international activities of CSOs' in de facto states.

International activities seeking impact/ change	**THOUGHTS**	**WORDS**	**DECISIONS**	**PLAYING FIELD**
With the objective to	persuade international actors to change official policy and perception towards de facto states	change official discourse of international actors	convince international actors to take a one-time action	expand international visibility, representation, and interaction
Through activities with the focus on/seek to	narrative development to support acceptance of de facto states; attempts to frame recognition issues differently	produce new research and induce new terminology	convince international actors to take a specific decision, whilst not implying an official policy-change towards de facto states	open and deepen channels of interaction opportunities with international actors and audiences
	narrative development to increase international legitimacy; attempts to de-stigmatise de facto states'	advocacy meetings to promote a change in official discourse towards de facto states	persuade international actors to vote (or abstain) during a certain voting process	enable and expand international interaction in multilateral networks
	using digital devices to represent alternative tools to internet users and audiences in the online domain			increase international visibility and presence, through participating in transnational events
				networking and resource sharing with de facto state institutions

In the face of the contested legal status and limited bilateral recognition and multilateral presence that their governments' face, CSOs attempt to find avenues and communicate arguments to different actors with the purpose of ameliorating the thoughts, words, decisions of international actors, and expanding the playing field of de facto states. It is argued that each international activity of a de facto state's CSO will fall somewhere into these four types, as part of their attempts to influence different international audiences, which includes state and non-state actors. Seen more broadly, through their international engagements CSOs become involved in the foreign policy issue area, implementing activities that aim to protect the interests of their citizens, and enhance interaction of their contested state with the UN-led global order.

CHAPTER 5.
The International Engagement of CSOs in De Facto States: Understanding Underlying Processes

The previous chapter examined the scope and scale of CSO activities within the three cases under review, noting that many of the international actions of CSOs are driven by national questions tied specifically to the statehood of de facto states. By exploring categories of issue areas and activity types, the analysis demonstrated that CSOs in de facto states utilise a wide array of strategies, addressing both state and non-state audiences, to promote and protect the interests of de facto states and their citizens on the international stage – particularly in instances where government capacities are limited in achieving these objectives on their own. In short, the analysis of empirical materials showed numerous examples of CSO initiatives which aimed towards bolstering the acceptance, recognition, and integration of de facto states in the international community.

Building on this foundation, the current chapter delves deeper into the de facto state CSOs' international engagements that connect to foreign policy issues. In essence, after establishing *what* CSOs in de facto states do, the focus now shifts to uncovering the underlying processes that drive their international engagements, thereby examining *how* these processes unfold. While CSOs are often branded simplistically either as extensions of domestic governments or as agents advancing the agendas of international donors, such generalisations risk overlooking the diversity of pathways and strategies at play. This chapter takes a different approach, seeking to understand the nuanced processes and pathways that enable CSOs' international activities within the contexts examined. It also investigates the variations in the CSO relationship with de facto state institutions, particularly the government and, more specifically, with the MFA.

This chapter draws on a variety of data sources for its analysis, including original interviews conducted specifically for this research, a dataset of website activities, and supplementary media sources and relevant documents collected during the study period. While the three cases studied exhibit varying levels of CSO international engagement, the diversity among CSOs poses challenges for developing a single universally applicable analytical framework to investigate potential trajectories. The chapter identifies four primary pathways as underlying processes that shape CSOs' international engagements: Dyadic Formula (CSO-De Facto States Government Engagement); International Access and Participation; International Access and Participation plus the Dyadic Formula; and Unilateral CSO Action. These pathways reflect processes leading to the observed outcome – instances of domestic CSOs engaging internationally and interacting with international actors on issues related to statehood, sovereignty, legitimacy, and recognition. The four pathways were theoretically constructed by blending deductive reasoning and inductive insights derived from the data.

These pathways originate from trigger points that initiate a sequential process, where one component leads to the next. The triggers vary, ranging from inter-

actions between CSOs and the de facto state's government – often, though not exclusively, involving the MFA – resulting in a collaborative domestic foreign policy front; to CSOs gaining access to and participating in international organisations and networks; and independent decisions and activist efforts by the CSO(s). Following the conceptual representation of these pathways, they are probed against empirical materials selected as representative examples for each trajectory under examination. Four illustrative cases are applied as plausibility probes to evaluate the theorised processes. As it will be demonstrated, the theoretical propositions underlying these four pathways are validated by the selected empirical examples.[63]

The drivers behind the four pathways explaining CSO engagement at the international level can be broadly categorised into three levels. One pertains to factors arising from international dynamics, such as expanded opportunities for CSOs to participate in multilateral forums. In the selected cases, achieving ECOSOC status with the UN and participating in UNFCCC are utilised as examples of international organisations and institutions granting de facto state CSOs access and participation opportunities. Two of the pathways are framed within this broader factor, though they exhibit distinct differences in their characteristics. The second factor relates to dynamics at the domestic level, capturing instances where de facto state institutions invite CSOs and create conditions for their inclusion in foreign policy actions. The third type of intervention pertains to factors originating at the CSO level, specifically the internal processes and decisions within organisations that initiate foreign policy actions independently. CSOs' unilateral foreign policy actions are commonly driven by intrinsic motivations, and internal decision-making processes. From a different angle, these three drivers can also be analysed within the framework of the structure-agency debate. Factors at the international level are considered macro-level influences, as they derive from systemic changes of international affairs over which CSOs have minimal control. Conversely, when CSOs engage internationally through their own resources and initiatives, they can be viewed as agents making active efforts to navigate and interact with the structure.

It is noteworthy that during its life cycle a CSO is expected to implement different activities, projects and programmes that fall under different pathways. For instance, a CSO may start lobbying activities for the membership of a de facto state inside an international organisation without external support, based solely on internal decision-making and activist willingness (that is, pathway IV). The very same CSO, however, may later join a broader domestic foreign policy action, led by the de facto state's government, meaning that such international engagement is better understood through a different trajectory (pathway I). That is to

[63] Out of four events, one comes from Kosovo, one from Taiwan, and two from Palestine. In order to confirm or disprove the propositions, each of the components of the chain must be confirmed with empirical evidence, otherwise the mechanism fails to hold. All events that have been selected for probing represent examples of the work that the CSOs conduct outside of the de facto states territory in interaction with different international actors and audiences.

say, the pathways are not to be comprehended as definitive processes explaining all international engagements implemented by a certain CSO. If one pathway is identified as a plausible explanation behind certain international actions of a CSO, it does not exclude the possibility for other actions to be better explained by another trajectory. Thereby, a pathway, as it is presented here, ought to be thought of as an ephemeral disposition. If they are imagined as such, the four pathways will help to account for the multiplicity of directions of complex real world relationships, thus escaping unidirectional frameworks.

5.1 Pathway I – The Dyadic Formula (CSO – De Facto States Government Engagement)

The previous chapter briefly revealed different examples where CSOs and de facto states' governments might team-up in attempts to reach a certain international objective. The empirical data revealed that certain international activities of CSOs can be considered as a direct consequence of the interaction between CSOs and de facto states' institutions. However, the previous chapter did not delve into how this process takes place in a sequential manner, and it also did not focus on conceptualising different degrees of engagement that CSOs and de facto states can develop. Both CSOs and MFAs (or de facto state institutions in general) operate under various internal and external constraints while pursuing their goals, and can support each other through different means, ranging from financial resources to technical expertise. Such dynamics comprise the first pathway that leads to CSO international engagements, termed here as the 'dyadic formula'.

CSOs are observed connecting with public civil service departments and divisions, or the political level such as the ministerial cabinet. Joint efforts between the CSOs and governments are not new in the literature. For instance, some scholars, such as Najam (2000, p. 379) have noted that CSOs and governments are "colliding into policy stream far more often than before – sometimes by intent, sometimes by default". In an increasingly interconnected world, some CSOs that populate the foreign policy issue area are thus expected to forge deeper ties with their own institutions, typically the MFA. Depending on the contextual conditions and official foreign policy choices, different literature findings demonstrate that MFAs also consider including domestic CSOs in the official foreign policy process as beneficial.

One blueprint example are programmes on public diplomacy, where CSOs are considered to be well-suited to participate, arguably due to their expertise and moral authority in communicating with the general public. CSOs are regularly included in public diplomacy programmes by MFAs in fully recognised states, showing both similarities and differences in the foreign policy strategies of de facto states compared to confirmed states. On the one hand, the dyadic formula illustrates similarities between de facto states and full-fledged states in international society, where MFAs integrate local CSOs into the foreign policy orbit, to improve state interactions with other actors. On the other hand, de facto states

carry specificities stemming from the fact that their foreign policy goals relate to existential dilemmas, such as survival, acceptance, and recognition, rather than being primarily linked to policy level actions. It may be expected that the role of CSOs in the dyadic formula responds to such differences, thus becoming context specific in regard to its application.

The dyad between the CSOs and de facto states' governments arises when some form of interaction is materialised, and is followed by an implicit or explicit agreement on joint engagements for a certain international intervention. Often the contact point for the CSOs is the respective de facto state's MFA, usually in the headquarters in the capital city, but sometimes also occurring in the diplomatic and consular missions and offices abroad. For the dyadic relationship between the CSO and de facto states government to exist, some kind of proximity must thus be identified, ranging from meetings, signed agreements and documents, and subsidies. Whilst de facto states governments largely prefer to team-up with CSOs with previous experience and technical expertise in specific fields, this is not always a prerequisite. Empirically, the most complex and deepest forms of the dyadic formula were found in Taiwan, followed by Kosovo to a lesser extent.

In practical terms the dyadic formula is mediated either by CSO action or by the de facto state government's initiative. There is no blueprint on how the interaction between a CSO with the MFA is initiated, and how such interaction then transforms into a deeper form of engagement. The relationship between CSOs and de facto state governments benefits both sides, nevertheless it also carries complexities, as it is influenced by factors such as ideological differences. However, the main aims that drive the relationship pertain to ameliorating de facto states' citizens' representation, improving the international posture of de facto states, or helping the government to combat the actions of the former host (adversary) state – each may be sufficient to sustain the relationship. In this context, the challenging external environment of de facto states, combined with the sense of ownership that their CSOs hold in state-building efforts, makes collaboration between CSOs and de facto state governments towards international objectives seem like a necessary strategy to bolster the external engagements of de facto states. CSOs often see the MFA as different from other ministries and public institutions because it focuses on international actors and diplomacy. This makes collaboration more acceptable, even when CSO-government cooperation is highly restricted in other fields.

Nevertheless, the engagement between the CSOs and de facto states' governments represents a rather wide notion. This poses a challenge in disentangling different forms of proximity that might take place in practice. The question that might be posed, therefore, is: how can these different forms of engagements between de facto states' CSOs and MFAs be conceptualised? One is right to expect that depending on the context and issue at stake, different forms of engagement between the two entities take shape. For example, financial subsidies represent a way under which the relationship between CSOs and de facto state governments exhibits itself, however, looking solely at funds and donations risks excluding other forms of engagement that underpin the relationship. Hence, to

understand the different degrees that the engagement between the two, one must first delve into the different types of support that they can lend to one another.

The types of support that guide the dyadic formula between CSOs and MFAs can be material and non-material, and unidirectional or bidirectional. To depict the most common types of support that the CSOs and MFAs lend to one another, the following categories might be used: (a) Funding and Subsidies; (b) Information Exchange; (c) Network Access; (d) Research and Analysis; (e) Technical Assistance. The funding and subsidies can be understood as a unidirectional instrument offered by MFAs, as identified in cases of Kosovo and Taiwan. As noted, this type of support was by far most present in Taiwan. The funding and subsidies includes funds for short-term activities and projects and long-term programmes, but also subsidies intended to reimburse and pay for specific one-time expenses, such as travel costs. The category 'funding and subsidies' represents the main instrument of support for MFAs in their quest to increase the international engagement of domestic CSOs and their presence in events abroad.

Both information exchange and network access appear as bi-directional dynamics, meaning that they can be conducted by both CSOs and MFAs. Network access encapsulates international organisations, local CSOs in other countries and international CSOs, but also individual contacts of decision-makers, policy-makers, former politicians and diplomats, etc. Information exchange entails any form of give-and-take, where CSOs and MFAs converse and keep each other in the loop on their work at the international level. The shared information might range from simple updates on international engagements that are being conducted, to more detailed encounters focused on the planning ahead of some event, seeking to ensure that the de facto state's state and non-state sectors are on the same page ahead of specific international events. An illustration of this are examples when the de facto state's institutions and CSOs organise meetings to converse before participating in international events, such as UNFCCC (case of Taiwan) and UNHRC (case of Palestine).[64]

By strengthening ties with the MFA, CSOs not only gain access to new venues and actors, but also offer their networks and contacts as resources to support the statehood project. CSOs share guests with de facto state institutions and help by providing their international contacts and networks.[65] Additionally, CSOs produce research and analysis directed specifically to their MFA (i.e. on relations with non-recognisers and non-diplomatic allies), thus offering expertise to the foreign policy institutions of de facto states. Finally, in the case of Kosovo, one CSO was registered for providing technical assistance through a project funded by the Norwegian Embassy (and currently the Swedish Embassy) in Kosovo. This

[64] While in Taiwan such meetings represent a regularity, in Palestine they represent a rarity. Nonetheless, they are registered to have occurred.

[65] Bringing international guests (politicians, ex-politicians and diplomats) is widely present amongst the Taiwan CSOs. Prospect Foundation and Association of Foreign Relations (AFR) represent two organisations included in the study which organise regular activities to bring guest speakers to Taiwan.

assistance included covering the salaries of external experts working for different institutions, including the MFA.

By supporting each other in these ways, CSOs and MFAs help expand the international playing field, deepen their access to information, improve the quality of international engagements, and enhance the effectiveness of their interactions. In Palestine, because of the context under which the CSOs and the PA operate, but also the weak ties between the PCSOs and the PA, most of these elements are absent in the work of the PCSOs. This does not mean that PCSOs are less active internationally, it solely means that the international engagements of the PCSO sector are better explained by other pathways that will be presented below.

Table 12. Five types of support that shape the relationship between the CSOs and MFAs in de facto states.

Type of Support	**Directionality**	**Direction**	**Presence Across Cases**
a) Funding and Subsidies	Unidirectional	MFA to CSO	Kosovo and Taiwan
b) Information Exchange	Bi-directional	MFA to CSO; CSO to MFA	Kosovo, Palestine, and Taiwan
c) Network Access	Bi-directional	MFA to CSO; CSO to MFA	Kosovo and Taiwan
d) Research and Analysis	Unidirectional	CSO to MFA	Kosovo and Taiwan
e) Technical Assistance	Unidirectional	CSO to MFA	Kosovo

This categorisation does not necessarily represent an exhaustive list of all types of support. However, the data of this study still reveals that these five types of support largely shape the contours of the relationships between de facto state CSOs and MFAs. Moreover, these five types of support also represent determining factors regarding the depth of engagement and proximity between the two actors in foreign policy. Therefore, it can be deduced that these five forms of support ultimately produce different results on the degree of the engagement that occurs between CSOs and MFAs. Attempting to offer conceptual nuance and a so-called 'degreeism' to such engagements is both helpful and necessary, to not only better understand the differences between the three contexts, but also variations at the level of the CSOs. The engagements between CSOs and de facto state governments in the foreign policy issue area are thus conceptualised into three main general categories: coordination, cooperation, and partnership.

i. Coordination – Coordination is the simplest form of relationship between a de facto state CSO and the MFA in international engagements. A process of coordination is not expected to substantially impact or change the work of either of the actors, nor it is expected to result into a joint front of action, namely a

new project or program. The coordination, thus, assumes the absence of funding and subsidies from the de facto state government. Meetings and consultations may take place, but not necessarily following a structured pattern. Furthermore, while often being ad-hoc, such exchanges do not necessarily result in follow-up activities. Coordination as a form of engagement is mostly compatible with the information exchange types of support.

Coordination is present in Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan, nonetheless, it is most effective in illustrating the types of engagement between Palestinian CSOs and the PA. For example, one of the interlocutors from a Palestinian CSO during the interviews noted the following with consideration to their participation at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR):

> "We sat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we told them what we will focus on, we asked them what they will focus on. You know, just keynotes, topics. For example, the Universal Periodic Review for Israel is this month as well. So, we coordinated with the State of Palestine on what to do, what to focus on, both ways, they tell us what they want, and we tell them what they want. But I can assure you this is all symbolic. And we only do it because we have to at the end of the day, but by no means do, for example, Palestinian organisations listen to what the PA has to say… or does the PA listen to our organisations" (P-2, 2023).

As the excerpt underlines, coordination serves as a venue for exchanging opinions and ideas, updating the CSO sector and MFA about each other's work. Because there is an absence of funds from the PA to Palestinian CSOs and the relations between the PA and PCSOs are less dynamic compared to the two other contexts, in the Palestinian case coordination represents the limits that the CSO-MFA proximity yields.

ii. Cooperation – Cooperation represents a form of engagement between CSOs and MFAs, which entails funding and subsidies, including small scale support such as reimbursement for travel costs. Through cooperation mechanisms, the CSOs and de facto state governments facilitate joint activities, short-term projects and event-based sponsorship. This degree of engagement is likely to result in a united front, therefore vesting the relationship between the state and CSO sector in the realm of foreign policy with a structured approach. Cooperation as a form of engagement creates support mechanisms for the implementation of separate activities and projects for both CSOs and MFAs. Moreover, cooperation may also result in a framework of joint action between the two entities, with clearly delineated separate responsibilities. Some examples of cooperation mechanisms have been mentioned in the previous chapter, such as Kosovo's joint endeavours between the MFA and CSOs to target the five EU non-recognisers (in the KStalksEU project during 2013–2015), and cooperation between Taiwanese institutions and Taiwanese CSOs in enhancing relations with Lithuania since 2022.

More recently, in November 2024 the Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS) and The Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA), a foreign policy think-tank based in Nepal, organised for the first time an event in Prishtina – the Prishtina Dialogue. The Prishtina Dialogue was designed to boost cooperation between Kosovo and South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, most of which are non-recognising countries. In this instance, while Kosovo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora (MFAD) was engaged in organising the event, the foreign ministries of these countries were not present in the process, which led to an increased interaction between KCSOs and the CSOs of these countries. Cooperation was found mainly in the case of Taiwan, and also in Kosovo to a lesser extent.

iii. Partnership – This form of engagement represents the deepest and most stable engagement practice between CSOs and MFAs, as it indicates both a structured approach and regularity. Partnership develops when there is a long-term proximity (i.e. over several years) between the CSO and the respective de facto state's government. Partnership is also potentially institutionalised through signed contracts or agreements, such as funding and project contracts, memorandums of understanding, and memorandums of cooperation. As partnership represents a deeper and longer form of engagement (thus not a one-time event) it inevitably also encompasses coordination and cooperation within itself. Similarly to cooperation, partnership was found mainly in in the case of Taiwan, and also in Kosovo to a lesser extent.

The Taiwanese campaigns for accession and increased participation at the WHO offer an apt illustration of 'partnership' as a form of relationship. During an interview in Taipei City with a high-ranking representative of the Department of NGOs at the MFA, it was stated as follows:

> "Take the World Health Assembly, our Taiwan Medical Association has been a good partner, in terms of campaigning [for] our participation. Each year we will invite those medical heath associations, sit down and let them know the government goal this year, and what they can do with us. A similar case with our bid for [the] UN as well" (T-11, 2022).

As part of the partnership process, the CSOs and MFAs are expected to create a relationship of trust in their joint work to reach out to international audiences. Thereby, partnership assumes regularity, frequency, and intensity. While in the case of Taiwan the MFA cooperation with the CSO sector is mainly channelled through the work of the Department of NGO International Affairs at the MFA, in Kosovo it is more scattered and includes different offices, from the cabinet of the minister to more specific departments, i.e. those focused on the public diplomacy portfolio.

These three types of multi-layered efforts, especially cooperation and partnership, serve to boost the engagement of CSOs both at the domestic level and at the international level. At the international level, rapprochement with the MFA has the potential to expand the web and reach of their action at the CSO disposal. At the domestic level, this spectrum of relationships integrates CSOs into the official foreign policy implementation processes of a de facto state's domestic institutions. Finally, such proximity also allows CSOs to diversify official foreign policy practices and narratives, as the illustrative example of CSOs transmitting messages directed at publics in other non-recognising states reveals. Although I refrain from adopting rigid labels, which I envision as a hindrance to capturing the multiplicity of CSO relationship(s) with other parties, it can be stated that, at certain junctures, particularly at the international level, the dyad between some civil society organisations and governments tends to intensify to the point of exhibiting characteristics akin to those identified in the literature as government-organized non-governmental organisations or civil society actors (GONGOs). Having said that, I argue that it is more useful for this study to consider such engagement as a dynamic practice that fluctuates across contexts and scales, without reducing and fixing the status of the respective CSO to a singular classification. In addition, this pathway also illustrates that the relationship between CSOs and governments differs on the scale of operation (local and international). In other words, collaborative endeavours at the international level cannot be expected to automatically recur with the same intensity at the local level, and vice versa.

The data also demonstrates that both categories of types of support (funding and subsidies; information exchange; network access; research and analysis; technical assistance) and forms of engagement (coordination, cooperation and partnership) are largely conditioned by the issue at stake, ideological proximity, and personal relationships with people inside the foreign ministry. Therefore, not only are forms of support subject to change across different contexts, but the government rotation also carries potential to make significant changes into what types of support are extended to which CSOs, and vice versa. It may sound trivial, but it is noteworthy that the types of support and the degrees of engagements are constantly transformed. The more the government is receptive to the CSO sector's involvement in foreign policy, the more present the types of support and the deeper the type of engagements. Likewise, the more inaccessible the government and the MFA are for the CSO sector, the less likely this pathway is likely to occur. At the same time, different CSOs enjoy different forms of relationships with different political parties and officials in power. All three de facto states' governments and foreign policy institutions, nonetheless, exhibited some willingness to establish a degree of engagement with CSOs in foreign policy issues, even if that sits at the most basic level, and entails solely sporadic coordination via conversations and information exchange.

