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STATELESS NATIONS AND THEIR ENDEAVOR FOR INDEPENDENCE

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis surveys the endeavor of stateless nations to achieve greater autonomy, in the hopes of crossing the threshold of independence. In seeking independence, nations create political parties to coordinate the tactics employed such as civil disobedience and protest. The movements rely heavily on authoritative leaders, a history of oppression, and a shared cultural background. When disenfranchised from political participation, these stateless nations resort to violent tactics such as terrorism and guerilla warfare. The international community has failed to act in a manner that will proactively mitigate the effects of these independence movements. To avoid conflict, the international community should encourage policies that allow stateless nations an avenue to independence through peaceful, political means. Doing so would help to resolve centuries-old conflicts and avoid potential conflicts that spring from stateless nations.

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

*“A large aggregation of men, of sound mind and warm of heart, creates a moral conscience which is called a nation. As long as this moral conscience proves its strength by the sacrifices demanded... in favor of a community, it is legitimate, it has the right to exist.”*

Ernest Renan<sup>1</sup>

## **East Turkistan, Xinjiang, or 维吾尔族 (Wéiwú'ěr zú): A Stateless Nation**

In Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang, China, dozens of concrete skyscrapers have been constructed over the past decade.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of Han Chinese have been moving to China's northwestern-most province and one of five autonomous regions in the country. Many of the migrants are moving to Xinjiang to work in the booming natural gas industry. The region is attractive because it represents some of the only uninhabited land in a country that has a growing population of more than 1.7 billion people. The only problem with this migration is the land is not uninhabited.

To clear the land for the skyscrapers, the government must tear down the traditional mud huts of the Uighur, a nation of Turkish Muslims native to the land. Uighurs identify closely with the cultures and nations of Central Asia. As the Chinese move in, they destroy what the Uighurs see as symbols of their culture (e.g. the practice of Islam and their traditional housing). In Kashgar, however, the government has made a concerted effort to 'renovate' and 'restore' the old city, but in doing so has destroyed ancient Uighur architecture.<sup>3</sup>

The Uighurs claim a history that goes back millennia and has generated a rich civilization. Many Uighurs believe that Xinjiang should be an independent country. China, officially an atheist country, restricts the practice of Islam, in part by not allowing Uighurs to be a part of the political process unless they renounce Islam. In response to the destruction of their culture and denial of political rights, many Uighurs have turned to violence and mass demonstrations. In 2009, massive riots in Urumqi turned deadly and over the last decade several terrorist attacks – bombings, attempted plane hijackings, stabbings, etc. – have targeted ethnically Chinese settlers. In turn, the Chinese government condemned these “illegal religious” and “separatist” actions and cracked down with significant military force.<sup>4</sup>

Conflicts like these have risen all over the world. From Xinjiang, to Tibet, to the Kurds, to the Quebecois, to the Scots, to the Basque and Catalans – both in Spain – stateless nations seek greater autonomy. Stateless nations are groups of people within a state that do not make up the majority of the population of that state or feel that their state is structured in such a way that it does not accurately reflect their values. When people are denied the ability to engage in this endeavor for autonomy through peaceful political means, they often turn to violence to achieve their goals. Their struggles have far reaching impacts, causing civil wars, political turmoil, refugee movements, civil disobedience, etc. The endeavor of stateless nations to achieve greater autonomy and independence is therefore critical to understating these impacts. This thesis explains how stateless nations seek to cross the threshold of independence, the geographic impacts of doing so, and possible solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of their endeavors.

The threshold of independence is the point where a group of people, creating and acting under one governing polity, becomes independent of any higher governing polity, gaining the ability to self-rule. The ability to self-rule is measured on a scale showing a spectrum of degrees of autonomy. When a polity reaches a sufficient level of autonomy, it becomes *de facto* independent. *De jure* independence, on the other hand, comes with legal recognition from one or more other states. Chapter 2 outlines the arguments behind the right to rule, the definition of nations, and the importance of focusing on autonomy as a metric for studying independence movements.

Chapter 3 provides a framework for how nations further the cause their nationhood, often through the creation of political parties. Nations, through these political parties, use rhetorical and political tools to gather support for a common cause of crossing the threshold of independence. The impacts of the process and results of these independence movements on the human geography

of the local, state, and international order are widespread. Stateless nations have far reaching impacts and are important actors in international affairs. However, due to their status as non-independent, stateless nations are often not treated by members of the international community as the important actors they are. The cases studies of Chapters 5 and 6 show in depth, why the endeavor of stateless nations to achieve independence matters to the international community and the countries they immediately effect.