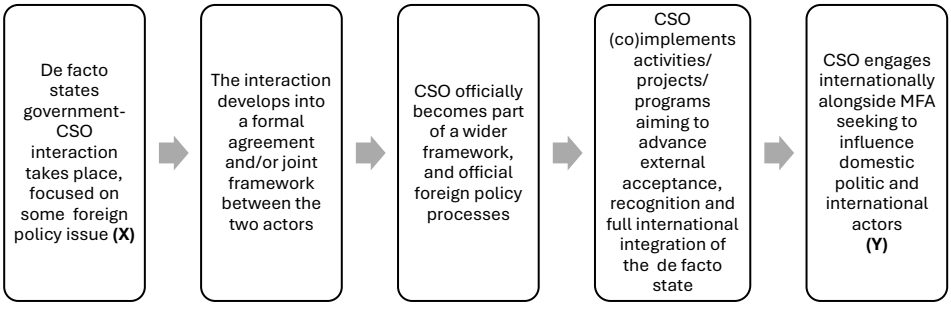

Figure 12. Theorised Pathway I – CSO engages in international activities that seek to influence international actors through some form of interaction with the de facto states government.

The illustration above presents theoretical propositions on how CSOs engage internationally through a dyadic formula, where their international involvement stems from interaction with the de facto state's government, that in this instance is the MFA. The theorised pathway begins with a trigger, which is typically a documented interaction between the CSO and the de facto state's government. The initial interaction can entail formal meetings, informal consultations, and communication exchanges, with a clear focus on foreign policy objectives, revolving around de facto state ties with an international actor. The interaction sets off a series of events that ultimately leads to the CSOs engaging internationally, within a wider state-to-state or state-IO framework. The steps between the trigger and the outcome involve a transition from mere interaction to some form of agreement or institutionalisation between the two actors. This process of institutionalisation eventually results in establishing cooperation or partnership.[66]

Not all interactions between CSOs and de facto state governments result in formalisation, creating a dyad. As such, the scope conditions that need to be present to allow such interaction to lead to a formal agreement are as follows: government openness; alignment of thematic focus between CSO and foreign policy priorities; and the CSO organisational capacity. Through such a chain of actions the CSO becomes integrated into broader frameworks, where it starts to (co)implement activities, projects, and programmes alongside public institutions. Crucially, a united front with the MFA is formed. Through the interaction of these actors and decisions, the CSO is given the opportunity to expand its foreign policy activities, both within the domestic sphere and on the international stage.

[66] Note that *coordination* is excluded here.

5.1.1 Pathway Illustrative Example: CSO X[67] lobbying for Kosovo's membership in INTERPOL in 2018

On November 20, 2018, Kosovar institutions found themselves amidst a diplomatic battle with Serbia that had started at the beginning of the year. A large delegation of Kosovar representatives was present in Dubai to participate in the 87th INTERPOL General Assembly Conference. The Kosovar delegation was participating with a clear aim: convincing member states of INTERPOL to support Kosovo's accession to the organisation, thus secure the 2/3 of the required votes to allow Kosovo to become a full member. Inside the corridors of the venue, there was also a high-level official of CSO X, making efforts to convince recognising and non-recognising states to support Kosovo's membership in INTERPOL with an affirmative vote. The CSO representative in the interview admitted to participating in meetings with as many as "50 state delegations" (K-11, 2022). Much to the surprise of the KCSO representative these meetings were even organised in the "last minutes, which is quite late for these processes", while continuing to narrate the experience with the following words: "[m]any things do not rely on you because it is the decision that has been taken by the president of a country or the more senior level, but you still push towards the last minute" (K-11, 2022). In parallel, Serbia was engaged in a counter-lobbying campaign to dissuade member states officials in the building from supporting Kosovo's bid, thus mobilising its diplomatic alliances to oppose Kosovo's INTERPOL membership.

Although the result of the voting was not successful, and Kosovo did not ultimately manage to join INTERPOL, one can pose the question: how did the involvement of an Executive Director of a CSO, lobbying to enhance its country's external sovereignty, come about? What chain of events explains the event? Indeed, the answer is that such participation is best explained through a dyadic relationship established between CSO X and Kosovo institutions. As the illustration below shows the process was set in motion through an extended invitation from the Kosovo Government to CSO X to join an Inter-Institutional Working Group. The Inter-Institutional Working Group was established to channel cooperation between different Kosovar ministries and institutions on supporting the INTERPOL application. In the illustrated mechanism below, the invitation by the government is considered as the triggering event.

[67] To maintain anonymity, I refer to CSOs throughout this exercise by placeholders such as X, Y, S, Z rather than their real names.

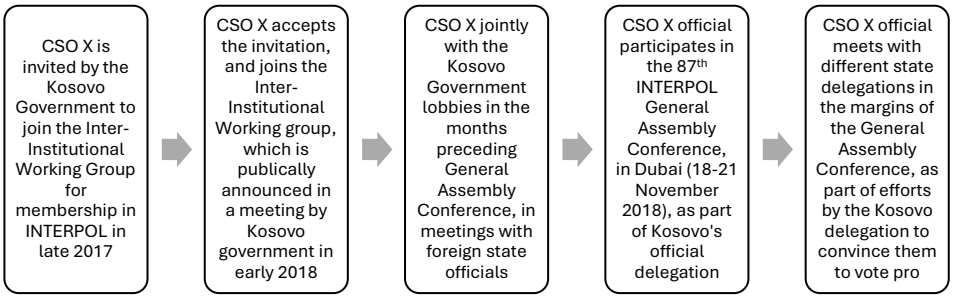

Figure 13. Empirical Pathway I – The engagement of CSO X in the lobbying process for Kosovo's full membership as a new member of INTERPOL in 2018.

The involvement of CSO X was formalised and made public on January 4, 2018, during a meeting of the Kosovo Government cabinet, where Kosovo's lobbying campaign for accession to INTERPOL was discussed. INTERPOL membership remains one of the key multilateral objectives of Kosovo's foreign policy – it is regularly part of Government Programs, and it is considered important on several levels, namely for boosting the state-building process and international legitimacy, but also to enhance security and cross-border cooperation. The government meeting, therefore, formalised the role of CSO X in the lobbying campaign, which had been discussed with state officials over several weeks.

The Inter-Institutional Working Group was comprised of different state institutions and ministries, ranging from areas such as law enforcement, cross-border cooperation, to those in charge of foreign affairs and diplomacy. As a multi-stakeholder mechanism, the working group allowed CSO X to draw on its technical expertise and competence to support the application process, whereas the Kosovo Government saw merit in the portfolio of CSO X to bolster the lobbying campaign. The CSO's role in the campaign focused on providing specialised expertise on the strategic advantages of Kosovo's INTERPOL membership, and advocacy to reinforce and legitimise Kosovo's claims internationally. As my interlocutor stated, the CSO was engaged in the process with different tasks, namely: "policy research analysis, with advocacy in certain circles, using professional arguments why Kosovo should be part of INTERPOL, talking to different interlocutors and former police experts where we were part of a regional initiatives. By being part of the committee we gave our contribution considered to be significant, I would say" (K-11, 2022). Seen more generally, the example at hand also demonstrates how governments choose to draw on CSOs' operational capabilities and expertise for the purpose of boosting campaigns that target multilateral membership.

In the months that followed, CSO X was part of the official Kosovar delegation in different events of the lobbying campaign. For several months, CSO X was present in different visits abroad in recognising and non-recognising states, participating in direct meetings with their officials, although the exact number is

not clear. During 2018 CSO X contributed in different forms to support Kosovo's application to become a new member of INTERPOL, finally ending up in the 87th INTERPOL General Assembly, in an arena dominated by state officials and diplomats. Inside the proceedings, CSO X managed to become an active participant in official state delegation meetings, thus attempting to influence the result of diplomatic negotiations that represents the final component of the empirical chain.

The negative vote at the INTERPOL General Assembly illustrates the difficulties that not only CSOs, but also state institutions face in persuading other international actors to support their agenda of expanding multilateral accessions, which are affected by different factors such as foreign policy strategies, state alliances and great power politics. At the same time, the example demonstrates how CSOs and state institutions join forces to advance the state-building agenda through a unified foreign policy front. As Figure 13 illustrated, the trigger of this CSO international involvement was born out of the invitation of the Kosovo Government to participate in the working group, which was then formalised, due to the presence of scope conditions. The formalisation then set in motion a series of events over the course of 2018, which ultimately resulted in greater participation of CSO X in the official foreign policy process, and participation of CSO X in the INTERPOL General Assembly in November 2018. Seen counterfactually, without the invitation by Kosovar institutions, the participation of CSO X in the INTERPOL General Assembly is not likely to have occurred.

5.2 Pathway II – International Access and Participation

Throughout its lifecycle, a CSO engages with various institutional and professional networks across different countries. This shall come as no surprise. Relations with international organisations, international CSOs and the donor community contribute to multiplying the networks over time. Various opportunities for attendance in international events and forums arise for CSOs during these progressions. At the other side of the spectrum, major international organisations (and their offshoots), and international CSOs exhibit an interest in exploring modalities to enable the access and participation of de facto state CSOs in their events, despite potential hurdles. In broad strokes, the presence of de facto states' CSOs in international events is considered to enhance democratic principles and the legitimacy of international institutions and networks, by ensuring representation for the citizens who live there in a manner that is somewhat, though not entirely, discharged of political sensitivities. Practically, this allows IOs and international networks to frame participation by CSOs in de facto states as a step towards principles of inclusiveness and equality, thus facilitating a comprehensive representation and coverage of the world map while circumventing contested sovereignty issues.

The international participation of the CSOs of de facto states is also aided by larger structural developments in global governance which are creating new

spaces for non-state actors inside and around IOs. The number of CSOs gaining access and participation has experienced a sharp upward turn since the 1990s onwards, with different international organisations changing procedures of work. This process in the literature has been described as a process of an "opening up" and a "transnational turn in global governance" (Tallberg et al., 2013a, pp. 1–8). Whilst the granted playing field for CSOs in different international organisations is presumably also subject to the issue area and IO type, this dynamic has impacted the work of both international and domestic CSOs at the global level. A notable example is the UN. While in the first few decades after the 1945 UN international order offered limited opportunities for domestic CSOs, this changed in the mid-1990s, whereby ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 eased guidelines for the accreditation and participation of domestic CSOs in UN activities (Götz, 2019). The number of domestic CSOs affiliated with the UN is increasing through the Consultative Status. The status is granted upon recommendation of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, where CSOs may gain one of the following standings: General Consultative Status, Special Consultative Status or Roster status.[68] In parallel to these developments, the argument that may be raised is that this evolution of the UN also increasingly permits CSOs from countries lacking full UN membership, with different degrees of access and opportunities for participation inside the organisation. Yet, the UN represents only one of many examples. Uhlin (2022) aptly notes that the opening up of IOs has created conditions for increased input by CSOs from the Global South, also challenging predominant structures of power. In the same vein, a similar argument might be advanced about the domestic CSOs of de facto states' – that is to say, due to the transformation of global governance practices, domestic CSOs possess more access and participation entry points in IOs where their state lacks membership.

Nonetheless, despite such openings, the reaction of the former host (adversary) state often discourages the presence of CSOs from de facto states in international events, namely through attempts to compel alignment with its own sovereignty framing. China, especially since the DPP came to power in Taiwan in 2016, has pursued a rather hostile approach towards the participation of Taiwanese CSOs in international venues. Where the PRC has more power to suppress CSO efforts, it makes efforts to affect their presence in two main ways. The PRC prefers to keep any form of Taiwanese participation at minimal levels. During an interview with a TCSO my interlocutor stated as follows:

> "Several years ago, they wanted to recommend the representative in Taiwan to be the chairperson of one of the associations of doctors, but because of the objections from China, we could not do that. So, it happens all the time. I mean, even in non-profit organisations, China wants to prohibit the space at Taiwan's expense" (T-1, 2022).

[68] The number of 'All organisations in Consultative Status' in 2024 is close to 6, 500. To submit the application the CSOs must submit different documents, including certificate of registration, constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and financial statements.

In addition, because of its stature in world politics as a great power, the PRC possesses capabilities and tools to condition the presence of Taiwanese CSOs, and disassociate it from the ideas of independence and statehood for the island. Symbols and words that signal some sort of endorsement and legitimisation of statehood are perceived as a threat from the former host (adversary) state, hence the behaviour of the CSO in the international event becomes subject to scrutiny, sometimes also inviting a reaction by official diplomacy channels. That is to say, despite changes in procedures that have allowed for increased access and participation of CSOs in international events, the path of CSOs from de facto states inside those doors, especially in events organised by IOs, is not always straightforward.

As the claim of my interlocutor shows, the PRC is wary of increased visibility of Taiwanese CSOs even in international CSO networks. Discussing the necessity to silence political messages of Taiwanese CSOs inside international venues, another of my interlocutors stated as follows:

> "[i]f we do this, China will immediately block the entrance, so we not only lost the chance to talk, we also lost the chance to collect information of what's going on this year's event. If we show our initiative as 'Taiwan is part of the world', 'Taiwan is part of [the] UN', then we will have none of this. This turns our diplomacy as very low-key" (T-2, 2022).

The objections also turn to actions – for instance, China's Taiwan Affairs Office of the PRC in 2023 sanctioned one of the CSOs included in this study (The Prospect Foundation) for supporting Taiwanese independence. Nevertheless, the data also indicates that the CSOs included in this study managed to gain presence in different international events and forums of both international intergovernmental organisations and international CSOs. The application, registration and participation process requires the adoption of different name tags for CSOs. In practical terms, agreeing to be registered as a CSO from the adversary state, or under some other neutral label, represents one of the ways to engage in compromise. At the UNFCCC, for example, Taiwanese CSOs are registered as CSOs coming from China (the PRC), and this compromise represents the only route for participation in the annual events. Kosovo CSOs have also been registered as CSOs from Kosovo* (with an asterisk) in regional events, and in some EU organised events. Depending on the venue, Palestinian CSOs can be presented as CSOs that originate from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Palestine, or the State of Palestine. These labels are shown in the badges and other participation sheets of the attendees. Such tactical manoeuvring appears to yield a larger strategic gain, that is access and participation inside the international sites of IOs and international level CSOs.

The participation of CSOs at the UN can also be discussed in light of the notion on the "Right to Diplomacy (R2D)", coined by Constantinou and McConnell (2023). Rooted in the power asymmetries both among member states and between states and other actors, the UN harbours an "irreconcilable tension

between inclusive diplomatic pluralism, and the resolute defense of sovereign state authority" (Constantinou and McConnell, 2023, p. 63), which is reflected in an ongoing contestation regarding which actors have the R2D pertaining to communication, representation, standing, and negotiation. Constantinou and McConnell (2022, p. 63), thus bring into attention the fact that the right of access and the nature of participation in practice remains deeply fragmented within the UN system, by asserting that: "tracing the messy picture of how the R2D is granted and denied in practice to a wide range of political actors exposes the moral and practical implications of the disjuncture between official policy and everyday practice at the UN". The notion of R2D is relevant here as it is intertwined with to the notion of legitimacy in multilateral diplomacy, or to use the framing by Constantinou and McConnell (2023, p. 56): "the terminology of the R2D troubles and questions who can legitimately speak and negotiate for whom and for what matter within the UN". At the general level mere standing of the CSOs in multilateral venues can be expected to enhance a form of legitimacy for the entity they originate from. Additionally, albeit not formal representatives, due to their connection to transnational webs the CSO engagement can enhance association with broader normative agendas, in some ways, representing alignment with shared international values and practices in the international society. By claiming their R2D, the CSOs represent a tool by which the de facto state are legitimised inside IOs thus expanding their international interactions and visibility. Most importantly, the CSOs claim the authority as legitimate representatives.

The CSOs from de facto states find ways to enter doors inside international organisations and networks where the de facto state's officials are not permitted to participate in an official capacity. By so doing, CSOs occasionally surpass the lengths that the MFA and diplomatic services are able to reach, and ensure that the de facto states' voices inside the event are heard.[69] When de facto state officials are absent, CSO presence presumably eases the consequences of the absence of official state membership, and evolves into a form of representation for citizens and the state. Even in cases where there is participation by de facto states officials, CSO participation presents a different narrative to the participants, stemming from a different angle of CSO sector activism. To this end, the lack of full membership in different multilateral bodies, hence the official absence of state participation in international venues, tends to be somewhat mitigated by CSO presence.

The international access and participation of CSOs sometimes derives from a direct invitation to attend, but it often follows a review process regarding membership in the respective IO or network, that is concluded with the CSO receiving consultative or observer status. If the review process is concluded successfully, which as noted can be challenging in practice, then the new status of CSOs is formalised, then unlocking further political opportunities and venues for access

[69] International participation of the de facto states is fluid and might change over time. In the previous section it was discussed how Kosovo's participation in the Council of Europe has changed over time, however, for some years in the post-2008 era the CSOs had larger access to the CoE building in Strasbourg.

and participation. In addition to joining international networks and identifying potential future partners, international venues also allow CSOs to interact with state officials and diplomatic services from recognising and non-recognising countries. The CSOs were registered to take advantage and conduct advocacy and lobbying campaigns both inside and around the building(s).

As noted, due to power asymmetries CSOs might also be conditioned in what they can and cannot say, and what they can and cannot do. Notwithstanding these constraints, de facto state CSOs were registered to showcase and represent different facets of policy-areas of de facto states. One way to conduct this is by simply explaining the state of art within the borders of the de facto states, hence as a separate jurisdiction regarding specific issue areas. If allowed, CSOs were recorded to disseminate narratives to participants on positive aspects that the existence and acceptance of the de facto states brings to the international community, and how its statehood project is aligned with, and contributes to, solving global governance challenges.

Before moving to the theorised pathway, a short digression on the international CSOs is warranted. It has been stated that international CSOs employ looser practices both regarding opening doors for CSOs from de facto states, and regarding conditioning their forms of access and participation. Recently, Brucker (2025) found how the official secessionist Biafran diplomacy (the so-called Biafra Lobby) targeted international non-state actors, including international CSOs seeking to gain external allies as a means to gain international support.[70] During that period, Biafra representatives sought external support from international non-state actors, which resulted in a network of actors calling for US intervention in Biafra. Brucker (2025, p. 46) terms the process of reaching out to international CSOs and international networks as 'civil society patronage'. According to this perspective, not only do de facto states pursue hard means and state external support to sustain their existence, but they also seek out softer types of support from international non-state actors, seeking to influence decision-making circles and global public opinion, and legitimise their claims. This sub-section can be said to supplement such literature findings, by highlighting endeavours by domestic CSOs from de facto states to engage with international ICSOs and other international networks, both in search of support, and attempts to influence them. The dynamic thus can be flipped, namely not only do state institutions reach out to international CSOs as a means of external support, but domestic CSOs from de facto states also seek to mobilise support by international organisations and international CSOs, in a direct fashion, without a visible government push.

[70] Biafra was a de facto state that declared independence and functioned separately from Nigeria in the period 1967–1970, until it was forcefully reintegrated following a civil war.

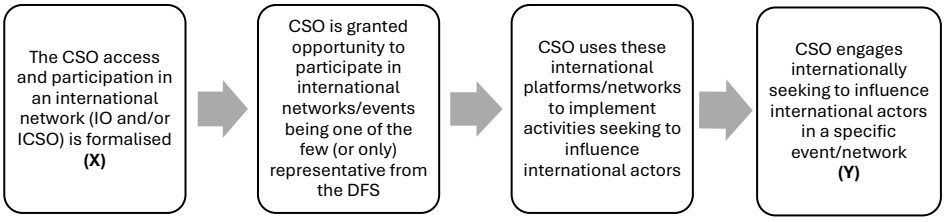

Figure 14. Theorised Pathway II – CSOs engage in international activities that seek to influence international actors, through a process of formalisation with international networks and organisations.

Figure 14 illustrates the process under which CSOs engage internationally in multilateral settings and networks under the pathway 'International Access and Participation'. The scope conditions that allow the pathway to occur are as follows: the openness of the IO; the alignment of thematic focus between CSO and IO scope; and CSO organisational capacity. Under this trajectory the international engagement of the CSO derives from a process of formalisation by an international body (trigger), that is when the CSO earns membership, receives the observer or consultative status into an international organisation, or network led by an international CSO. The formalisation process and status upgrade then creates conditions for the CSO to expand into international access and participation, thereby bolstering international presence and networks. Finally, the dynamic results in allowing the CSOs to attempt persuasion tactics in front of the attendants of that event on statehood and sovereignty narratives, which relate to the existence and acceptance of the de facto state as an equal member of the community of states.

5.2.1 Pathway Illustrative Example: CSO Y at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

CSO Y represents one of several PCSOs that participates regularly in UN Human Rights Council meetings, an intergovernmental body within the UN system that is focused on promoting and protecting human rights globally. The 47 member states of UNHRC are elected by the UN General Assembly to serve three-year terms, with a limit of two consecutive terms for each state. Whilst CSOs are allowed to participate in UNHRC meetings and contribute to discussions, they do not enjoy voting rights. As the mandate of UNHRC pertains to promotion and documentation of human rights violations, and providing a platform for dialogue on human rights issues, CSOs contribute significantly to various phases of UNHRC's work, including reporting, advocacy, and dialogue. Perhaps most importantly, the UNHRC employs the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which represents a unique mechanism where each UN Member State undergoes a peer review of its human rights records. In this context, due to the history of the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict the UNHRC represents an important venue for Palestinian actors to flag the actions of Israel in front of UN member states and international public opinion.[71]

During participation within UNHRC, CSO Y contributes with different submissions, statements, and oral interventions about human rights protection in the Palestinian territories, including Gaza.[72] This regular international participation of CSO Y was triggered through a formalised relationship between the CSO and an international body, that in this case is the UN. Whilst the theoretical pathway does not exclude potential coordination (such as meetings and conversations) with the de facto state's institutions, it grants no role to them as a stakeholder in the processes of CSO formalisation with the consultative status, or its long-term engagement with UNHRC. It is noteworthy that the State of Palestine participates in the UNHRC meetings and discussions, making use of the non-member observer state status. In parallel, CSO Y leverages its status as a dedicated human rights organisation, thereby becoming an advocate of the citizens facing human rights violations on the ground. CSO Y contributions may also be considered as part of collective efforts of PCSOs in the UN, therefore they often represent joint submissions that represent the Palestinian CSO sector. Likewise, CSO Y also draws on transnational partnerships and networks for its submissions inside the UNHRC.

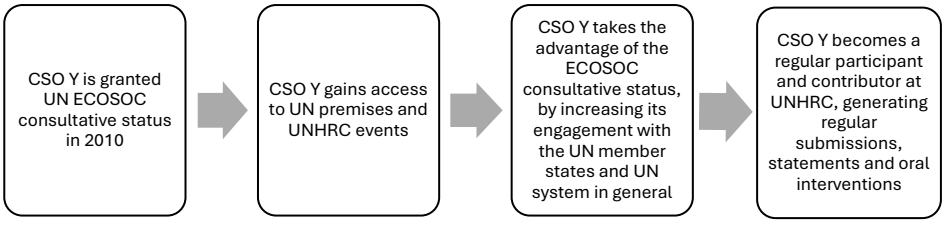

Figure 15. Empirical Pathway II – The process under which CSO Y engaged internationally and became an important PCSO at the UN Human Rights Council.

As the illustration above shows, it was in 2010 that CSO Y was granted the UN ECOSOC consultative status, becoming officially affiliated with the UN. Discussing the ECOSOC status, the interlocutor from CSO Y noted that once attained, the consultative status expanded the opportunities and capacities of

[71] It must be mentioned that the UNHRC's standing has also been reduced among some Western countries, due to its perceived leniency and asymmetrical responses on human rights violations, towards certain states such as China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria. In other words, the UNHRC is also criticised to employ softer responses to human rights violations in some countries, in contrast to its record towards Israel. Citing these arguments, the US officially withdrew from the council in February 2025. Having said this, for PCSOs the UNHRC continues to be considered an important venue to channel international participation.

[72] The organisation is based in the Gaza Strip.

CSO Y for international engagements in UN premises. The CSO Y representative stated that the status gives them "access to the UN. We physically have a badge just so we can enter certain UN premises in Geneva, New York, and Vienna. We can physically enter, and more concretely it means that we can engage during the Human Rights Council" (P-1, 2023). The ECOSOC status, nonetheless, is not an end in itself, and it must be strategically utilised as a means to yield tangible outputs for CSOs that attain it. In this particular example, after the consultative status upgraded the status of the CSO Y in relation to the UN, it served as a springboard to deepen engagement with different parties. In the years that followed, CSO Y took advantage to increase its engagement with UN institutions and the UN system in general, through regular participation and contribution to the work of the UNHRC. Since 2010, CSO Y representatives regularly travel to participate in UNHRC meetings, with submissions, statements and interventions taking place as part of the proceedings, in quest of presenting their claims, and influencing the stance of UN member states on different human rights debates. Gradually, CSO Y was transformed into one of the leading PCSOs engaging with UNHRC member states in the field of human rights.

Unlike the previous empirical pathway, this pathway does not regard domestic institutions as enablers of the CSO's international engagement. Rather, the process of CSO international activities is conducted by utilising the playing field enabled by a multilateral body, where the de facto state does not enjoy full membership. Seen more widely, pathway II can be considered as a consequence of shifts at the systemic level. The ultimate result created conditions for CSO Y to participate regularly in UNHRC events, and to supply this multilateral body with submissions and primary documentary data, in attempts to influence the discourse on human rights surrounding the Palestinian cause. Perhaps most importantly, the example shows how systemic level changes have created conditions for domestic CSOs from non-UN member states to utilise UN sites to flag policies and seek accountability for the adversary state, which in this case holds a full-fledged seat as an UN member.

5.3 Pathway III – International Access and Participation, Plus the Dyadic Formula

The third pathway explaining the processes under which a CSO engages at the international stage (International Access and Participation plus the Dyadic Formula) shares significant similarities with the two previous pathways, and in some ways represents a blending of their components. In pathway III CSO engagement at the international level can be traced to a formalisation process such as obtaining membership or gaining observer or consultative status within an international platform, which then develops into regular international access and participation. All remarks made under the previous sub-section of pathway II remain valid under pathway III, including the difficulties and compromises for

CSOs in registering and attending international events, as well as the former host (adversary) state's potential reactions to this participation.

However, a key difference is that the formalisation process which grants the CSO the opportunity to become part of international webs leads to international participation in the venue, which is then followed with additional support from the MFA. Under this pathway the MFA is expected to employ a reactive approach to the international engagement of local CSOs, in quest of creating a potential team-up in later stages. As a result, the dyadic formula is created along the way, namely after the CSO has established a practice of participation into an international venue. In other words, the interaction between the CSO and the MFA does not serve as a stimulus behind the international engagement of the CSO, but rather it serves to support and enhance it, after it has already commenced. The pathway III integrates cooperation and partnership mechanisms between the MFA and the CSO to facilitate the indirect access and participation of MFA (or other de facto state institutions) in the respective international web. Differently from pathway I, where the MFA was observed to grant CSOs a playing field to become engaged in official foreign policy, in pathway III it is the CSO which grants the MFA an opportunity to expand its official foreign policy programmes and its international reach.

As noted, the data indicates that in Taiwan the MFA provides significant support to CSOs, enabling them to attend international events and enhance their presence in global networks. In addition to financial assistance, coordination meetings between the MFA and CSOs were also noted, particularly before participation in events such as the UNFCCC and the World Health Assembly. On the side of a CSO, during an interview in Taipei City one of my interlocutors stated: "MOFA gave us some goals. I mean, when they give us the grants, they also give us some goals and one of the goals is to reach as many politicians or from international, like the UN… as many of them as possible" (T-1, 2022). At the same time, the Taiwanese MFA also offers support for domestic CSOs to host different international CSO events in Taiwan, to increase international presence on the island.

In the interview organised at the Taiwanese MFA, it was confirmed with more detail how the MFA helps the CSO sector with financial support to "attend an international conference or host an event in Taiwan for an international INGO" (T-11, 2022). In Kosovo, the MFA has collaborated with some CSOs due to their international access and participation, as observed in the example of the Council of Europe, although on a smaller scale. Most importantly, such offered support allows the MFAs to forge a link between the already established international presence of CSOs and official foreign policy. Whilst for CSOs creating the dyad with the MFA in later stages translates into a larger number of staff participating in the international event, and less of a financial burden to cover, the collaboration allows the MFA to ensure an increased presence of citizens at the event, and to create ownership in international participation. Support for CSOs also allows the MFA to potentially receive information regarding the proceedings of the international event via the CSO channel. The MFA can also instigate an information

exchange process with the CSOs, most notably through submitted narrative and financial reports by the beneficiaries.

A question that arises is how can the presence of the support by MFA be explained? In other words, if MFAs choose to offer support to CSOs in some instances, why is that support not found in all instances of CSO international presence? A combination of factors might be used to offer an answer. First, there are instances where CSOs refuse such support, or do not demand it. In some interviews with Kosovo CSOs, it was stated that they refuse funds from public institutions altogether, as a matter of a principled approach. Furthermore, the MFA is expected to entertain preferences for some CSOs, based on fields of expertise, personal relationships and established contacts, as well as the ideological orientation of the government. In addition, the MFAs also regard some international events and venues as settings of interest, whereas some others simply may not represent an area of primary focus. Thereby, the MFAs presumably identify instances where domestic CSOs have ensured access to international venues and events that are considered as zones of interest. Finally, another factor relates to the lack of financial schemes and public funds dedicated for such purposes altogether, as in some contexts the public funds to support the CSOs appear scant (if they exist at all).[73] The combination of these factors helps to explain why in some cases the international engagement of CSOs in international events might be explained by pathway II (without state support), and in some others it may be best explained by pathway III (with later state support).

In addition to major international organisations, the networks of interaction surrounding international CSOs are also significant, as they serve as diplomatic forums and venues for exchange. As noted in Chapter 4, international CSOs are targeted by Taiwanese CSOs in particular to boost international engagements. This aligns with claims that for contested actors all international actors and audiences might be of interest, or as Huddleston and Hall (2023, p. 378) note "an important factor distinguishing secessionist foreign ministries from those of recognized states is that, in the quest to justify their independent existence, there are no 'small audiences'". Therefore, all actors, playing fields and venues matter.

The triangle between de facto states governments', de facto states' CSOs, and international organisations and networks merits an additional discussion considering literature debates presented earlier in the theoretical section on transnational advocacy networks – namely the 'boomerang' and 'boomerang inversed' models (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Pallas, 2017). As stated in the theoretical chapter of the dissertation, one of the main differences between the two models is the location of the blockage point, in other words, the question whether the barrier rests at the local or international level affects how the intervention is crafted, by whom and who the target audience is. While the boomerang follows a local–international–local pattern, the boomerang inversed follows an international–local–international dynamic (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Pallas, 2017).

[73] This is valid in the example of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

With these existing models in mind, two specificities that de facto states' examples offer become visible. The first is that the blockage point, or the contested issue sits not at the policy level, but rather at the political and diplomatic level. Because it deals with questions such as statehood, sovereignty and state-creation, the blockage point thus requires a diplomatic solution, through a wider (international) peace settlement, thereby carrying existential implications not only for the future existence of de facto states, but for the whole system of states. It is attempts to overcome the existing political blockage that might bring the CSOs and the de facto states institutions closer to one another, even in instances where CSO access and participation in international venues was achieved independently. Seeking to take advantage of these international organisations and international CSOs networks, the MFA calculates a cost-effective modus to increase international presence and visibility. This also might help to explain how pathway III takes shape in the first place – that is, CSOs and a de facto state's government team-up along the way as a necessity to overcome existing wider blockages sitting at political and diplomatic levels.

Related to this, not only does the local-international pattern allow de facto state CSOs to become advocates on universal themes, as part of different issue areas, i.e. climate change, human rights, democracy etc., but their international presence also inevitably generates a direct linkage with the political status of de facto states inside these venues. This is not to say that de facto state CSOs lack contributions to transnational networks; on the contrary, with their resources and expertise CSOs offer original contributions both domestically and in front of global audiences, thereby enhancing links between represented constituencies and the wider international community. By so doing, de facto state CSOs enhance global representation in these networks, and increase their legitimacy in the event proceedings. It must be acknowledged, however, that the duality of commitment entails that issues of statehood and sovereignty consistently remains at the fore-front. What is more, once the MFA emerges with support for CSOs to participate in sites where they lack full membership, the duality of commitment is further intensified, and CSO participation evolves into a form of delegated representation.

It is argued that these two factors – the type of the political blockage and the duality of commitment that transforms into delegated representation – distinguish CSOs in de facto states from those in fully recognised states in their international engagements. Insofar as CSO international access and participation is subject to blockages at the political level, the eventual emergence of the MFA in the picture, creating a local-international pattern, does not seem surprising.

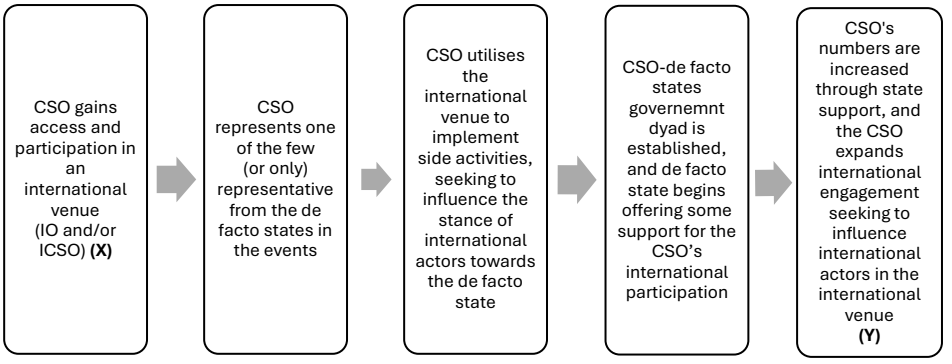

Figure 16. Theorised Pathway III – The trajectory with prepositions showing how participation in international networks and/or platforms invites government support.

The illustration above represents a set of theoretical propositions that describe the processual chain under which CSOs engage internationally under pathway III (International Access and Participation plus the Dyadic Formula). The scope conditions behind Pathway III are as follows: the openness of the IO; alignment between the CSO's thematic focus and the IO's scope; the CSO's organisational capacity; government openness; and the government's foreign policy priorities. In this trajectory, the CSO's international engagement derives as part of a broader process of formal integration, such as gaining membership or obtaining observer or consultative status in an IO. The formalised status of the CSO inside the international venue then leads to participation of the CSO in the IO (trigger of the chain).

In the next phase, the participation of the CSO in the event, which becomes regular, generates interest and financial support from the de facto state's institutions, thereby creating a new collaborative relationship between the two. Under this pathway, therefore, the CSO-IO engagement must be formalised, commence and potentially develop for a period of time without the involvement of the MFA. The dyadic formula ultimately results in not only increasing the numbers of CSO representatives in the venue, but also in allowing de facto state institutions to earn some sense of ownership in the process, thus forging a nexus between an already existing international presence of the CSO sector and official foreign policy processes.

5.3.1 Pathway Illustrative Example: CSO S Regular Participation at the UNFCCC

CSO S participates regularly in events of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),[74] which are held annually in changing locations, and is explained best by pathway III. Here, the trigger of the trajectory lies in the relationship between the CSO S and the international body, namely UNFCCC, which in the initial phase served to grant CSO S with international access and participation opportunities, due to its inclusive policies for CSOs. Established in 2007, CSO S participated in the UNFCCC annual event for the first time in 2009, kickstarting a tradition of participation.

The UNFCCC regulations allow CSOs to organise side events and exhibits, namely through the so-called 'CSO booths'. Side events provide admitted observer organisations (which have limited speaking opportunities in formal negotiations) with opportunities to interact with member states and other participants, thereby permitting networking, knowledge sharing and learning best practices – three useful lanes of interaction especially for states deprived of full-fledged participation in the international community. In this light, the UNFCCC events appear to offer two types of results for CSO S. First, the events that are organised inside the venue represent devices to promote Taiwan's achievements in climate change policies, thereby making calls for the international community to recognise them. As a representative of CSO S noted:

> "we want to be a part of the international community about this quite important issue. As participants of UNFCCC, we're introducing Taiwan's efforts into the international community, and we also do side events or receptions in the conference to promote Taiwan" (T-14, 2022).

The side events by CSO S are commonly organised in cooperation with other Taiwanese representatives, and sometimes even with other diplomatic and non-diplomatic allies. In addition, participation in UNFCCC also offers a way for CSO S to gain insights into practices that are being implemented at the global level, or as my interlocutor noted:

> "[w]e also bring information. Taiwan is not one of the member states of the UNFCCC, so it's quite a challenge or difficult for us to catch the very brand-new information from the formal conference, and about the decisions they are making. So, we got to get the information from our friends, allies. Also, we bring the information that we saw in conference, we bring them back, and share to all our

[74] UNFCCC represents an international treaty established in 1992, aimed at addressing the global challenge of climate change, by fostering cooperation among countries to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to its impacts. The Convention serves as the foundational framework for subsequent agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol (signed in 1997) and the Paris Agreement (signed in 2016), which set binding and non-binding commitments for states to combat climate change and limit global warming effects.

> stakeholders in Taiwan. We have seminars, workshops to share what we saw in COP" (T-14, 2022).

This quote highlights the potential for learning that international participation offers not only for CSO S, but for the CSO sector in general, and for de facto states at large. Finally, my interlocutor also described another lane of engagement of CSO S that has occurred inside UNFCCC events, where the CSO has assisted in communication and message exchange between Taiwanese and Chinese officials. My interlocutor noted as follows: "[t]ake UNFCCC as an example. We did a lot of under [the] table interactions with mainland China, because they don't officially communicate with our government officers" (T-14, 2022). In this context, CSO S interlocutor also admitted to helping mediate with mainland officials inside the venue, given that direct communication between the officials is not possible. As it has been noted, Taiwan is not a member of the UNFCCC, but its officials participate in the annual conference through the quasi-governmental Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI), as an 'NGO observer'. In this context, CSO S in the UNFCCC acts as a networker, learner, policy disseminator, and sometimes even a mediator.

The starting point of this international engagement is the participation of the CSO S at UNFCCC in 2009 (about two years after the organisation was formed), which elevated the status of the CSO, and expanded its international reach. As Taiwan considers the UNFCCC an area of relevance due to its thematic profile, the Taiwanese MFA seeks to enhance visibility through increasing the numbers of the Taiwanese delegation, thus it offers support for CSO representatives to attend by paying for flight costs. My interlocutor noted this as follows: "Every year we go to the UNFCCC conference. MOFA can subsidise some traveling fees in this one event. Just for this" (T-14, 2022). The funding by public institutions leads to a higher overall number of Taiwanese representatives participating in the UNFCCC event of that year, which ultimately is one of the objectives of Taiwanese state institutions. It is noteworthy that several TCSOs hold a consultative status with UNFCCC.

Further, it is important to note that in pathway III the financial assistance from Taiwanese institutions is not decisive for the participation of CSO S in UNFCCC events. In other words, seen counterfactually CSO S is likely to have participated at the UNFCCC over these years without any MFA support. There is no evidence that the MFA support enabled the participation, nevertheless, it appears that its financial support did increase it. In case MFA funds would be absent, the CSO S' participation in UNFCCC would likely still have occurred, and would be better explained by pathway II. By contrast, once Taiwanese state financial support is documented (which is the case with CSO S), then pathway III seems to be well-suited to explain the CSO's international engagement, given that ultimately the attendance of CSO S representatives is increased due to receiving some financial support from public funds.

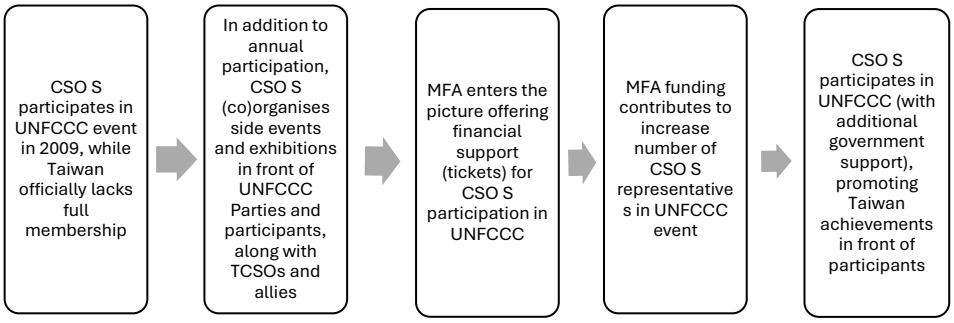

Figure 17. Empirical Pathway III – The regular participation of CSO S in UNFCCC, showcasing Taiwan's climate and environmental policies and achievements.

The participation of CSO S to UNFCCC which started in 2009 ultimately resulted in a larger undertaking comprising of CSO S, an international institution (UNFCCC), the de facto state's institutions (Taiwan's), but also the adversary state (China) which stands and watches on the fringes for any political messages that run counter to its sovereignty framing. In short, CSO S presence in UNFCCC represents a complex web of interactions through which the Taiwanese MFA manages to increase its presence, amplify devices that promote its statehood credentials, and increase interaction with the international community by fostering an existing CSO channel inside the multilateral realm.

5.4 Pathway IV – Unilateral CSO Action

A great deal of what has been discussed thus far has shed light on instances where CSOs and de facto states' institutions engage with one another, to different degrees of proximity and forms of action. Instances where these two actors work separately in parallel to one another, or even standing against one another, were not analysed thus far – these fall under pathway IV. The final pathway under which the international engagement of CSOs might be explained represents an idiosyncratic process stemming from decisions taken inside the offices of CSOs.

The term 'unilateral' efforts does not exclude joint domestic coalitions between peer CSOs, nor instances of financial support from international donors. Nonetheless, financial support from international donors is often not necessarily directed towards the purpose of financing specific projects and programmes that focus on the foreign relations of de facto states. Under pathway IV CSOs make the decision to use these international funds to implement projects on sectoral fields (i.e. human rights, democracy, energy efficiency) that are not necessarily related directly to foreign policy purposes, while also advocating and lobbying internationally for statehood, acceptance and recognition.

This occurs by engaging internationally through pro-bono activities that are not specifically funded by any budget line, thus falling outside of core projects and programmes. In other instances, pathway IV may also entail funding projects

through membership fees or donations from individuals and businesses that are used to sustain activist efforts. Pathway IV, therefore, is useful for depicting instances where the CSOs of de facto states attempt to affect international dynamics through internal decision-making processes and their willingness to engage in activism (at the organisational level), rather than developments stemming from the international level (i.e. formalisation of their status and participation in international bodies) or domestic level (i.e. MFA support).

The CSOs which engage in unilateral efforts commonly possess some form of expertise in foreign policy areas, and by so doing, illustrate their willingness to self-identify with state-making efforts, and become an international advocate of their state. By connecting themselves to the state-building project, CSOs also foster ties with specific local constituencies that they claim to represent, and the category of citizens of de facto states in general. For example, CSOs' unilateral efforts are organised with open letters, which as demonstrated in the previous chapter, represent a common form of activity to directly reach out to international actors. Open letters and petitions were identified as a form of international interventions by both Kosovar and Palestinian CSOs, however this type of activity is rarely part of action plans and funded activities of projects and programmes. Open letters represent a reactive way for CSOs to respond to international events and situations caused by the foreign policy decisions of other actors. Practically, open letters are often conducted by larger coalitions of domestic CSOs, therefore they are intended to represent the CSO sector, rather than a single CSO. Whilst it does not exclude instances where CSOs engage internationally in a well-planned fashion, pathway IV primarily captures patterns where CSOs respond to international dynamics in an ad-hoc and spontaneous manner, sometimes gathering signatures to advocate for an issue just a few hours after the event. In addition to open letters, other activism outputs such as on-site and online meetings, social media posts, and policy research, all fall into unilateral endeavours of CSOs to affect international dynamics.

Pathway IV assumes greater autonomy for CSOs in crafting the style and language of international interactions, as it relies on limited interactions and dependence on other actors. Engagement with the MFA is not present in terms of joint endeavours and support, indicating a clear dividing line between the international engagement of CSOs and the foreign policy process led by the MFA. Such a dividing line, nonetheless, remains silent on the matter of the compatibility of international engagements between the two actors, hence it solely assumes separate tracks under which these actors pursue their agendas internationally. In practice, the activities of CSOs may or may not be convergent to MFAs' official foreign policy course (more on this below). The fact that a CSO commits to engage internationally on its own, by crafting actions that target international actors regarding foreign policy decisions, does not necessarily imply that it runs counter to the official foreign policy narratives of its own state. However, it also suggests that this scenario cannot be excluded. Thus, both scenarios remain viable possibilities.

To depict international engagements that CSOs undertake as part of unilateral efforts, thus completing the spectrum of CSO-de facto state institutions relationship, I borrow two notions from the literature focusing on CSO-state relations. These terms are 'complementarity' and 'competition' (Coston, 1998; Najam, 2000), which are slightly modified in order to fit the context under inquiry. These notions have often been used to discuss international rather than domestic CSOs,[75] which represents another slight difference to their application. Complementarity can be considered to occur when CSOs and the MFA generally support the state-building project internationally, and agree on the fundamentals of this project thus sharing similar views, while working in parallel without bumping into one another at any point. Competition can be considered to occur when the actors rival each other with a different narrative. Competitive dynamics do not suggest that the two actors confront and oppose each other directly, or that they engage in a competition about financial resources. Instead, competition suggests a disagreement on political goals and narratives considered as drivers of long-term foreign policy choices of the de facto state. It follows from this that while working separately on two tracks, the CSOs and MFA relationship may be complementary (lobbying and advocating separately for similar goals), or competitive (lobbying and advocating for dissimilar goals). Pathway IV (unilateral action of CSOs) does not a priori prejudge on if it depicts the complementarity or competition dynamics. The pathway may thus be applicable to either of them.

1. Complementarity – Lobbying and advocating for similar goals independently

Some CSOs included in the study were registered to engage internationally and support the state-building project without documented differences with official foreign policy narratives, while keeping themselves in a separate track from their MFA at all times. By populating the foreign policy issue area, these CSOs tend to frame their international engagement as a means to contribute to the long-term interests of citizens, and the de facto state's international position. Such unilateral CSO action entails engagement on similar issues that the MFA covers. In other words, they advance narratives that align with the official foreign policy agenda. Complementarity does not suggest that CSOs and MFAs possess identical agendas, however, it indicates that the international engagement of both actors is largely directed to improve the position of the de facto state in front of international audiences by utilising similar messages. The representative of one Palestinian CSO, which implements different international activities on its own, stated during the interview:

[75] It is common for *cooperation* to be placed in this spectrum. However, that notion was part of a three-fold conceptualisation of collaboration between CSOs and MFA's (coordination, cooperation, partnership).

> "I would just say that when we do our advocacy, we have our own agenda, our own recommendations, and our own connections. And we find it useful to work with other like-minded CSOs, Palestinians CSOs, but with the PA there just hasn't been any collaboration on that front" (P-8, 2023).

The unilateral efforts as part of the activities of CSOs can be found in the three contexts under study. Despite this, they are most present in Palestine, followed by Kosovo. In the case of Taiwan, even CSOs which do not have close relations with the MFA admitted in the interviews to have received subsidies (i.e. flight tickets) at least once. As such, even Taiwanese CSOs that do not rank among the closest partners of the MFA were still able to identify certain instances of co-ordination (i.e. meetings and events) and small financial subsidies received from their government. By contrast, several Kosovar and Palestinian CSOs during the interviews noted that they had never had support or coordination from state institutions during their existence and functioning as a CSO. If CSO foreign policy activities are not pro-bono and implemented out of 'goodwill', they likely represent the results of specific projects and programmes, which are commonly funded by international Western donors (Kosovo and Palestine) in sectorial issue areas, or from different donations, namely from donations and membership fees (Taiwan).

A few examples shall prove helpful to visualise the compatible separate tracks empirically. In November 2021, around 20 Kosovar CSOs wrote to US officials, urging the organisers to invite Kosovo to the Summit for Democracy, also highlighting the reasons why Kosovo fulfilled the criteria to be amongst other states as a participant. The letter was written and disseminated for signatures by the co-founder and board member of one of the CSOs included in this study. The initiative of writing the letter, organising the coalition, ensuring consent, arranging signatures, and disseminating it, was entirely CSO-led. During our interview (K-3, 2022), the author of the letter discussed the Kosovo government position in the process by the following words:

> "[T]hey might have found out in the meantime from other organisations, because while I was reaching out to almost 20 of them, somebody might have informed them. But my initial discussions were only with the NGOs and I never had any communication with the government on this particular matter. I only might have used some advice from previous diplomats on how to frame certain words, who to address the letter, but not the current government".

The procedure involves communicating through emails or smartphone apps to agree on the activity details, collect signatures, and share the drafts. As the interlocutor admitted, one can never be certain that one or some CSOs representatives do not inform the MFA, however even if this occurs, it this fails to make state institutions an active stakeholder in the action. Interestingly, a similar pattern was found among Palestinian CSOs. One of my interlocutors (P-3, 2023), who is a representative of one of the main Palestinian CSO coalitions, stated as follows:

> "We draft a letter. Not all the time, we're using letters or petitions. It depends on the case. Because of the time, it takes a lot of efforts to get signatures of NGOs. So first, we have this draft which is to be approved from our [CSO name] board in Gaza and [the] West Bank, then to be distributed to our members and non-member organisations and to have time – three, four days to collect the signatures. Then it will be translated and sometimes added to the EU or to the targeted bodies, and we have this media campaign to make it public".

Such joint types of actions take place at the level of the organisation, or at the level of the CSO sector more broadly. For complementarity to occur, the CSOs and the MFA must engage with their own audiences and partners, and while pushing in a similar direction, consistently maintaining separate parallel paths. The CSOs' actions do not defy the de facto state's governmental agenda regarding the state-building project and state recognition agenda – in fact, if anything, CSO activities support it.

2. Competition – Lobbying and advocating for dissimilar foreign policy agendas

In some instances, the parallel work on separate tracks of CSOs and de facto states institutions is driven by contrasting ideas about what the de facto states state-building project requires. Thereby a competitive dynamic arises over the agenda and political solutions of the contestation with the former host (adversary) state. The contestation at the level of ideas between the CSO sector and the MFA thus evolves into differences in international activities, and therefore different patterns of interaction with international actors. Two caveats must be made here. First, competition does not necessarily entail direct confrontation or conflict between the CSO and MFA actors with one another, although this cannot be excluded. Instead, competition primarily points to instances where two or more different narratives of CSOs and de facto states' institutions can be identified. That is to say, the competitive relationship does not indicate that the actors are working against one another, but it points to competition over the narratives stemming from de facto states that are produced and disseminated internationally. Competition, as presented here, also does not entail competing for financial resources and donations.

Second, the notion 'different agendas' does not infer that the CSOs object to or combat state-making efforts and full international integration of the de facto state. In fact, quite contrary to this, it presupposes the ways under which these goals can be pursued through different conceptions and interpretations. Competitive relationships capture instances where CSOs have different views on foreign policy, including what is in the best interest of the de facto state and its citizens, and how to present these narratives internationally. Under this dynamic CSOs and de facto state institutions find themselves at opposing poles, with each framing their stance as the best solution for the long-term interests of the de facto state. Competitive dynamics are generally absent among the TCSOs that have been included in the study, however, in the contexts of Kosovo and most notably

Palestine, they did emerge in the empirical data. In the case of Taiwan, an interesting situation was identified with TAIUNA, a CSO that advocates for Taiwan's application to the UN as a separate entity, essentially pushing for government accession to the UN, while cutting ties with the sovereignty claim of the Republic of China. In this instance, one can observe how a CSO maintained a more hardline position regarding Taiwan's relations with the UN when compared to its government. However, this example reflects the limits of TCSOs' and MFA's differing positions on foreign policy issues, and the disagreement did not transform into a serious rift.

Contentious CSO-state relations have been documented in the literature. In an influential work Najam (2000, p. 375) defined confrontation as instances where there are "dissimilar ends and dissimilar means". Contentious relationships might also arise at the level of ICSOs – literature findings also show that these organisations may employ various techniques of 'naming and shaming' against governments that seek to mount pressure against them and change their policies (Hafner-Burton, 2008; Murdie & Urpelainen, 2015). In response, some governments fire back with restrictions against CSOs, and take advantage of legal instruments in order to restrict their space and funding. The literature recognises that contentious dynamics between international CSOs and governments carry the potential to reconfigure the scope and scale of CSO activities. The domestic CSO and de facto state's institutions competitive setting provides no exception.

From the interviewed CSOs, two Palestinian organisations expressed open views against the two-state solution as declared in the Oslo Accords, thereby being in discord with certain positions of their own state. During our conversations, the CSO representatives questioned the utility of the Oslo Accords for the Palestinians, thus presenting disagreements with the positions of the PA, which one of the interlocutors called a "subcontractor to the occupation" (P-10, 2023). The respective CSO did not foresee the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as deriving from the agreements signed in the 1990s and the idea of a two-state solution, both of which have provided the foundation for peace talks and initiatives on conflict resolution ever since. One of the interlocutors stated:

> "We know that other Palestinian civil society organisations did engage with them [the PA]. It's easier I believe for them to go to the international fora and talk from within the framework of occupation, and not apartheid, because the only solution for apartheid is dismantling apartheid, right? Dismantling the apartheid without dictating a future solution, but dismantling the whole system of oppression between [the] Jordan River and the Mediterranean. When you are speaking, talking, conveying a message from within the framework of occupation you retain the two-state solution in a way. You do not put that in into question" (P-9, 2023).

The international advocacy of these organisations is rooted in deep disagreements regarding the Oslo Accords, but also the stance of (at least a part of) the international community on the conflict, the PA, and Israel. Another interlocutor expressed disbelief regarding the Oslo Accords and the consequences it had pro-

duced on the ground, under the view that while not being fully and properly implemented, it had proved to be disadvantageous to the long-term interests of Palestinians. Perhaps most importantly, according to my interlocutor, this fails to be articulated in the official foreign policy narratives of the PA:

> "We perceive that the two-state paradigm, or the Oslo Accords, had imposed a false equivalence of us that there are two sides…that this is [the] PA and [the] Israeli government, and it's going to be resolved in a two-state facade. Basically, this paradigm has trapped us in an idea that our interests can be solved over a conversation or a set of agreements when actually Israel is in control of everything" (P-10, 2023).

These disagreements over core themes, such as the two-state solution and the utility of the Oslo Accords, serve as illustrative examples of a competitive relationship at play. The language and narratives put forth, as well as the international advocacy actions of PCSOs appear in disjunction with the official narrative of the State of Palestine. But seen more widely, not only does such a competitive relationship put these CSOs into a divergent position to the official line of the PA, but it also places them at odds with the narratives of the majority of the international community that take the peace process of the 1990s as the starting point. Finally, the articulation of such positions also highlights differences between these PCSOs with some other PCSOs which promote a different stance on the two-state solution and the Oslo Accords, thus rendering the Palestinian CSO sector more diverse. A short digression may be warranted here. Recalling the cross-case comparison of issue areas of CSO sectors in Chapter 4, it was stated that the predominant focus on human rights and legal avenues, such as on international law and international humanitarian law rendered the thematic focus of Palestinian CSO sector less diverse. Nevertheless, when it comes to statehood and sovereignty questions that deal with what the best long-term solution for the statehood project, it is the PCSO sector which displays the most variations.

Similarly, some CSOs in Kosovo have articulated opposing views pertaining to the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, which started in 2011 as a technical dialogue, and developed into a political dialogue in subsequent years.[76] Some international developments have ignited a deeper opposition from some Kosovar CSOs, at times placing them into direct opposition with state institutions and leaders, and also the EU and wider international community. Two such key developments that stand out are the EU-facilitated dialogue (especially with the Brussels 2013 so-called April Agreement), and the potential land-swap (so-called border correction) idea between Kosovo and Serbia notably between

[76] On September 9, 2010 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a consensus Resolution (A/RES/64/298), welcoming the readiness of the EU to facilitate a dialogue process.

2018–2020.[77] Both these processes that were supported by two different Kosovar institutions (the first by the Government, and the second by the President), ignited a diverse reaction of different degrees within portions of the Kosovo CSO sector.[78]

When the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia commenced in 2011, one part of the CSO sector supported it, and another opposed it. The Foreign Policy Club,[79] which was the main KCSO engaged in the foreign policy issue area at that time, was heavily objected to it. The idea of a technical dialogue with Serbia at that time was considered futile for Kosovo's state recognition agenda. Discussing the position that the CSO held in 2010–2011, one of the interviewees from the Foreign Policy Club noted:

> "The government had different ideas on how to move forward, [and] we had different suggestions. We were opposed to the technical dialogue, and we were quite vocal. I think this is where we created an antagonism" (K-8, 2022).

Furthermore, among Kosovar CSOs there was also opposition against the agreements signed in 2013 and 2015 in Brussels with Serbia, that among other plans foresaw the creation of an Association of Serbian Majority Municipalities in Kosovo (ASMM).[80] A considerable number of Kosovar CSOs were vocal in objecting to this agreement, raising questions as to the extent of benefits for Kosovo stemming from its implementation, and the potential of destabilising Kosovo's constitutional order through the creation of a third-level of power via the creation of ASMM. Discussing the opposition by Kosovar CSOs of the Brussels dialogue developments since 2011, and specifically Kosovo's undertaken obligation to form such an association, one of the interviewees stated as follows:

> "The position of civil society[81] had much higher causes of nationalism than the government. So, you have a civil society who will frame themselves as defenders of public interest and national interest, against their government, which is weird, or unnatural. We would have civil society opposing agreements that will be reached by the Government, with Serbia, on the grounds that such agreements are violating our sovereignty of the country. The members of government were people

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[77] As of 2024, the ASMM has still not been established and the issue continues to be divisive in Kosovo's political spectrum and public scene, and also in Kosovo relations with its allies.

[78] Interestingly, opposition to the land-swap idea offered a rare opportunity to unite CSOs from Kosovo and Serbia behind a common cause. In August 2018 close to 40 Kosovo and Serbian CSOs wrote a letter to then – High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, opposing the land-swap idea.

[79] I mention this organisation by name as it is not active anymore. Foreign Policy Club was one of the main KCSOs dealing with state recognition agenda in the period 2008–2012.

[80] As of early 2025 ASSM is yet to be established.

[81] In Kosovo the notion 'civil society' [Albanian – *shoqëria civile*] is commonly used to refer both to civil society as a whole, but also the 'CSOs' specifically. As a result, during the interviews the interlocutors often refered to CSOs as 'civil society', and they even used this notion during interviews conducted in English.

> who led the resistance and the fight for independence and statehood. When you look at the agreement of 2013, that was considered historic between us and Serbia, the first negative reactions of that agreement came from civil society, not from opposition parties. Opposition parties then took it to the next level, but it was civil society who came and said that this agreement is against Kosovo's national interest and we're trying to do another Republika Srpska [in] Bosnia style" (K-1, 2022).

Therefore, it can be inferred that both the commencement of EU-facilitated dialogue (in 2011) and specific agreements with Serbia (i.e. the so-called Brussels Agreement in 2013) ignited a degree of counter-reaction within the CSO sector in Kosovo. The counter-reaction of some CSOs in essence argued against external processes, and signatures which were considered non-beneficial for Kosovo's international standing. By contrast, the CSOs argued how such events were considered to carry a threat to Kosovo's state-building project and state recognition agenda, and therefore, the state institutions were adopting the wrong policies.

Some years later, in 2018, the idea of a land-swap (also called border correction) as part of the dialogue process with Serbia started to float in public. While it was being discussed at the international level, the land-swap idea also produced tension and opposition within the Kosovar CSO sector. More broadly, discussions of territory exchange contributed to creating a deep divide in public opinion in Kosovo. Certain Kosovar leaders and institutions such as the-then President supported the idea, while a large coalition was on the opposing bloc, and was comprised of opposition political parties, some CSOs, and different social movements. The division largely appeared across other societal realms, and was manifested with a large protest organised in front of the government building in September 2018. During conversations concerning that period and the potential differences between CSOs and the government, one interviewee put into the spotlight how the CSO sector took the "role of antagonising the government, both domestically in terms of fuelling protests, but also internationally, in terms of articulating different positions from the government" (K-3, 2022). During that period an important part of the Kosovo CSO scene opposed the implementation of the land-swap idea, through domestic and international actions, on the grounds that its implementation would legitimise partition of territory, thus being detrimental to Kosovo's statehood which has been recognised by over 100 UN member states since 2008.

Both sets of examples highlight the diversity amongst the CSO sector in Kosovo and Palestine with respect to the positions of individual CSOs, and additionally, they also demonstrate processes under which CSOs articulate disagreements with their own institutions on foreign policy issues pertaining to statehood, sovereignty, self-determination and recognition. Occasionally CSOs portray themselves as 'deterrents' against international agreements which are perceived to be harmful concessions for the sovereignty of their states, and beneficial to sovereignty claims of the former host (adversary) state. The agreements and political processes to which objections have been raised are facilitated by the international community. Therefore, not only do competing narratives by domestic

CSOs oppose the decisions and positions of the de facto state's government, but they also push back against internationally-facilitated negotiating processes, such as the Oslo Accords and the EU-facilitated dialogue, focused on conflict resolution with the former host (adversary) state.

Interestingly, the competitive dynamics demonstrate how de facto states' CSOs set out to defend the long-term interests of the de facto states from their current government, by opposing the potential concessions of officials in internationally led peace projects. By so doing, CSOs tend to maintain a hardline position, and push forward 'maximalist' demands in front of the international community. To achieve such purpose, CSOs also forge international advocacy campaigns, and reach out to their contacts and networks. In other words, by disregarding the narratives of their own state, CSOs take over tasks to protect and advance the national interest of the de facto state and its citizens, in the face of what are considered to be counterproductive compromises. While sitting in distant poles, both CSOs and de facto state governments continue to consider their activities as the 'right' ideas and choices to advance the state-making agenda, and see themselves as the legitimate representatives of the citizens.

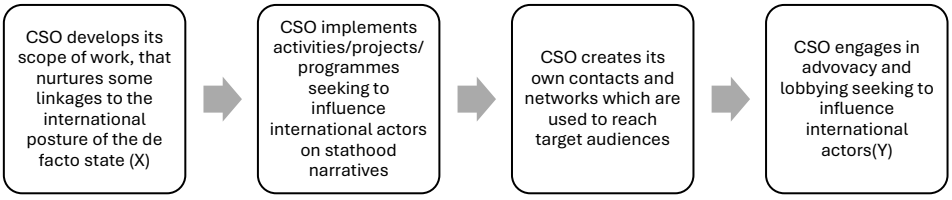

Figure 18. Theorised Pathway IV – CSO engages in international activities that seek to influence international actors through internal decisions.

Figure 18 represents a set of theoretical propositions describing the process under which CSOs engage internationally under conditions of unilateral CSO actions. Under this trajectory the international engagement of the CSO is explained through internal decisions (trigger), that translate into some form of action by the CSO staff, or a wider coalition of domestic CSOs, which occurs either as part of complementarity or competitive dynamics. The scope conditions that allow the pathway to occur are: activist willingness and the CSO organisational capacity. Through such activities the CSO develops contacts and network, which are utilised for the purpose of reaching international audiences. De facto state CSOs adapt their types of actions, the level of international audiences, and increase their expertise in the process. Consequently, lacking formalisation in an international organisation or international CSO, and in the absence of support from the MFA, CSOs engage internationally in quest of exerting influence upon different international actors, even if that means pushing back against the official foreign policy positions of their own state, by articulating alternative political choices regarding state sovereignty.

5.4.1 Pathway Illustrative Example: CSO Z presenting alternative narratives to PA's official diplomacy

The final illustrative example is exemplified by the work of CSO Z, an organisation which is registered and operates on the Palestinian Territories, while having international coverage that includes a functioning office in Brussels. Having presence in Brussels, one of the key diplomatic centres of the world, allows CSO Z to connect directly with EU decision-makers and policy-makers, CSOs, and other international actors, which would be less accessible, or perhaps inaccessible, from Palestine. The processual chain of this pathway displays how CSO Z independently engages in international advocacy and lobbying. The underlying processes represent a combination of intrinsic motivation and strategic resourcefulness, rather than reliance on government support or institutionalised access and participation in multilateral bodies. The venues of interaction and the targeted actors appear rather diversified in comparison to previous pathways, where they appeared as fixed into one setting, i.e. a certain multilateral venue.

This pathway was triggered by internal factors, namely the CSO staff's willingness and activism, to establish a CSO with an international focus aimed at shifting global discourse on the Palestinian cause through advocacy and lobbying. Following this step came the launch of forms of action implemented by CSO Z with the aims to influence perceptions of international audiences on events inside and around Palestine. With the passing of time, the willingness of CSO Z's staff, together with the implemented work, led not only to increased activities but also to augmenting the network of CSO Z, which was subsequently leveraged to expand the CSO's avenues of interventions.

CSO Z considers itself as different from other PCSOs which were born out of broader structural events such as the Six Days War (1967), the First Intifada and the Oslo Accords (1988–1995), and the Second Intifada (2000–2005). In this context, CSO Z also pays increased attention to the inter-generational dimensions intertwined with narratives surrounding the Palestinian cause, and traditional diplomacy implemented by the PA. CSO Z is newer and younger, therefore, its representatives consider that the existing discursive structures and frames disfavour the representation of Gen-Z Palestinian youth. Consonant with this, CSO Z claims to represent the younger generation of Palestinians and, through the help of technology, to forge lines of communication between these youngsters and audiences (mainly) in Western states, in parallel and even in confrontation with the messages and narratives transmitted by the traditional diplomacy of the PA. My interlocutor stated as follows:

> "There are two angles of work that we focus on. The first time goes the advocacy campaigns, and the second angle is communications. We work towards shifting discourse and policy with decision makers and international movements on Palestine, through various engagements and educational content that we do" (P-10, 2023).

To shift the discourse on the Palestinian cause, CSO Z produces original digital content. What is noteworthy to discern is how these messages might diverge with

those of the Palestinian MFA or its diplomatic service. In discussing the relations with the PA my interlocutor added:

> "We want to talk about an inclusive narrative focusing on the younger generation of Palestinians, and this focus comes because we believe that the traditional diplomacy failed us miserably. The younger generation is much more vocal or fearless and talking about the reality in Palestine than the traditional diplomacy that gave up on the right of return and is in a shrinking space, basically holding an authority in pockets under Israeli control" (P-10, 2023).

In this view, the emergence of CSO Z may be interpreted as a response to disillusionment with conventional diplomatic channels, reflecting demands from grassroots youth for alternative narratives to be transmitted to international audiences. CSO Z's international engagement in essence seeks to offer an alternative representation for young Palestinians abroad. Representation as a diplomatic function continues to be widely considered to be state-exclusive, however the example of CSO Z serves to illustrate how such traditional view is being challenged in our age.

Several years of actions placed CSO Z in a suitable position to not only conduct activities on its own, but also to conduct network-sharing with other fellow Palestinian CSOs, with the aim of boosting the reach of their actions. CSO Z thus engages in network-sharing with other PCSOs, by sharing suggestions on how to plan their own advocacy trips in Brussels, namely identifying key decision-makers and allies who can amplify their messages, therefore enabling CSO Z to place its web of contacts at the disposal of the Palestinian CSO sector. In discussing meetings in Brussels with EU officials and representatives, my interlocutor depicted the work of the organisation in the following terms: "The idea is that you want to reach out to members of parliament that are not aligned to you, to try to convince them to push for your demands to push for your recommendations in [the European] Parliament" (P-10, 2023).

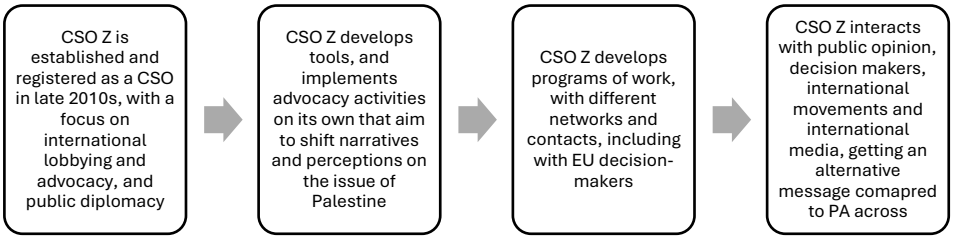

Figure 19. Empirical Pathway IV - CSO Z reaching out to international actors, while lacking government support and no formal access to international organisations and networks.

As the empirical chain of processual events shows, the chain is set in motion through the founding and registering of the CSO, beginning its operations in the late 2010s. These events, which are placed at the organisational level (CSO level), then led to an expansion of the CSO network, framing its profile and refining its

purpose, as well as increasing of expertise and know-how to conduct activities. This chain of activities ultimately placed CSO Z in a position to produce content and impose such outputs to different audiences, across digital and on-site realms. The disseminated digital content transmits alternative messages in support of the Palestinian cause, yet rooted in deep disagreements with the course of the traditional diplomacy of the PA. Most importantly, through this work CSO Z employs unilateral efforts to overtake representation tasks and speak on behalf of younger generations of Palestinians. As a result, due to CSO Z engagement the international actors that sit in the external environment such as (international) public opinion, EU decision makers, CSOs, grassroot groups, international movements, and international media become recipients of an alternative voice of Palestinian youngsters, regarding how local constituencies see the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

5.5 Concluding Section

This chapter has examined four different pathways through which CSOs become engaged internationally. Initially presented as theoretical constructs, these underlying mechanisms were then probed in empirical materials by utilising the method of process-tracing and employing the most likely examples. The chapter also presented direct anonymised quotations from the organised interviews. The four pathways were termed as follows: Dyadic Formula (CSO–De Facto State's Government Engagement); International Access and Participation; International Access and Participation plus the Dyadic Formula; and Unilateral CSO Action. The factors enabling these pathways are located at different levels, namely: international, domestic, and organisational.

To shed light on domestic-level factors as part of government–CSO cooperation, an example of joint lobbying for Kosovo's membership in INTERPOL was examined. Whilst the openings in multilateral venues were discussed as examples of international-level factors, the UNFCCC and UNHRC were presented as specific venues where Palestinian and Taiwanese organisations implement their international activities. The final pathway presented evidence of a Palestinian CSO that engages in lobbying and diplomacy idiosyncratically, utilising digital platforms to transmit international messages and narratives.

The four pathways are not intended to explain all international engagements implemented by a certain CSO, nor to define the fixed status of a given CSO. For instance, CSOs engaging in dyadic cooperation may simultaneously undertake independent initiatives aligned with pathway IV. Also, engaging in dyadic cooperation does not, by itself, categorise a CSO as a GONGO, albeit the dynamic might manifest some similar characteristics. While these four pathways can be considered inexhaustive (as other pathways might emerge in future studies), it is argued that they offer a solid foundation to better comprehend the multi-directional relationships of CSOs while targeting international actors, in the face of issues of incomplete recognition and membership.

CHAPTER 6.
De Facto States CSO Diplomacy and External Environment Transformations

After presenting the CSOs' international activities in the three contexts, and examining the pathways behind their international engagements, a following broader question that arises is: what are the outcomes of de facto states' CSOs' international actions, and how can they be understood considering IR theory? In other words, if human, financial and material resources are considered as an input by CSOs, and implemented international actions are considered as the output that is transported to the external environment, then consequently digging deeper into the possible effects of such actions appears a useful undertaking. Attempting to unearth such questions, this chapter is structured into three sub-sections.

The first sub-section discusses and lists a set of ramifications resulting from de facto states' CSOs' international actions – these are to be read as a continuation of the mapping (empirical work of CSOs) that was presented in Chapter 4. In the second sub-section, the notion of what I refer to as 'de facto states' CSO Diplomacy' is introduced, as a process which makes additions to the external interaction capacity of de facto states, in their struggle for participation, representation and membership in the international society. De facto states' CSO diplomacy is to be conceptualised as an informal channel that plays a role in establishing, maintaining, and expanding the foreign ties of de facto states, and their communication with the international society.

The third sub-section adopts a broader lens, examining structural changes that, in recent decades, have rendered the international environment more open to participation by non-state actors, including domestic CSOs from non-UN contested polities. Taking advantage of Buzan's (2004) triadic model, devoted to the interaction between the state-centric field (international society) and non-state field (world society), this model is enriched by populating it with domestic CSOs from de facto states. The presented model suggests that by means of their international engagements, CSOs of de facto states both promote and contest the primary statehood-related institutions and norms of international society such as state sovereignty, self-determination, territorial integrity, non-intervention, and territoriality.

While not appealing for the overhaul of these primary institutions, CSO transmissions[82] directed towards international society represent appeals for an alternative understanding that ultimately (de)legitimises certain claims circulating in the external environment. To this end, the institutions of international society are challenged, but not through calls for their abolition. Instead, these institutions are claimed through calls for a renegotiation and reconfiguration, in attempts to make them conducive for the de facto states' citizens and the state-building project, in

[82] I borrow this term from (Steffek & Nanz, 2008) who assert that CSOs can be seen as transmission belts between a global citizenry and the institutions of global governance.

the face of alternative sovereignty claims of the former host (adversary) state. Seeking to broaden our understandings of domestic CSOs in world politics, the chapter places de facto states' CSOs' international engagements amidst wider transformations of world politics in the 21st century, which serve as permissive conditions for such transmissions to take place. In so doing, the discussion attempts to push our understanding further, not only on the matter of the interaction of de facto states with the international community, but also regarding encounters between international society and world society.

6.1 CSOs' International Engagements and De Facto States External Interaction Capacity

The core dilemma surrounding de facto states' existence is rooted in their exclusion from 'the 193 club'. While being outside of the UN, and having their statuses open to negotiation by at least a part of the international community, de facto states explore avenues of integration into the club of fully recognised states. Sitting in a so-called in-between zone, the de facto states' status yields questions on privileges, rights, and membership that are embedded in the legal personality of the state. The category of the de facto state, therefore, brings to light a process of political and legal alteration that has been set underway, yet is awaiting completion.

At the political level, de facto state CSOs populating the foreign policy issue area put in motion a multi-channel diplomatic approach. Although CSOs often serve as supporting auxiliaries to a de facto state's international footprint, in some instances they also serve as direct replacements of official foreign policy institutions, becoming the sole channel of interaction with international actors. In general terms, CSOs make the de facto state's claims more legitimate, by mobilising international support for the acceptance and recognition of de facto states, and augmenting communication with the international society. Domestic CSOs have the capabilities to improve the interaction capacity of de facto states for interacting with different circles and audiences of international society, even if it is based on narrow sectorial areas. In specific terms, the data showed that CSO international activities possess capabilities to aid the de facto states interaction capacity in the following domains:

- Deepen engagement and dialogue with state officials from recognising and non-recognising states, especially in the opening or breakthrough phase.

One of the key lanes where CSOs' roles become visible is their presence in the opening and breakthrough phase with non-recognising states. The opening and breakthrough phase represents a milieu when relations between a de facto state and a fully recognised state begin to take form, thus initiating a process of steady recognition manifested by bilateral exchange. In this zone, CSOs are regarded as so-called necessary auxiliaries, as illustrated by the examples of Kosovar CSOs

engaging with EU non-recognisers and certain South Asian countries, as well as Taiwanese CSOs engaging with Lithuania. Here the argument follows that CSOs' interactions with non-recognising states enriches the engagement without recognition framework (Cooley & Mitchell, 2010), by contributing to diplomatic processes that enhance informal relations with non-recognising state officials.

- Representation, presence and visibility inside and around IOs are increased.

CSOs possess capabilities to add to de facto states' foreign relations by enabling representation, and to increase their presence and visibility in international organisations where de facto states lack full membership. Earlier in the study it was discussed that CSOs' presence in IOs be conceptualised as either participation or representation, depending on the de facto state's official's presence. A third way of interaction represents outdoors activities in the vicinity of the IO, when CSOs are not formally allowed to enter the venue. In instances where there is already a presence of the de facto state's officials, CSOs serve to legitimise and multiply the claims of the de facto state's institutions with an alternative voice coming from the civil society sector. Since the de facto state is neither a full member of the international community nor entirely excluded, the CSO channel provides an effective means to enhance its presence and visibility inside and around international organisations. This is particularly valuable in the absence of full state membership, as it consistently represents the concerns of de facto state citizens, and helps to bring local constituencies to the forefront of discussions.

- Presence in the international events of ICSOs and transnational networks is expanded, at times even taking the lead or chairing.

Another way in which the CSOs of de facto states add to the latter's international footprint is by their presence in transnational webs, and attending international events and forums – by so doing the international presence of de facto states' constituencies in general terms is increased. In addition, events organised by ICSOs often consist of a multi-stakeholder set-up, blending the political and CSO sectors, therefore allowing opportunities to increase interaction with officials from non-recognising states and non-diplomatic allies. Most importantly, de facto state CSOs were reported to take leadership positions in some networks, resulting in more visibility and integration within global governance webs. The Taiwanese Government, for example, has put in place specific policies and financial schemes to enlarge the TCSO presence inside ICSOs, which are considered by Taipei to be useful venues to enlarge Taiwan's international footprint.

- Networking and linkages with non-state actors in recognising and non-recognising states (local CSOs, international CSOs, grassroots groups and activists) are intensified.

In relation to the previous point, CSOs also appear agile in creating collaborations with various local actors located in other states, through forging and expanding transnational linkages. For instance, the domestic CSO-CSO formula represents one way of forging a channel between the de facto states and non-recognising states. Most importantly, in contexts where no diplomatic relations and formal state communication exists, such as in CSO partnerships (in the CSOs' parlance), might comprise the most advanced form of interaction between the de facto states and actors of that respective state, thereby representing the sole form of exchange. Although informal, and often covering what are considered as 'non-political' themes, CSO-CSO interaction seemingly results in reaching a higher number of citizens and political representatives in non-recognising states.

- Influencing proceedings in IO events where de facto states lack full membership.

While each IO maintains distinct working procedures and access opportunities provided to domestic CSOs, at times they also permit CSOs to voice opinions, and participate in debates. Insofar as the internal proceedings of IOs allow, CSOs of de facto states have demonstrated capabilities to affect internal proceedings, through items such as oral and verbal statements and submissions, supplying IOs with original documentary data, and accompanying fact-finding missions on the ground. In addition, some instances of affecting proceedings have been registered, namely their capability to call urgent meetings, and to initiate the creation of specific temporary bodies, such as committees, missions and rapporteurs (this is especially valid for PCSOs). What follows is the conclusion that some IOs permit CSOs to influence their internal agenda, and, due to this, domestic CSOs from de facto states occasionally represent agents with capabilities to affect internal proceedings, rather than being mere participants.

- Outreach increase of general publics in recognising and non-recognising states.

Due to CSO interventions the outreach to citizens in other countries, including non-recognising states, is increased. One common way to organise these efforts is through utilising digital tools in order to engage in knowledge production and dissemination of information, generating new arguments about de facto states. Through CSO activities more citizens on a global level interact with and gain information about the de facto states, their statehood projects, and the also actions of the former host (adversary) state. In another second track, CSOs of de facto states are observed implementing foreign aid projects in other states, as various TCSOs examples have shown. International assistance that is delivered directly to citizens represents another way in which CSOs engage with foreign publics in non-recognising states.

Different findings focusing on public diplomacy have shed light how states now implement various programmes designed to engage directly with general publics in other countries outside of traditional state-to-state diplomacy (Nye,

2008; Snow & Cull, 2020). Interacting with general publics is not a new feature of world politics, however, a consensus now exists that the intensity, volume and speed have been significantly affected due to technological evolution. Consequently, de facto state CSOs enjoy a good track record in terms of outreach to general publics, even when no diplomatic relations exist at the state level, and little to minimal political engagement is identified. Moreover, CSO actions may also comprise a rare channel of outreach for respective general publics, to present alternative arguments and knowledge on the subject of de facto states and relations with the former host (adversary) state via a so-called non-mainstream angle. In this context, CSO messages differ from de facto state officials in both the messenger (the actor that delivers them) and their content (transmitted message). It may thus be deduced that a key result of the international engagements of de facto state CSOs is their outreach to foreign general publics, by implementing interventions that can be placed under the new public diplomacy umbrella.

- Policy language and terminology of non-state international actors is (slightly) adjusted.

De facto state CSOs' efforts can help shape the language and terminology of international non-state actors, such as international CSOs and international media. Earlier in the theoretical chapter it was mentioned that CSOs are recognised as actors capable of knowledge production (Markland, 2020) and issue-framing (Allan & Hadden, 2017). De facto state CSOs actively engage in international forums and conferences where language accuracy is debated. Through their research, CSOs also highlight how certain terminologies inaccurately reflect the realities on the ground, or marginalise the experience of certain groups. This way, domestic CSOs possess capabilities to humanise abstract political issues, demonstrate the implications of terminological choices, and increase awareness of language accuracy. International CSOs are one of the actors that have been recorded to make tweaks to the language used. Indeed, this also appears to represent a limit of CSO efforts, given that persuading states is presumably out of reach. Evidently, language and terminology play a pivotal role in the ongoing contestation between de facto states and former host (adversary) states, and how the dispute is portrayed in different sites, namely in international media. The linguistic battles reflect deeper political struggles over the meaning of statehood and sovereignty – de facto states' CSOs represent important players within such discursive battles.

- Assist linkages of de facto states' government and businesses with global markets and the private sector.

De facto state CSOs are witnessed to play role in improving the ties of de facto states and de facto states' businesses with the global business community. CSO actions are organised through three different formulas entailing four different actors: the CSO, the de facto state's government, foreign businesses, and foreign governments. First, these linkages occur directly between de facto state CSOs and

foreign businesses. Second, they involve de facto state CSOs and the government jointly engaging foreign businesses. Finally, the materials reveal a network connecting CSOs, the government, foreign governments, and foreign businesses. These three configurations enable CSOs to interact with foreign businesses, collaborate with de facto state institutions, and engage in broader schemes involving foreign governments. CSO efforts have the potential to improve interaction with the foreign business community; assist local businesses in accessing global markets; integrate de facto states in the online country lists of MNCs and internet properties; and ameliorate the position of de facto states and citizens vis-à-vis foreign businesses.

- Foreign-policy process of de facto states is diversified and enriched.

Through formal inclusion in the foreign policy process CSOs diversify and improve the foreign policy process of de facto states across different stages of the policy-cycle. CSOs possess capabilities to shape internal de facto states' foreign policy conversations inside the de facto states, through research and public debate activities. In light of this, the inclusion of CSOs in foreign policy processes integrates them into the wider foreign policy community, offering platforms to invest their expertise in overcoming the resource and recognition constraints that plague the effectiveness of their government and diplomatic service.

The points above provide a non-exhaustive overview of how CSO engagement aligns with the international posture of de facto states. Nonetheless, the points expressed represent only affirmative dimensions of CSO international activity. As perhaps expected, CSO actions fail to address core issues that are located at the centre of traditional diplomacy. No evidence was found of changes to other states' foreign policy or bilateral recognition outcomes resulting from these actions. Furthermore, despite frequent advocacy and lobbying campaigns, de facto state CSOs face difficulties in having a tangible impact in the membership processes of international organisations. While CSOs' international actions carry the potential to make additions to a de facto state's foreign relations, such actions cannot be considered to make a difference into core issues that plague the statehood, security and future of de facto states in the international fora. That these issues represent the limits of CSOs' international engagements shall come as no surprise. After all, to address issues that are located at the centre of traditional diplomacy remains challenging for the foreign policy institutions of de facto states themselves, and even for the wider international community.

6.2 De Facto Diplomats Implementing CSO Diplomacy

Despite limitations, the international actions of de facto state CSOs should not be underestimated. One must consistently recall the broader contextual setting, which is affected by the contested status that de facto states hold under international law, not only in relation to the lack of UN membership, but also within the state-centric diplomatic field. For some fully-fledged sovereigns, de facto states are considered entities with a legal personality and sufficient statehood credentials to establish diplomatic and consular relations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963). Formal recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations at the state level opens the way to exchanging diplomatic missions and regular communication through a state-to-state protocol. However, ambiguity attached to the concept of de facto states also means that some states also refuse to treat them on equal terms.

This ambiguous presence of de facto states in international society means that they are simultaneously perceived as an equal state with rights and privileges, a non-existent diplomatic actor, and something in-between. In short, the MFAs and diplomatic services of the de facto states represent both equal counterparts and invisible entities to confirmed UN member states. Another illustration of this dynamic stems from different forms of diplomatic offices and their names, enacted to balance competing sovereignty claims. After all, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT)[83] is commonly referred to as the de facto embassy of the US in Taiwan, while Taiwan's representation is organised through the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US. Some international actors attempt to find a middle ground. In short, the fact that the diplomatic relations of the de facto states are inherently contested and ambiguous also highlights the importance of informal diplomacy.

Given the diplomatic challenges faced by de facto states, one might question how to understand the role of CSOs and how their activities relate to the concept of diplomacy in IR. In regulating state relations, Article 3 of the Vienna Diplomatic Convention on Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961, p. 3) the functions of a diplomatic mission consist of: a) representing the state; b) protecting interests of the state and of its nationals; c) negotiating with the government of the receiving state; d) ascertaining conditions and developments in the receiving State, and reporting to the government of the sending State; e) promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations. Practically, such categories help to regulate how state-to-state diplomacy unfolds daily, and how diplomatic services operate internally, and interact with one

[83] The American Institute in Taiwan is a US nonprofit, private corporation established under the auspices of the US government. It was established after the US established diplomatic relations with the PRC (1979), and is responsible to manage the 'unofficial' relationship to Taiwan.

another externally. Building on these categories, which stem from the Vienna Convention, and the existing literature on diplomatic functions presented in Chapter 1, this dissertation examines six diplomatic functions that de facto state CSOs may potentially undertake: negotiation; communication; representation; information-gathering and analysis; promoting friendly relations and minimising friction; protecting the interests of de facto states and of its nationals.

The functions have been slightly modified to fit into the overarching dynamics of the dissertation that are anchored in the contestation of the polities and the conditions of partial recognition and limited membership. For instance, 'protecting the interests of the de facto state and of its citizens' represents a diplomatic function that a de facto state as a non-UN member polity is expected to face challenges to properly fulfil. These six diplomatic functions encapsulate linkages with recognising and non-recognising state officials, yet they might also be applicable to encounters with non-state actors in world politics. A wider application of the notions surrounding diplomatic functions is necessary in order to capture the multi-target international actions of CSOs, and escape from strict state-centric lenses.

The empirical analysis supports the claim that CSOs participate in the performance of these six diplomatic functions. Indeed, many examples have been demonstrated up to this point. For instance, CSOs engaging in negotiations includes meetings and conversations with state officials, but also with other non-state actors, such as foreign businesses. In addition, the negotiation function can also be understood in the process of facilitation of interaction – CSOs were recorded to help facilitate negotiations between de facto state officials and other international actors. The organisation of international events that serve as venues for interaction between de facto state officials and international actors, such as the Yushan Forum in the case of Taiwan, can be understood in light of such dynamics. Communication captures instances when de facto state CSOs transmit various de facto states perspectives to other countries publics, other local CSOs and international media. Communication does not only entail state officials that are targeted, but may be understood as a broader process of transmitting messages to various actors in foreign countries, as shown by activities implemented by Kosovo Centre of Diplomacy (KCD), Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD), and Taiwan Digital Diplomacy Association (TDDA). The increased interaction with actors in foreign countries by CSOs can be seen as part of efforts to improve communication through reshaping the arguments transmitted to international audiences. Representation in diplomatic studies typically entails delegated representation from citizens to state structures (diplomatic services). Yet, with the expansion of diplomatic understandings even CSOs claim representation tasks on behalf of citizens and specific groups (i.e. domestic businesses). The blueprint example are de facto state CSOs representing de facto states and their citizens in international events where there is no official representation. In a rather paradox fashion, the insufficient official representation of de facto states in the international fora increases international representative functions for domestic

CSOs. These representation functions might be delegated by the institutions or self-claimed by the CSO.

Information-gathering and analysis are widely considered basic functions of diplomacy, and were explicitly listed in the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations (1961). As for a linkage to the actions of CSOs, the information-gathering and analysis function is tied to research, fact-finding and documentation, and policy research efforts. While fact-finding and documentation can be considered exclusive to the case of Palestine, CSOs in all three cases were registered to engage in policy research efforts on topics of foreign policy. In Kosovo and Taiwan, many CSOs run specific programmes that show dedication to research topics related to foreign policy aims in their titles, namely 'Euro-Atlantic,' 'integration,' and 'exchange'; particular regions (e.g., Asia, Western Balkans); or international organisations (e.g., the EU). In addition, in Taiwan and Palestine, CSOs also maintain specific international offices and departments dedicated to international outreach. In this vein, one aspect of the internal organisational development of CSOs points to increasing capacities aimed at improving the quality of their international communication.

By fulfilling these functions CSOs expose and delegitimise the actions of the former host (adversary) state, or produce research that seeks to improve decision-making pertaining to the international posture of the de facto state, such as analysing ties with other states, including both recognisers and non-recognisers. The information-gathering and analysis may, or may not, be organised for a specific international actor (i.e. PCSOs in relation to the UNHRC). The last two diplomatic functions, the promotion of friendly relations and minimising friction, and protecting the interests of the de facto state and of its citizens are somewhat broader, as they may be addressed to diverse audiences. Both, however, are relevant to capture challenges that stem from the partial recognition and lack of full-fledged membership in international society.

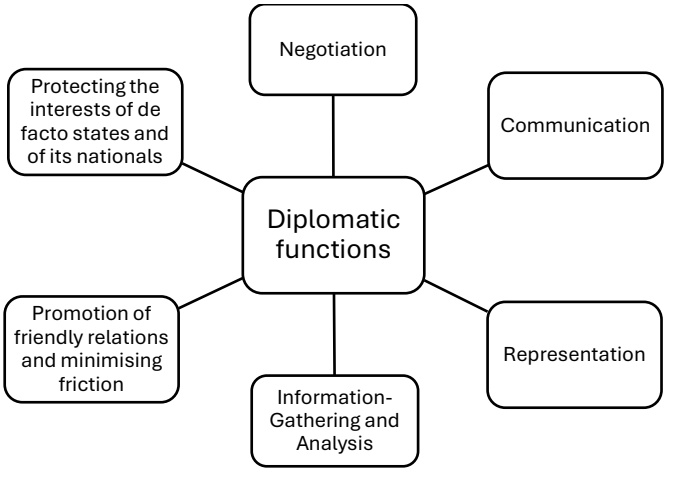

Figure 20. The constitutive attributes of diplomacy or diplomatic functions. Based on existing literature, and Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations (1961).

The dissertation advances the claim that these six diplomatic functions maintain a relationship to the international actions of de facto state CSOs. Since the CSOs of de facto states contribute to these six diplomatic functions, it is thereby argued that viewing different international actions of de facto states' CSOs through the diplomatic lens offers a suitable interpretation. While the notion of 'NGO diplomacy' (Betsill & Corell, 2007) has been adopted to analyse instances of international CSOs' diplomatic practices, 'de facto states' CSO diplomacy' certainly appears helpful to interpret the multi-avenue international engagements of domestic CSOs. This notion can be adopted for instances where de facto state CSOs interact with various international actors with explicit aims to represent its citizens, ameliorate the international posture and status of the de facto state, and increase international reach, integration, and recognition. In this light, CSO diplomacy can be understood both as a polylateral (Wiseman, 2010) and a trans-professional form of interaction (Constantinou, Cornago, and McConnell, 2016). In other words, CSO diplomacy shifts between state and non-state domains, but also within and across professions.

Interestingly, in each of the three contexts under study there was at least one CSO that had utilised the word 'diplomacy' in the name of their organisation, or the titles of their programmes. The connection of CSOs to diplomacy thus also relies on an existing self-perception that is shared by many CSOs, a view which was further confirmed during interviews. A caveat to be made is that this does not mean that CSO diplomacy can be applied to all possible exchanges that de facto state CSOs enjoy at the international level. Instead, the notion can be applicable to empirical CSO activities that relate to diplomatic functions, such as negotiation, representation, communication, information gathering and analysis, fostering friendly relations with international actors through peaceful means, and mediating differences. From this one can infer that de facto states CSO diplomacy encapsulates explicit and visible objectives which tie it to the aforementioned diplomatic functions, practiced on behalf of constituencies ranging from de facto states' citizens considered as a nation, to more specific groups and communities, or de facto state institutions – in some instances, a combination of all these simultaneously.

To clarify further, Figure 21 synthesises key elements that have been presented in this study, namely the dimensions of engagement (scope, scale, and targets), the four pathways leading to international engagement, and the outcome, that is the concept of CSO diplomacy. As may be observed, the external environment is not bound to a particular illustrative 'box', for it represents the general context under which all these dynamics are registered to take place. It is through this multi-faceted interaction that de facto states' CSO diplomacy is produced and transferred to the external environment, finally reaching international actors.

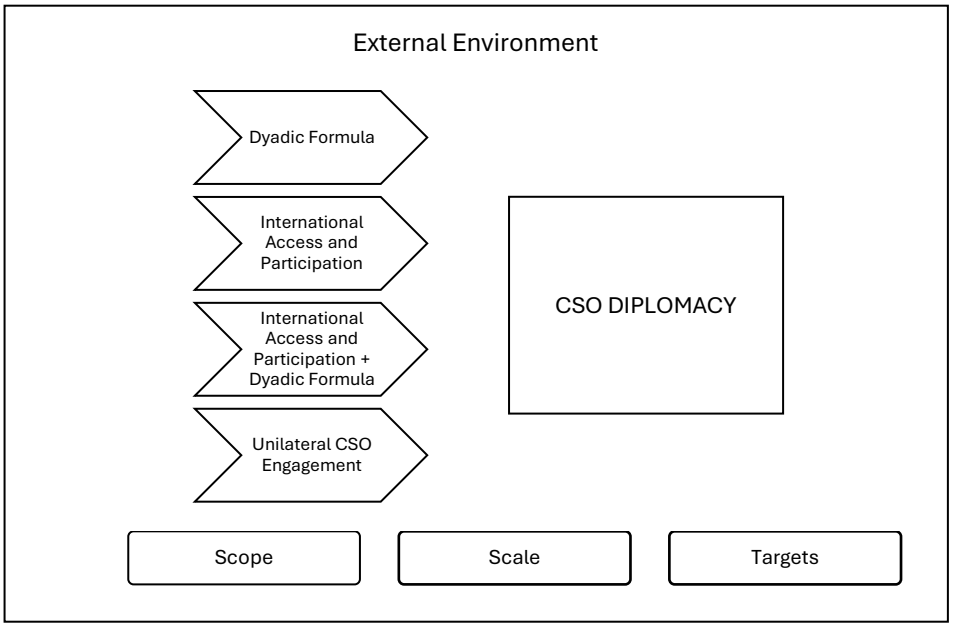

Figure 21.Underlying and supporting components of de facto states CSO diplomacy.

Another critical dimension pertains to relations between 'de facto states' CSO diplomacy' and de facto states' official foreign policy. Being a 'de facto diplomat' does not eliminate instances where CSOs collaborate with the de facto state government, even when the government maintains a clear leadership position, given that the role of CSOs in the foreign relations of the polity is still considered necessary in such instances. In line with the previous chapter which focused on various trajectories behind the international engagements of CSOs, de facto states CSO diplomacy, therefore, is considered as equipped to support, complement, and in some instances even challenge the official de facto state's foreign policy. Indeed, this brings another question into surface: the CSO agency vis-à-vis other agents and the international structure. For an actor to be considered a diplomatic agent, both diplomatic functions, as well as some sort of agency, understood loosely as the capacity to act independently, must be present.

It makes a difference how one thinks about agency in the first place – should agency be imagined as a value that is attached to the type of actor, or as a context-specific feature? Such choice largely determines the flexibility based on which actors can be vested with agency and how. Discussing the agency of small states, Neumann (2023, p. 49) notes that if "we disaggregate the question of smallness in terms of issue areas, fields, regional influence, and the like, then we move the area of validity of the answers regarding smallness from being a general one that is given to a specific one in need of empirical investigation". Agreeing with the assumption that agency is neither given nor a static concept, then the interaction of actors and processes appears constant, thereby regular change appears plausible. Thinking of agency as a fluid, processual and context-based item, rather than an

assigned value to the status of the actor, permits us to observe the issue area of human rights and identify the agency of Palestinian CSOs towards the UN and UN member states, through fact-finding and documentation and submissions and statements. Likewise, to observe the climate change regime, or foreign aid, and to spot the agency that TCSOs enjoy in delivering international assistance to citizens in non-diplomatic allies, while the Taiwanese Government's agency remains constrained.

This is not to say that CSOs enjoy full autonomy from their surroundings. Their agency remains limited also because the milieu in which they operate was designed to account for the dominance of state governments. CSO agency faces several constraints. First, de facto state CSOs are part of asymmetrical relationships, often heavily dependent for their survival on other actors. Being from entities with statehood challenges brings additional difficulties, including practical issues like travel restrictions for international events and eligibility for platform registration. Their own government might have restrictive tendencies towards them, and to top this all off, another constraint relates to the former host (adversary) state's actions, which could shrink their international space, because of fears that such activities weaken the latter's position internationally. Taken together, such limitations serve to hamper the agency of de facto state CSOs in world politics. Even CSO representatives themselves seem to understand that the structure is not conducive for their profile as non-state actors inside the state-centric fora. As one of my interlocutors stated, for CSOs "the space is huge, but very difficult to manage... but still, we need to give it a try" (T-8, 2022).

It is argued, however, that solely observing constraints fails to account for the full picture. Somewhat paradoxically, these general conditions for CSOs also contribute in vesting CSOs with degrees of agency amidst constraints, thereby granting them a diplomatic profile in interplays with various target audiences. Among these constraints, stemming both from the domestic and international levels, de facto state CSOs also become objects of attention from their government for bottom-up formulas, and the international donor community for top-down encounters. In this context, CSOs offer added value to engagements with both the de facto state's institutions and the international and donor community. Observing CSOs as partners, rather than extensions of other actors, allows us to make the claim that when CSOs work closely with the de facto state's institutions, it is because their agency provides added value to their foreign relations and foreign policy process. The same can be said about when they sit closer to the donor community, namely the CSO sector represents a milieu for the international community to reach the de facto state's citizens, thus circumventing existing political and diplomatic blockages. In other words, although the agency of CSOs is both constrained and limited, it appears relevant for the ties of the contested polity with their external environment.

Therefore, it is argued that portraying de facto state CSOs as passive agents of either their own government or the international community fails to capture the broader dynamics at play. These dynamics are best illustrated through two key tracks: idiosyncratic CSO actions and their diversity. As the previous chapter

showed, de facto states' CSO diplomacy can live on its own, without support from the de facto state's institutions or international donors. Pathway IV demonstrated how CSOs exhibit capabilities to engage internationally without support from other actors. It is evident that financial donations and other forms of support, such as access and political opportunities, either by de facto state governments or international donors may increase the volume and intensity of CSO diplomacy, and even enable it altogether. Despite this, no traces of direct support either from the government or the international community were found across substantial volumes of empirical data. Some CSO actions are conducted pursuing an idiosyncratic form of action through pro-bono activist programmes, or financed and enabled from other sources altogether. External support from the government or international donor community can therefore be considered sufficient to enable CSO international engagements, but it is not necessary per se, for CSO international actions were recorded to be implemented without it.

Illustrative examples of occasional increases in CSO agency have surfaced regularly in this study, related to their diverse international engagements. Consider in one instance a CSO official giving badges to the de facto state's officials to access a multilateral event and enter the venue.[84] Then in another instance consider a CSO having access to a direct meeting with the Secretary General of an IO to discuss membership credentials, whilst the de facto state itself lacks membership and the capabilities to organise such a meeting for themselves. Indeed, such examples illustrate how in particular moments the CSOs of de facto states are witnessed to enjoy increased agency. The core argument, therefore, becomes that under some contexts de facto state CSOs are well-positioned to exert different degrees of agency both towards their own government, international donors, and international actors. The space that emerges amidst constraining forces could be framed as an 'area of availability'. This area of availability can be imagined as a construct that becomes accessible for CSOs either through lack of attention from 'heavyweight' actors, or is enabled due to their actions, policies and support. In particular moments where the area of availability is expected to emerge, CSO agency has the potential to increase. It is the stepping into this area of availability that permits de facto state CSOs to seize the opportunity, and occasionally, even acquire a de facto diplomat-like role, thereby implementing CSO diplomacy.

Following the conceptual merging of 'CSOs' and 'diplomacy' into the notion of 'CSO diplomacy', it is instructive to end this sub-section by revisiting Sharp's (1999) definition of diplomacy, presented in Chapter 1. As previously noted, Sharp (1999, p. 33) defined diplomacy as "a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of necessarily ambiguous identities". This definition helps to observe the multifaceted identities of de facto states, considering both international perceptions, and the domestic processes of identity co-construction manufactured within CSO sectors. As Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation demonstrate, some examined CSOs exhibit intra-sectoral differences in how they frame notions of statehood.

[84] This was a practice mentioned during conversations amongst Taiwanese CSOs.

Reconnecting with Sharp's (1999) definition positions these intra-sectoral variations within broader processes of state identity formation, revealing how CSO diplomacy is marked by performativity, ambiguity, and ambivalence.

In Kosovo, empirical materials reveal that in relation to state identity, CSOs operate across a spectrum, from those relying primarily on multiethnic conceptions, to more nationalistic visions. One end is occupied by CSOs that frame Kosovo's identity purely through civic conceptions of citizenship and statehood. The other end comprises CSOs adopting more nationalistic views, thus viewing some agreements arising from the EU-facilitated dialogue process with Serbia as potential threats to the state's long-term viability. The division within the CSO sector over the establishment of the Association of the Serbian Majority Municipalities (ASSM) is an illustrative example. Once placed within the context of the human rights discourse, Kosovo's state identity is performed as an extension of the liberal international order, resulting from negotiations with Western actors.

Turning to Palestine, the layers of identity co-construction within the CSO sector are influenced by cleavages and divergent representations of governance in the West Bank and Gaza. In this context, the Palestinian state identity is mutually constituted and informed by a range of factors – historical legacies and the colonial struggle, multilateralist outcomes such as UNGA resolutions, peace processes like the Oslo Accords, legal narratives anchored in international and humanitarian law, Arab identity frames, and alignment with the human rights agenda. The Palestinian state identity emerges through various collective framings by CSOs in international activities, thus drawing on these notions to varying extents depending on the context.

In a similar manner, Taiwanese CSOs also demonstrate the fluidity of state identity. At one end, one can find views that encourage Taiwan to join the UN as a new state, by fully embracing a distinct Taiwanese identity, and rejecting the Chinese identity and the framing of Taiwanese statehood through the lens of Resolution 2758. At the other end, there are other conceptions, including full recognition and continuation of the Republic of China (RoC), as an entity distinctly separate from Mainland China. Taiwan's democratic profile is consistently outlined across the international engagement of CSOs, signalling the added value that it brings to international society. Most importantly, the Chinese versus Taiwanese identity markers, framed both as complementary and as contradictory, can also be spotted across sector activities. Overall, the multiplicity of de facto state identities, though subject to continuous negotiation, does not preclude their overlap. These identities can co-exist and even complement one another.

Such patterns suggest that CSOs actively participate in the performativity of contested state identities, which could be viewed as processes unfolding within CSO diplomacy. The dynamics of identity co-construction can be envisioned as two-pronged. First, the frames of reference are linked to historical legacies. Second, they connect to future aspirations regarding which markers should be acknowledged by the international community, and how the entity should be ordered internally. Relatedly, this touches upon the role of minorities, narratives

concerning the former host (adversary) state, and the future ethno-linguistic composition of society. Positioned between the past and future, the frames of reference connect asymmetrically to these temporal dimensions, both within and across sectors. Notably, although ambiguous and ambivalent, such identities are generally accommodated within a larger framework of affirmative positions on statehood, which appears largely non-negotiable. Therefore, the broader concept of statehood is stabilised and legitimised, even amid the multiple identities that are performed in relation to the state itself. In other words, there is broader consensus within the sectors regarding the right to statehood, than on the frames of reference through which it should be ordered and imagined. More broadly, such ambivalence also indicates underlying divergences rooted within CSO sectors, at the societal level, and in the strategic orientations of international donors.

6.3 CSO Diplomacy Amidst External Environment Transformations: World Society Transmissions to International Society

To understand the international actions and diplomatic roles of de facto state CSOs, it helps to view them within the broader changes in global politics of the 21st century. Today de facto state CSOs from contested polities lacking UN membership enjoy significant opportunities to engage with international audiences. These opportunities, or areas of availability, have not always been as accessible in the UN-centred international order as they are at present. It is shifts in the external environment that enable CSOs from de facto states to conduct international engagements, and unearthing the cloth of these CSO transmissions, that I turn next. I do so by drawing primarily on the English School of IR, which is considered to represent a suitable general framework to inspect unit interactions in world politics,[85] thereby capturing change on a broader level.

The question to kickstart the discussion is: how do transformations in the global landscape play into the participation of de facto state CSOs inside the international society? It is argued that several dynamics at the system level serve as contributing factors in transforming opportunities for the engagement of de facto state CSOs in recent decades, thereby enlarging their interplay with institutions that underpin the international order. Seen more broadly, such questions can be tackled not only regarding interaction between de facto states CSOs and different international actors, but also with respect to encounters between the international society and world society, state and non-state realms respectively. To this end, it

[85] For instance, in addition to its conceptual pluralism, the English Schoold itself borrows from different IR theories, such as (neo)realism, (neo)liberalism and constructivism. Such openness of the English School allows it to blend concepts of 'balance of power' (realism) and 'issue areas' (liberal institutionalism) and norms (constructivism).

is argued that shifts of the fabric of world politics are reflected through five main avenues of transformation.

The first avenue relates to changes deriving from (re)negotiation and (de)legitimisation of the long-held primary institutions of international society. The renegotiation of primary institutions, such as state sovereignty and diplomacy, which date back several centuries, implies consistent revision regarding how they are comprehended and practiced by agents. Largely understood as a state-centric notion, sovereignty has evolved by integrating more nuanced features, namely additions regarding state responsibilities towards their populations. In discussing the evolution of the concept of sovereignty Ramos (2013, p. 5) maintains that "[a]s the normative fabric of the international system evolves, so too does the meaning of state sovereignty and vice versa. One might visualize this as a web of interconnecting norms, with state sovereignty at the centre. These norms push and pull on one another, with profound implications for the conduct of international relations". Therefore, beneath these primary institutions and norms there are alternative conceptions and narratives advanced by different actors over how they ought to be understood and practiced. De facto state CSOs participate in debates surrounding the evolving nature of norms, among others, by transmitting advocacy appeals over how responsibility to protect and human rights enjoy prominence over sovereignty claims of the former host (adversary) state. Additionally, by fulfilling diplomacy-like functions, CSOs exercise sovereignty-adjacent roles in acting as diplomatic representatives on behalf of local constituencies internationally.

Second, and concomitantly, in addition to the century-long tradition of primary institutions, one can witness an increase in the relevance of new concerns and issue areas as primary areas of interest in the 21st century. Diplomacy as state-to-state interaction commenced in connection to themes such as war and peace, while nowadays the issue areas underpinning international actors' actions are constantly emerging, from the most recent ones such as attempts to establish international regulations for the use of artificial intelligence (AI), to earlier ones such as counterterrorism, combating global poverty and international development. Most importantly, new issue areas underpin existing understandings and reshape the practices of agents regarding collective action. It was already noted that themes such as the environment, global health, and human rights, but also more recent ones such as cybersecurity or the ethics of technology, represent the core facets of cooperative mechanisms in international affairs, and their tackling requires both state and non-state involvement. In parallel, the emergence of new issue areas also affects existing primary institutions from within, for instance, even diplomacy at the state level cannot be properly grasped without considering the increasing relevance of new thematic additions such as cybersecurity and AI regulation. As new issue areas emerge, de facto state CSOs are observed engaging and claiming expertise, and their activities are then accompanied by expanded opportunities for international interactions.

Another feature which has been discussed in the literature is the broadening of spaces for domestic CSOs inside existing international organisations and

multilateral bodies (Tallberg et al., 2013b; Uhlin, 2022). In connection to literature findings, the dissertation has highlighted how CSOs are now widely recognised as stakeholders in combating collective challenges of humanity, through codified opportunity structures in multilateral institutions and regimes, including major multilateral institutions such as the UN. It can also be added that the practice of CSO inclusion has even travelled to non-Western inter-governmental initiatives, such as the BRICS Civil Forum. Growing inclusivity of IOs aids the potential for de facto state CSOs' international reach, namely by permitting their presence in multilateral venues where their own state lacks full membership.

Another area of change pertains to the broadening of the non-state realm itself, through the increased importance of CSOs and non-state actors such as citizens and transnational networks in international affairs. In the post-1990 period, the number of domestic CSOs in Kosovo, Taiwan, and Palestine increased and grew larger and more diverse, similar to trends observed at the global level. The densification of world society, namely by increasing the number of CSOs in the past four decades or so, and the enlarged importance of other non-state actors, such as general publics in world politics, have multiplied the opportunities of transnational exchange for de facto state CSOs. Most importantly, for de facto states the densification of world society allows greater opportunities to mobilise the support of different actors residing in non-recognising states.

Finally, technological evolution has empowered CSOs to reach global audiences directly (see: Dennis and Hall, 2020; Hall, 2022). This dissertation has shown multiple ways in which social media and digital communication platforms enlarge the devices at the disposal of de facto state CSOs for implementing action and invoking international transmissions. Online technologies permit CSOs from de facto states to implement digital activities that target international actors, organisations and norms, and to attend online meetings where on-site participation is difficult. To this end, by reducing barriers of time and space technological evolution allows de facto state CSOs to execute cost-effective digital campaigns to mobilise support for their causes with audiences in foreign states. Indeed, some CSOs included in this study conduct most of their activities digitally.

Thus far it has been argued that five general changes to the external environment have played a role in increasing the areas of availability for the international engagements of de facto state CSOs. These wider shifts, which have been present to different degrees in literature debates, can be grouped as follows: evolvement of primary institutions; emergence of new-issue areas; increasing spaces inside existing secondary institutions; densification of world society; and technological evolution. The international actions of de facto state CSOs ought to be comprehended considering these broader dynamics occurring at the structural level, which have made CSOs a noteworthy actor of the international order. An important aspect is how these systemic level changes enable CSOs to project transmissions aimed at primary institutions in the international society. In other words, the fact that systemic level changes allow CSOs from entities lacking full UN

membership to forge international linkages and implement international actions in an interconnected world comes as no surprise.

What is interesting is how such trends enable de facto state CSOs to engage in the politics of (de)legitimisation towards the primary institutions of international society, particularly concerning norms related to statehood and sovereignty underpinning the UN-centred international order. Kyris and Brisland (2024, p. 10) have already asserted that the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), as an international CSO, "re-imagines" statehood norms in international society, such as self-determination, in order to bolster the statehood credentials of its members, in this case, unrepresented nations and peoples. Figure 22 shows the tripartite distinction of world politics advanced by Bull (2012), and illustrated by Buzan (2004), which has been populated graphically to display domestic de facto states' CSOs in contemporary world politics in interplay with constitutive elements of the international society.[86] As the illustration shows, de facto state CSOs utilise secondary institutions, but also direct modes of action such as digital tools, to implement their transmissions which finally end up targeting the primary institutions of international society.

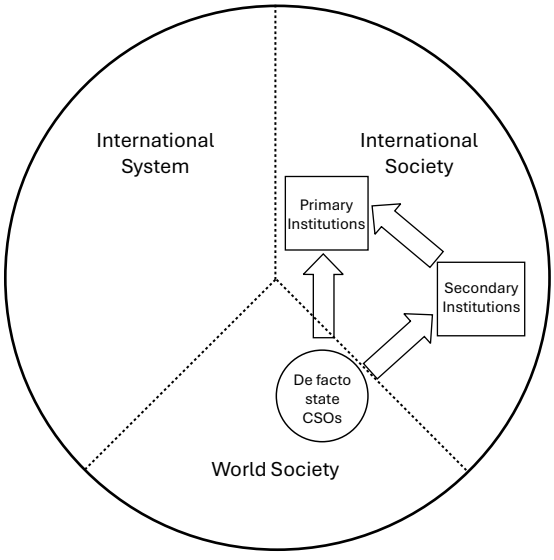

Figure 22. The encounters of CSOs from de facto states in global governance, and at the same time, the encounter of international society and world society – based on Buzan's triad illustration (2004), building on earlier work by Bull (2012).

[86] Additions to the original model include the de facto states CSO circle, squares of primary and secondary institutions, and the arrows.

It is argued that some primary institutions that are worthy to be considered are state sovereignty and its related notions, such as self-determination, territorial integrity, non-intervention, and territoriality. Because of the judicial and empirical differences between the contexts, the directions in which arguments are posed exhibit differences from one another. For example, the ways that the three CSO sectors interact with primary institutions are conditioned by contextual factors, namely how lines of political authority stand on the ground, and the nature of the contested issue. Whilst variation in how statehood-related principles are framed becomes salient within the three sectors, a key commonality lies in the fact that efforts to challenge or contest existing institutions are not carried out via appeals to dismantle them. Rather, CSO transmissions appeal for the exact opposite, namely through claims to redefine these institutions in attempts to create alignment with the de facto state's state-building and state recognition projects. In line with previous discussions, it can be argued that through their diplomatic actions, domestic CSOs in essence reproduce international society (Jönsson and Hall, 2005, p. 25), or as Hedley Bull (2012, pp. 163–166) put it, they symbolise the existence of the society of states.

To put it differently, CSO transmissions stemming from world society do not condone the status-quo, but they also disagree with revolutionist claims which aim to abolish these statehood-related institutions altogether. By and large, the CSO transmissions correspond to appeals for an evolutionary transformation of statehood-adjacent primary institutions, tilting them in favour of supporting the de facto state's long-term existence and international membership. In other words, CSO transmissions legitimise primary institutions as establishments that must continue to exist for maintaining the order of international society, but redefining them in quest of favouring the existence, acceptance, and recognition of de facto states as both an empirical and judicial reality.[87] Despite differences in how these norms are approached or appealed, the underlying similarity of a reformist, rather than revolutionist approach appears to persist across the three CSO sectors.

Taking advantage of access to international society, CSOs reinforce narratives that target the weakening of the sovereignty claims of the former host (adversary) state, as one of the 193 states that enjoy full UN membership. The decisions of the former host (adversary) state are actively contested by CSOs, as they are considered to lack both legitimacy and legality. To put it differently, the CSO's international actions implicitly or explicitly appeal through their transmissions for the strengthening of the internal and external sovereignty of de facto states, promoted as *the* solution which goes hand in hand with addressing global governance challenges. Through their activities CSOs also bring into the spotlight the

[87] These are generalisations deducted from the three contexts. While there are also variations within the CSO sectors of de facto states, it does not mean that each CSO sector can be linked with explicit endeavours to each institution; this means that one sector might link its actions to a specific primary institution. For instance, the self-determination norm can be identified in advocacy and lobbying of PCSO international actions in an explicit fashion.

existing tension between norms of state sovereignty and self-determination. The self-determination norm is mobilised to argue for de facto states' citizens to exercise this right within a nascent nation-state, which is to be recognised as a judicial fact of international society. Should documents and legal frameworks deriving from international peace processes be in place, then they are also likely attached to CSO transmissions in order to strengthen the legitimacy of the claims.

The CSOs' international actions amass calls for a new territoriality (the spatial dimension of sovereignty) to either be maintained or enabled as the recognised border formula. That appeals for alternative understandings of borders and territoriality are conducted by taking advantage of the emerging spaces inside and around the UN, constructed for their very maintenance, contains a conflicting logic in its own way. Territorial integrity and non-intervention principles also represent key sovereignty-related Westphalian notions that appear central in guiding the conceptions and behaviour of the units of international society. Territorial integrity and non-intervention are either invoked via appeals towards international community to object to the effective control of the former host (adversary) state over the de facto state, or, in the case of an existing empirical statehood, they are designed to support its existence and delegitimise claims for a potential violent take-over by the former. In other words, the greater the de facto state's control over the claimed territory, the stronger the promotion of the non-intervention principle. Conversely, the higher the former host (adversary) state's effective control over the de facto state's territory, the more the principle of the territorial integrity of UN member states is likely to become contested. This way, CSO transmissions play into underlying contradictions enshrined in the UN Charter between the principles of territorial integrity and non-intervention on the one hand, and humanitarian principles on the other.

Another way to make this dynamic clearer is through utilising the top-down and bottom-up analogy. Top-down transmissions must be imagined as a diagonal directed from international society towards world society, and the bottom-up diagonal as the opposite dynamic. The top-down diffusion from the international society to world society, in this instance from international actors towards de facto state CSOs, centres mainly around contemporary issue area concerns, such as global health, environmentalism, human rights, democracy etc. The bottom-up transmission, at the opposite end, contains both the issue area concerns, and (de)legitimisation transmissions tackling notions of statehood and sovereignty. Here the argument follows that it is rather difficult to detach the international engagement of de facto state CSOs in global governance from the territorial dispute, which is filled with legal and political statehood dimensions. Hence, de facto states' CSO actions located inside of global governance challenges either touch upon or make full reference to the connoted 'solution', framed as a future arrangement where contestation from the former host (adversary) state ceases to exist, and support and recognition for the de facto state ceases to be partial.

Seen generally, beyond the state-centric configuration, the systemic level transformations are rendering international politics more conducive for the voices of de facto states, including their CSOs – at least more conducive than at any time

since the 1945 establishment of the current UN-led international order. In retrospect, not all de facto state polities that have existed in the post-1945 order have had such interaction opportunities. Delving into a historical de facto state example allows us to draw a parallel to demonstrate this. Take some extinguished polities – let's say the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, which perished in 1946, or the Hyderabad State which died in 1948, shortly after the UN order came into existence. It is possible to argue that due to the external environment that existed during that period, de facto states had a significantly smaller playing field to approach and communicate with the international society of states. This is not only because of the limits caused by the states' domestic institutional frameworks, or relations with the former host (adversary) state, which are always prone to specificities, but also because the international scene's configuration permitted fewer entry points for the access and participation in the international society for domestic non-state actors, such as CSOs. In short, during its outset period, the UN-led international order was not yet sufficiently developed to permit extensive informal engagements from non-member states, especially via the CSO channel. Having said this, one must also consider the current crisis in multilateralism and the challenges facing the liberal world order, illustrated by the shrinking space for CSOs at the global level in recent years. Therefore, while evidently the recent decades signal an expansion in opportunities for CSOs for international engagement, it is legitimate to ask whether the heyday of such engagement may already have passed. In other words, it is possible that continued narrowing of international civic space for CSOs will further intensify in the years ahead. The extent to which this trajectory will be reshaped, and reversed, by the ongoing setbacks remains to be seen in the coming years. Yet, the broader argument appears to hold, namely, that changes in the international order since the 1990s have generally created additional avenues for CSOs from de facto states to access and participate in international affairs, at least until the current period.

It must be acknowledged that the de facto state, as an analytical category in IR theory, is subject to such contingencies, namely that at different points in history channels were narrower regarding interaction with de facto states' external environment. Ultimately, due to less interaction with the dominant institutions of international relations, these historical de facto states also experienced fewer chances to become part of global governing structures, to socialise with fully-fledged states, to advertise their claims to statehood, and to showcase different membership credentials rendering them worthy of equal international state representation. At the same time, despite these evolutions, the access of de facto state CSOs to international society remains considerably constrained, not least because of the contested status of their polity. Due to coming from comparatively 'lightweight' actors in a state-dominated system, CSO efforts fall short of causing profound effects regarding how the primary institutions of statehood and sovereignty are perceived by international community in relation to the contested polity. Therefore, the increased areas of availability do not solve the core issues of statehood and membership. Nevertheless, they are likely to lend a welcome hand in somewhat mitigating them. An important question to be answered in the future

is if and how these areas of availability of the UN-centred international order will further enlarge in the coming decades for de facto state CSOs (and other non-state actors in general)?

In conclusion, domestic de facto state CSOs nourish connections to the so-called 'global conscience', however, issues with the former host (adversary) state consistently rise to the surface. Despite broader shifts reflected through an expansion of external environment opportunity structures, de facto state CSOs appear confined to the duality of commitment, thereby ending up constantly and inevitably cross-fertilising international engagements embedded on resolving universal global challenges with profound statehood and sovereignty questions. The systemic conditions in which they operate signal that CSOs are confined to such roles in the long run. In other words, there hardly appears a way for the CSOs of de facto states to escape the contested statehood conundrum, even if areas of availability continue to enlarge.

CONCLUSION

If one proceeds with the understanding that the international actorness of de facto states carries specific characteristics compared to fully recognised states, then it follows that their domestic CSOs also contain unique characteristics in their international interactions. Nonetheless, there is limited understanding regarding how such specificities manifest across different settings. Existing research predominantly focuses on individual de facto states, and a narrow set of CSOs and issue areas. This dissertation addressed this gap through a comparative analysis of the international engagements of 45 domestic CSOs across Kosovo, Palestine and Taiwan. In so doing, it shed light on how domestic CSOs engage internationally across contexts of contested statehood, while drawing on the English School of IR and diplomatic theory to frame the analysis.

In what ways do CSOs across de facto states engage internationally? What are the scope and scale of their activities? Such questions have been the principal concern of Chapter 4. Notable in Kosovo is the involvement of CSOs in breaking the ice with non-recognisers, in collaboration with the MFA. The analysis identified five instances since 2008 where Kosovo CSOs signed agreements with different institutions intended to improve foreign policy implementation. Other noteworthy efforts include engagement to increase Kosovo's recognition in the digital domain by tech MNCs and internet properties, and lobbying for membership in the CoE and INTERPOL. The case of Palestine revealed extensive advocacy and lobbying of Palestinian CSOs with the UN system via submissions, addressing human rights issues. Palestinian CSOs also direct efforts towards increasing interaction with public opinion in other states, seeking to increase solidarity abroad by mobilising international support for the Palestinian cause. As such, CSOs become direct actors in the 'war of narratives' surrounding the question of Palestine, attempting to persuade the international community of Palestine's right to exist.

In Taiwan, CSOs are extensively engaged in foreign aid initiatives. Findings also showed that Taiwanese CSOs mount efforts to engage with multilateral institutions and to keep dialogue open with various actors inside non-recognising states, particularly in Asia. In striving to convey Taiwan's adherence to international commitments, namely in climate change, environmental protection, and global health, Taiwanese CSOs actively interact with multilateral bodies, such as the UNFCCC and relevant UN programmes. The case of Taiwan was also marked by the presence of business CSOs, focusing principally on promoting opportunities for Taiwanese enterprises in global markets. Simultaneously, Taiwanese institutions implement programmes aimed at enhancing international CSO exchanges through capacity-building initiatives and funding support for the sector.

These empirical findings reaffirm CSOs' functional heterogeneity across de facto state settings. Crucially, the cross-case analysis revealed that despite variations, CSOs across the three contexts implement some international activities while being embedded in statehood causes, pointing to the context-specific

political and diplomatic challenges of their respective states. The empirical analysis displayed activities in each CSO sector directed at increasing their bilateral recognition and multilateral accession, participation, and representation. Sporadically, CSOs gain broader access to non-recognising states and multilateral bodies compared to the official channels of their own governments, including the MFA. The balancing of international CSO activities between their primary focus on global governance challenges and the national agenda of state-making has been framed as the 'duality of commitment'. In addition to demonstrating the operational adaptability of CSOs, this duality also displays non-state efforts towards augmenting state sovereignty and international acceptance.

To address the research question regarding the underlying conditions behind the international activities of CSOs, four pathways were presented in Chapter 5. The underlying processes were mediated by factors embedded across international (systemic), domestic (de facto state), or organisational (CSO) levels. The variations between the three cases render it difficult to draw a generalised frame about CSOs' ties with MFAs and de facto states' foreign policy institutions. To address this, the study outlined a scale of five dimensions, examining how the relationship develops. CSO–MFA relationships range from long-term institutionalised partnership to competing worldviews about how foreign policy should be approached. The presence of CSOs in the foreign policy issue area was also found to spiral into competing claims over who best represents citizens and what the long-term policy choices for the statehood project in international fora are. In this vein, CSO efforts also reveal the increasingly fragmented nature of diplomatic representation on behalf of populations in the international arena (Guilbaud, 2020), challenging narrow notions of sovereignty (Hudson, 2001).

The main claim that Chapter 6 advanced was to interpret the international engagement of CSOs through the lens of diplomatic theory. To depict instances where CSOs' international engagements ameliorate the international acceptance of de facto states, the dissertation introduced the notion of 'CSO diplomacy' as a vector stemming from their informal relations toolkit. Evidently, the agency of domestic CSOs as comparatively 'lightweight' actors in international affairs remains restrained. CSOs' international activities fail to make substantial impact on core questions regarding statehood and sovereignty. Nonetheless, domestic CSOs possess capabilities to occasionally enhance the external interaction capacity of de facto states, thereby expanding their international engagement, participation, representation, and visibility.

By focusing on CSOs in IR as diplomatic agents, de facto states' foreign relations via informal channels, and the pluralisation of diplomatic practices, the theoretical framework of this study forges dialogues between these literatures. It also draws on debates regarding how state sovereignty is claimed and practiced, and how legitimacy is constructed and contested in international relations. The activities of CSOs in external legitimacy-seeking practices appear two-pronged – in parallel to showcasing domestic alignment with global normative frameworks, they also make calls on international actors to uphold them. As the statehood project enjoys high internal legitimacy across the de facto state category, the

duality of commitment can also be expected to reinforce CSOs' legitimacy domestically. Finally, by fostering internal legitimacy and societal cohesion, which forge the basis of their international engagements, CSO actions resonate with interpretations of Westphalian statehood, particularly in alignment with the Montevideo Criteria.

Instances when de facto states officially accommodate CSOs into foreign policy processes reveal hybrid practices of seeking external legitimacy and sovereignty via joint state and non-state undertakings. The presence of CSOs within official foreign policy indicates their emergence as instruments in de facto statecraft – tools that de facto states which have existed since the post-1945 order have attained in recent decades. Indeed, changes in the international order have provided 21st-century domestic CSOs with new multilateral spaces and emerging instruments for international engagement. These spaces and evolving modes of action are utilised for transmissions that both promote and contest statehood-related institutions of international society, such as state sovereignty, self-determination, territorial integrity, non-intervention, and territoriality.

CSOs engage internationally through a toolbox that includes advocacy and lobbying, coalition-building with foreign actors inside normative frameworks, and utilisation of transnational networks, multilateral spaces, and technology. The evolution of CSOs as actors in international affairs is also marked by growing ambitions to develop capabilities in areas once considered exclusive responsibilities of MFAs and professional tasks of diplomats. Many examined CSOs have institutionalised their international outreach through dedicated departments or offices. Therefore, the institutional development of domestic CSOs also involves the professionalisation of their international interaction capabilities, alongside project management, grant writing, and monitoring and evaluation.

In this context, CSO diplomacy emerges as a practice that shifts across domestic and international levels; state and non-state boundaries, hence polylateral diplomacy (Wiseman, 2004); and professional and epistemic domains hence, transprofessional diplomacy (Constantinou, Cornago, and McConnell, 2016). As international affairs increasingly accommodate multiple forms of diplomatic representation, CSOs seek to claim a legitimate position within these shifting arrangements. Occasional tensions with the sovereign state are inevitably triggered. Drawing on this foundation, CSO activities pose implications for what Constantinou and McConnell (2023) term as 'the right to diplomacy', understood as the right to be considered a legitimate actor with the status to speak on behalf of populations. Despite the expansion of this right, observed through increased CSO presence in multilateralism, their diplomatic actorness remains constrained by systemic inequalities, in terms of both status and capabilities. Therefore, unfolding amid contestations over the legitimacy of diplomatic authority, CSO diplomatic actorness remains largely confined to a series of performative acts.

The study offers both empirical and conceptual contributions. The comparative qualitative analysis and original data collected provide new empirical insights through three in-depth case studies. The main conceptual contributions are the notions of duality of commitment and CSO diplomacy, employed as analytical

frameworks to disentangle the phenomena under investigation. While these notions are not limited to the specific empirical contexts explored here and may be relevant in other political or geopolitical settings, their applicability should nonetheless be assessed in consideration of the specific environments in which CSOs operate. Practically, the study may offer some insights to real-life practitioners on engagement forms and strategies with non-UN member entities via the CSO channel.

This study is not without limitations. One is that the timeframe of the analysis proper focuses on the period starting in 2008. The background sections of the cases, which offered an overview of the pre-2008 period, both mitigated this limitation and unveiled that expanding the analysis further could yield additional findings about CSO activities in early state-making efforts at the societal level. Another limitation is that the CSO sectors are also similar to some extent, given that the liberal framework and Western ideas on international order became dominant forces from the 1990s onwards. All three cases enjoy rather high international acceptance compared to the average population of the de facto state category. The study also does not focus on CSOs operating primarily outside de facto states, such as diaspora organisations or regional and transnational networks.

Some of these limitations could be addressed by building on this work. Future studies could compare non-state actors in cases less aligned with the Western liberal framework, historical cases that no longer exist, and cases with less international legitimacy. Understanding the factors that determine the success or failure of CSO activities in different contexts would be valuable. Additionally, if CSOs prove effective in representing contested sovereignty and recognition causes abroad, it would be worth exploring whether de facto states are inclined to further utilise this CSO channel by integrating them into institutional frameworks with secured funding and staffing. In doing so, CSOs could potentially extend their influence, evolving into strategic instruments of statecraft and extending beyond what has been considered their traditional role. As diplomacy evolves and its boundaries blur, the story of CSOs in de facto states serves as a call to examine the margins of international relations, where legitimate diplomatic authority is claimed in the fringes.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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1. K-1. Interview by Author with Lëvizja FOL Representative (period 2008–2011), Prishtina, November 8, 2022.
2. K-2. Interview by Author with Kosovo Open Society Foundation Representative, Prishtina, November 11, 2022.
3. K-3. Interview by Author with Sbunker Representative, November 14, 2022, Online.
4. K-4. Interview by Author with Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS) Representative, Prishtina, November 15, 2022.
5. K-5. Interview by Author with Lëvizja FOL Representative, Prishtina, November 16, 2022.
6. K-6. Interview by Author with Deputy Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs and Disapora (MFAD), Prishtina, November 17, 2022.
7. K-7. Interview by Author with Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) Representative, Prishtina, November 24, 2022.
8. K-8. Interview by Author with Foreign Policy Club, Prishtina, November 25, 2022.
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10. K-10. Interview by Author with Balkan Policy Research Group (BPRG) Representative, Prishtina, November 29, 2022.
11. K-11. Interview by Author with Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) Representative, Online, December 13, 2022.
12. K-12. Interview by Author with Institute on Foreign Relations (IFR) Representative, Prishtina, December 11, 2022.
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15. K-15. Interview by Author with IPKO Foundation Representative, Prishtina, February 2, 2023.

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1. P-1. Interview by Author with Al Mezan Representative, Online, March, 20, 2023.
2. P-2. Interview by Author with Addameer Representative, Online, March, 21, 2023.

3. P-3. Interview by Author with Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) Representative, Online, April, 13, 2023.
4. P-4. Interview by Author with Academic (conducted fieldwork in Palestinian territories), Online, May 9, 2023.
5. P-5. Interview by Author with former Activist of Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS), Online, May 14, 2023.
6. P-6. Interview by Author with Academic (conducted fieldwork in Palestinian territories), Online, June 2, 2023.
7. P-7. Interview by Author with Academic (conducted fieldwork in Palestinian territories), Online, June 15, 2023.
8. P-8. Interview by Author with Miftah Representative, Online, July 25, 2023.
9. P-9. Interview by Author with Community Action Center (CAC) Representative, Online, July 27, 2023.
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1. T-1. Interview by Author, with Garden of Hope (GoH) Representative, Taipei City, October 5, 2022.
2. T-2. Interview by Author with Former Employee of Environmental Quality Protection Fund (EQPF) Representative (period 2014–2017), Taipei City, October 6, 2022.
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15. T-15. Interview by Author with Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC) Representative, Online, November 11, 2022.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Kodanikuühenduste roll de facto riikide välissuhetes: Kosovo, Palestiina ja Taiwani võrdlev analüüs

De facto riigid on üksused, mis täidavad riikluse kriteeriumid, kuid ei ole Ühinenud Rahvaste Organisatsiooni (ÜRO) täisliikmed. Kuigi de facto riigid loovad diplomaatilisi suhteid tunnustatud riikidega ning võivad kuuluda erinevatesse mitmepoolsetesse organisatsioonidesse, ei aktsepteerita neid siiski rahvusvahelise riikide kogukonna täieõiguslike liikmetena. Sellest tulenevalt iseloomustavad de facto riikide ametlikku diplomaatilist tegevust sageli mitmetimõistetavus, ambivalentsus ja performatiivsus (Bouris & Fernández-Molina, 2018; Visoka, 2018). Ühe alternatiivse võimaluse rahvusvahelise vaidlustatuse mõjude leevendamiseks loovad nende jaoks mitteametlikud kanalid. Niinimetatud tunnustamiseta kaasamise raamistikus võivad mitteametlikud sidemed laiendada de facto riikide välissuhtlust ja tugevdada nende kommunikatsiooni rahvusvahelise kogukonnaga (Cooley & Mitchell, 2010; Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018). Selles kontekstis lähtutakse käesolevas doktoritöös arusaamast, et kui de facto riikide rahvusvaheline suhtlus omab teatud eripärasid, siis peaks ka nende kodanikuühiskonna organisatsioonide ehk kodanikuühenduste rahvusvaheline tegevus ilmutama mõningaid ebakonventsionaalseid jooni.

Töö esimeseks uurimisküsimuseks on, kuidas osalevad de facto riikide kohalikud kodanikuühendused rahvusvahelises tegevuses erinevates kontekstides? Seejärel küsin, kuidas mõista kodanikuühenduste rahvusvahelise tegevuse aluseks olevaid protsesse? Ning lõpuks liigub doktoritöö laiema uurimisküsimuse juurde: kuidas saame selliseid kodanikuühenduste tegevusi mõtestada läbi rahvusvaheliste suhete teooriate?

Käesolev doktoritöö koosneb kuuest sisupeatükist ning sissejuhatusest ning järelduste peatükist. Esimeses peatükis kirjeldatakse uurimuse teoreetilist raamistikku, mis ühendab kolm rahvusvaheliste suhete uurimissuunda: kodanikuühendused, de facto riigid ja diplomaatia. Teoreetilises peatükis sedastatakse, et võrdlevaid uurimusi, mis keskenduks kodanikuühenduste rahvusvahelisele tegevusele de facto riikide kontekstis, on vähe. Seetõttu viin oma uurimuse läbi kolme de facto riigi baasil: Kosovo, Palestiina ja Taiwan.

Peatükk 2 esitleb töö uurimisdisaini. Kuigi vaadeldavateks riikideks on Kosovo, Palestiina ja Taiwan, hõlmab uurimus 15 kodumaist kodanikuühendust igast nimetatud de facto riigist. Töös kasutatakse nii esmaseid kui ka teiseseid allikaid. Lisaks andmebaasi loomisele, mis sisaldab enam kui 2300 kirjet nende kodanikuühenduste veebilehtedelt, ning lisamaterjalide nagu näiteks dokumentide, raportite ja meediakajastuste kogumisele, viisin aastatel 2022–2023 läbi välitööd Kosovos ja Taiwanis intervjuude tegemiseks. Välitööde tegemine Palestiinas ei olnud regiooni julgeolekuolukorra tõttu võimalik ning intervjuud Palestiina kodanikuühendustega toimusid seetõttu veebi teel. Kokku viisin kolme de facto riigi kodanikuühendustega läbi 40 intervjuud. Peatükis 3 kirjeldatakse iga de facto riigi

tausta ja tutvustatakse nende riikluse vaidlustamise konteksti, lisaks antakse ülevaade kodanikuühiskonna tärkamisest ja arengust igas vaatlusaluses kontekstis.

Peatükk 4 vastab esimesele uurimisküsimusele dokumendianalüüsi kaudu. Kuna see peatükk ei sisalda informatsiooni, mis on saadud otsesuhtlusest kodanikuühendustega, viitan sellele kui „välise vaate“ lähenemisele. Võrdlev juhtumianalüüs tõi esile kodanikuühenduste suhtluse erinevate rahvusvaheliste toimijatega (nagu näiteks riigid, rahvusvahelised organisatsioonid, ettevõtted, avalikkus jne). Kosovo ja Taiwan on kaasanud oma kodanikuühendused ametlikesse poliitikatesse, süvendamaks suhteid mittetunnustavate riikide ja mitte-diplomaatiliste liitlastega. Kosovos toimus see näiteks projektis KStalksEU (2013–2015), mis keskendus Euroopa Liidu viiele Kosovot mittetunnustavale riigile. Taiwani kodanikuühendused on kaasatud Uue Lõunapoolse Poliitika (*New Southbound Policy*) elluviimisesse, mille eesmärgiks on süvendada suhteid 18 Aasia riigiga väljaspool Hiina suhtlusvõrgustikku. Multilateraarsete foorumite osas viisid kodanikuühendused ellu lobi- ja huvikaitsetegevusi, mille eesmärgiks oli tugevdada oma riigi kohaolu ja liikmestaatust rahvusvahelistes organisatsioonides. Kosovo kodanikuühendused lobisid Kosovo liikmelisuse nimel Euroopa Nõukogus, Taiwani kodanikuühendused aga de facto riigi koha nimel Maailma Tervishoiuorganisatsioonis ja ÜROs. Palestiina kodanikuühendused korraldasid tegevusi, toetamaks Palestiina ÜRO-liikmesuse taotlust aastatel 2011–2012 ning Palestiina ühinemist Rooma Statuudi osalisriigina (2015). Kodanikuühenduste regulaarne osalus foorumites, kus nende riik ei ole täisliige, kipub aja jooksul kujunema mitteametliku esindamise vormiks.

Kodanikuühenduste suhted ärisektoriga erinevad juhtumite lõikes märkimisväärselt. Taiwanis täidavad niinimetatud ärilise suunitlused kodanikuühendused ainulaadset rolli, toetades institutsioone kaubandussuhete arendamisel mitte-diplomaatiliste partneritega, kus valitsuse tegevusvõimekus on piiratud. Näiteks tegid kaks Taiwani kodanikuühendust koostööd avaliku sektoriga majanduslike ja diplomaatiliste suhete edendamiseks Leeduga (2020–2023). Vastanduva lähenemisega paistavad silma mõned Palestiina kodanikuühendused, näiteks ühendus *Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions* kutsub üles suurendama rahvusvahelist toetust Iisraeli ja nende rahvusvaheliste ettevõtete boikoteerimisele, mida nähakse okupeeritud aladel tegutsemist toetavatena. Kosovo puhul esines huvitav juhtum, kus üks kodanikuühendus tegi koostööd valitsusega Kosovo digitaalse riikliku tunnustatuse saavutamiseks veebiplatvormide ja tehnoloogiaettevõtete poolt (2013–2015). Viimase näitena suunavad mõned Palestiina ja Taiwani kodanikuühendused oma tegevuse rahvusvahelisele üldsusele, kasutades oma paindlikkust, ekspertiisi, ja moraalset autoriteeti välisabi rakendamiseks ja uue avaliku diplomaatia kujundamiseks. Palestiina kodanikuühendused püüavad võita rahvusvahelise üldsuse poolehoidu ja luua solidaarsust palestiina eesmärkide täitmiseks – seeläbi saavad neist toimijad narratiivide sõjas Iisraeli-Palestiina konflikti üle. Taiwani kodanikuühendusi peetakse aga mõningate mitte-diplomaatiliste liitlaste puhul vastuvõetavamateks välisabi saajateks kui ametlikke institutsioone.

Sellest kontekstist lähtuvalt lävivad kodanikuühendused rahvusvaheliselt väga eriilmeliste toimijatega, kasutades selleks erinevaid strateegilisi vahendeid, sealhulgas huvikaitset ja lobitegevust, koalitsiooniloomet välispartneritega erinevate normatiivsete raamistike kontekstis, riikidevaheliste võrgustike ja mitmepoolsete platvormide kasutamist ning tehnoloogia rakendamist. Kodanikuühenduste tegevus välise legitiimsuse saavutamisel on kahetine: paralleelselt demonstreeritakse de facto riigi siseriiklikku kooskõla rahvusvaheliste normatiivsete raamistikega ning apelleeritakse nende normatiivsete põhimõtete alalhoidmisele rahvusvaheliste toimijate endi poolt. Sporaadiliselt võivad kodanikuühendused saada mittetunnustavatele riikidele ja mitmepoolsetele organisatsioonidele suuremagi ligipääsu kui nende koduriikide valitsused läbi oma ametlike kanalite, sealhulgas välisministeeriumi kaudu. See ei ole küll pidev ega üldine muster, kuid on siiski dokumenteeritav. Lisaks näevad mõned rahvusvahelised toimijad suhtluses de facto riikide kodanikuühendustega strateegilist võimalust luua suhtlusvorme, mis on poliitiliselt vähemlaetud kui ametlik suhtlus de facto riigiga. De facto riikide kodanikuühendused lõikavad sellisest rahvusvahelisest tähelepanust kasu: see toetab nende püsimajäämist ja tegutsemisvõimalusi, kuigi eeldab neilt ka sagedasi operatiivseid, temaatilisi ja retoorilisi kohandusi.

Kõige olulisem on asjaolu, et igas valdkonnas leidub kodanikuühenduste tegevusi, mille eesmärgiks on suurendada de facto riikide kahepoolset tunnustamist, mitmepoolsete platvormidega liitumist ja rahvusvahelist esindatust. Kodanikuühendused osalevad rahvusvahelistel foorumitel ning esindavad sümboolselt nii de facto riiki kui ka selle elanikke. Seetõttu viivad kodanikuühendused kõigis kolmes kontekstis ellu mõningaid rahvusvahelisi tegevusi, mis on tihedalt seotud nende vastavate riikide poliitiliste ja diplomaatiliste väljakutsetega. Lisaks aitavad ka sellised tegevused, mille põhifookus on näiteks inimõigustel, kliimamuutustel või ülemaailmsel tervishoiul, luua sidemeid, mis aitavad legitimeerida de facto riike klassikalise Westfaali riikluse võtmes. Kodanikuühenduste rahvusvaheliste tegevuste tasakaalustamist üleilmsete valitsemise väljakutsete lahendamise (mis on nende peamiseks fookuses) ja rahvusliku riigiloome agenda vahel on selles doktoritöös kontseptualiseeritud „pühendumuse kahesusena“ (*duality of commitment*). Selline dünaamika eristab de facto riikides tegutsevaid kodanikuühendusi nendest, mis tegutsevad tunnustatud ja stabiilse riiklusega riikides, kus säärased riiklusega seotud probleemid puuduvad.

5. peatükk keskendub teisele uurimisküsimusele, tuginedes intervjuudele kodanikuühenduste esindajatega – seetõttu nimetan seda „seesmiseks vaateks“. Käin doktoritöös välja neli lähenemist, mille kaudu de facto riikide kodanikuühenduste rahvusvahelist tegevust analüüsida. Ühelt poolt võivad kodumaised kodanikuühendused osaleda rahvusvahelistes tegevustes juhul, kui neid kaasatakse ametlikkesse välispoliitilistesse protsessidesse nende enda institutsioonide poolt (I lähenemine), kuid nad kasutavad ära ka suurenenud ligipääsu ja võimalusi osaleda rahvusvahelistel üritustel ja foorumitel (II lähenemine). Sellega seonduvalt võivad de facto riikide valitsused, kasutades ära kodanikuühenduste ligipääsu rahvusvahelistele üritustele, hiljem liituda ja pakkuda kodanikuühendustele ametlikku toetust (III lähenemine). Ning viimaks viivad kodanikuühendused

iseseisvalt ellu huvikaitset ja lobitööd, rakendades digitaalseid tööriistu (IV lähenemine). Need lähenemised näitavad, kuidas kodanikuühenduste rahvusvahelist tegevust kujundavad süsteemsed tegurid (rahvusvaheliste toimijate poolt loodud võimaluste struktuurid), siseriiklikud tegurid (de facto riikide välisministeeriumite algatused) ning organisatsioonilised tegurid (kodanikuühenduste valmisolek ja võimekus).

Kui kodanikuühendused teevad koostööd riiklike institutsioonidega, näitab nende kaasamine ametlikku välispoliitikasse nende kujunemist de facto riigi strateegilisteks instrumentideks. Juhtumid, kus de facto riigid kaasavad kodanikuühendusi ametlikesse välispoliitilistesse protsessidesse, viitavad hübriidsetele praktikatele, milles välise legitiimsuse ja suveräänsuse saavutamisel põimuvad riiklik ja mitteriiklik osalus. Teistel juhtudel on mõned kodanikuühendused astunud välja omaenda koduriigi valitsuste vastu eesmärgiga kaitsta de facto riigi pikaajalisi huve olukordades, kus ametnikke arvatakse valmistuvat järeleandmisteks rahvusvahelistes rahuprotsessides. Sellistel juhtudel võtavad kodanikuühendused range seisukoha ning sekkuvad taas legitimeerimise poliitikasse, kuid seekord vastandudes nii omaenda valitsusele kui rahvusvahelisele kogukonnale.

6. peatükis seon analüüsi rahvusvaheliste suhete teooriatega, mistõttu see on käsitletav „vaate laiendamise" peatükina. Kodumaiste kodanikuühenduste kui rahvusvaheliste suhete võrdlemisi „kergekaaluliste" toimijate agentsus jääb piiratuks. Mõnevõrra ootuspäraselt ei avalda kodanikuühenduste rahvusvaheline tegevus riikluse ja suveräänsuse kesksetele küsimustele märkimisväärset mõju. Sellele vaatamata suudavad kodanikuühendused aeg-ajalt tõsta de facto riikide võimekust suhelda rahvusvahelise kogukonnaga, laiendades seeläbi nende rahvusvahelist osalust, esindatust ja nähtavust. Sellest kontekstist lähtuvalt kontseptualiseerin selles doktoritöös „kodanikuühenduste diplomaatia" nende mitteametlike suhete „tööriistakastist" tuleneva tegevussuunana. Empiiriline analüüs toetab väidet, et kodanikuühendused osalevad diplomaatiliste funktsioonide täitmises nagu näiteks läbirääkimised, kommunikatsioon, esindamine, info kogumine ja analüüs, de facto riigi ja selle kodanike huvide kaitsmine, sõbralike suhete edendamine ja pingete maandamine. Diplomaatia teooria käsitleb neid funktsioone diplomaatia kontseptsiooni põhikomponentidena.

Kodanikuühenduste sisemine struktuur on muutumas, kuna nad arendavad aina enam võimekusi valdkondades, mis varem kuulusid üksnes välisministeeriumite ja professionaalsete diplomaatide pädevusse. Näiteks teevad kodanikuühendused jõupingutusi, institutsionaliseerimaks ja täiustamaks oma rahvusvahelist haaret. Seetõttu väidan doktoritöös, et kodanikuühenduste diplomaatia kujuneb praktikana, mis liigub sujuvalt riigisisese ja rahvusvahelise tasandi vahel ning üle riiklike ja mitteriiklike piiride – ehk tegemist on polülateraalse diplomaatiaga (Wiseman, 2004); ning professionaalsete ja episteemiliste kogukondade vahel – ehk tegemist on ka transprofessionaalse diplomaatiaga (Constantinou, Cornago ja McConnell, 2016).

Laiemas vaates on kodanikuühenduste tegevusel mõju ka sellele, mida Constantinou ja McConnell (2022) nimetavad „õiguseks diplomaatiale" (*the Right to Diplomacy, R2D*). See mõiste seostub debattidega selle üle, keda tunnustatakse

legitiimse toimijana, kel on õigus rahva esindajana sõna võtta. Kuna rahvusvahelised suhted hõlmavad üha enam mitmesuguseid diplomaatilise esinduse vorme, võitlevad kodanikuühendused selle eest, et kindlustada endale selles muutuvas korralduses legitiimset kohta.

Kodanikuühendusi diplomaatiliste toimijatena piiravad siiski süsteemsed ebavõrdsused, seda nii staatuse kui võimekuse osas. Siiski on käimas kiireloomuline diplomaatia ümberkujundamine ning üha enam toimijaid nõuab oma diplomaatilise autoriteedi legitimeerimist. Sellest tulenevalt on Cooperi ja Hockingi (2000) üleskutse „diplomaatia rekalibreerimisele“ endiselt a(s)jakohane. See doktoritöö panustab nendesse aruteludesse, väites, et vaidlustatud riikluse kontekstis võib kodumaiseid kodanikuühendusi tõepoolest käsitleda „de facto diplomaatidena“, isegi kui nende diplomaatilised praktikad jäävad suuresti performatiivseteks.

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Suur aitäh, Eesti!

CURRICULUM VITAE

Butrint Berisha
10 February 1994
butrintberisha1@gmail.com

Education

PhD in Political Science (2025), University of Tartu

MSc in Political Science (2017), Stockholm University

BA in Political Science (2015), University of Prishtina

Academic Publications

Berisha, B., & Berg, E. (2025). Punching Above Their Diplomatic Weight: De Facto States' Civil Society Organisations in International Affairs. Global Society, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2025.2478035

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Mustafa, A., & Berisha, B. (2022). Why is progressive policy reform in Kosovo uncertain, despite the accelerated power shift to the left? Party Politics, 29(5), 969–980. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540699221101562

Selected Trainings and Conferences

- European Consortium Political Research (ECPR) Winter School in Methods, KU Lueven, Belgium (Online), 5–9 February 2024.
- European Consortium Political Research (ECPR) Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, 4–8 September 2023, Paper Presenter.
- Emerging Scholars Workshop organised by Statehood Sovereignty & Conflict Research Network (ECPR), Online Presenter, May 15, 2022.
- MethodsNET School of Methods, Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 21 June – 2 July 2022.

Teaching Experience (Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies)

Bachelor: Power in International Politics – Teaching Assistant (Spring Semester 2022)

Master: Security Politics – Co-lecturer (Spring Semester 2023)

Master: International Relations – Teaching Assistant (Autumn Semester 2023)

ELULOOKIRJELDUS

Butrint Berisha
10 veebruar 1994
butrintberisha1@gmail.com

Hariduskäik

PhD politoloogias (2025), Tartu Ülikool

MSc politoloogias (2017), Stockholmi Ülikool

BA politoloogias (2015), Prishtina Ülikool

Publikatsioonid

Berisha, B., & Berg, E. (2025). Punching Above Their Diplomatic Weight: De Facto States' Civil Society Organisations in International Affairs. Global Society, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2025.2478035

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Valitud konverentsid ja Koolitused

- European Consortium Political Research (ECPR) Winter School in Methods, KU Lueven (Online), 5–9 February 2024.
- European Consortium Political Research (ECPR) Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, 4–8 September 2023, Paper Presenter.
- Emerging Scholars Workshop organised by Statehood Sovereignty & Conflict Research Network (ECPR), Presenter, May 15, 2022 (online).
- MethodsNET School of Methods, Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 21 June – 2 July 2022.

Õpetamiskogemus (TÜ Johan Skytte poliitikauuringute instituut)

Bakalaureuseõpe: Võim rahvusvahelises poliitikas – õppeassistent (2022 kevadsemester)

Magistriõpe: Julgeolekupoliitika – kaasõppejõud (2023 kevadsemester)

Magistriõpe: International Relations (2023 sügissemester)

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