Catalonia and Kurdistan have been selected as two cases for studying the process and impacts of a stateless nation's endeavor to cross the threshold of independence. In Kurdistan and Catalonia, there are clearly defined national identities, political movements, and oppressive experiences. These are critical ingredients to the development of nationalist independence movements. Catalonia provides an example of a nation that has gained a great deal of autonomy through peaceful means, while Kurdistan exemplifies a nation that has chosen to – successfully – resort to violence to gain its autonomy.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I provide recommendations on policies that can be applied by international bodies and individual states to mitigate the adverse effects – i.e. terrorism, war, etc. – that can stem from independence movements of stateless nations. One recommendation is the creation of peaceful political outlets within the state for nations to achieve greater autonomy, including independence, which can drastically reduce the likelihood of violence. I also outline the challenges of dividing states and establishing new ones. In the case of Catalonia, this separatism is unilateral (involving only Spain), but in the case of Kurdistan it would require international cooperation between Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria.

Stateless nations are nothing new, though the concept of nations is a relatively recent one (only a few hundred years old). National independence movements have defined much of the

political and violent conflict in human history. Stateless nations are unlikely to suddenly stop trying to gain independence; thus, national independence movements will continue to shape international affairs. The world has seen a rise in nationalism, with the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the ‘Brexit’ vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, and ‘far right’ nationalist parties on the rise in much of Europe over the past decade. This rise in nationalist sentiments is likely to increase national tensions, not alleviate them.

In Scotland, the results of the ‘Brexit’ vote to leave the European Union has been the catalyst for First Minister Nicola Sturgeon’s call for a second independence referendum. Scotland held its first referendum in 2014 but voted 55% in favor of staying in the United Kingdom. However, the Scots voted 62% in favor of staying in the European Union in 2016. Many Scots now believe it is in their national interest to undergo the significant difficulties they will face leaving the United Kingdom rather than to leave the European Union.<sup>5</sup> It would therefore behoove governments – like that of the United Kingdom – to better understand these movements and address them proactively if they seek to mitigate conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*, (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1882), 27.

<sup>2</sup> “Why is there tension between China and the Uighurs?”, *BBC News*, September 26, 2014, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-26414014>.

<sup>3</sup> Dan Levin, “China Remodels an Ancient Silk Road City, and an Ethnic Rift Widens”, *New York Times*, March 5, 2014, accessed February 22, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/06/world/asia/china-remodels-an-ancient-silk-road-city-and-an-ethnic-rift-widens.html>.

<sup>4</sup> “Why is there tension between China and the Uighurs?”, *BBC News*.

<sup>5</sup> “Scottish Independence: Nicola Sturgeon to Seek Second Referendum”, March 13, 2017, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-39255181>.

## Chapter 2

### **The Right and the Ability: Nations, Sovereignty, and Autonomy**

*“The proposition... that every people should freely determine its own political status and freely pursue its economic, social, and cultural development has long been one of which poets have sung and for which patriots have been ready to lay down their lives”*

Woodrow Wilson<sup>1</sup>

## Defining Autonomy

Autonomy and sovereignty represent two elements of statehood. Sovereignty is the *right* to exercise self-governance. Autonomy is the *ability* to exercise self-governance. While recognizing the merits and place of both, this thesis is primarily interested in autonomy rather than sovereignty. It will explore how stateless nations seek greater autonomy until they cross the threshold of independence. To achieve independence, the nation may employ several tactics to rally support for its cause. Such tactics include legitimizing claims of sovereignty because sovereignty can be a means of cementing a state's place in the international order.

There are many levels of autonomy. Every state, autonomous province, province, federal district, or other polity has its own level of autonomy, whether these are powers granted to a polity legally or gained by it extralegally. Autonomy can be measured on a spectrum, from full independence to total dependence. Systems of government exist from provinces, to federal territories, to federalized unions, to autonomous states, and even regions that have thrown out the controlling bodies of their internationally accepted governors; each of these units has different powers granted to it and exercised by it. There are many criteria that go into determining the level of autonomy a state exercises that include: level of control over one's economy, borders, security, external relations, and more.

One of the defining characteristics of a state is the ability to delegate power. A sovereign state has the absolute authority to delegate powers within itself. This is what allows governance to take so many forms across the world. In the United States, polities exist in the form of townships, municipalities, counties, states, and the federal level of governance; each of these has the authority to delegate power and responsibility further – down to the individual person. There is a menu of polity choices from which a group of people or a state can choose that includes everything from

total central control to outsourcing certain government responsibilities, particularly foreign affairs, to other (usually larger) states.

Figure 2.1 shows the range of options that a state can choose for internal and external governance. On the right side of the threshold of independence, the polity is subject to a greater centralized control of the government; on the left side, the polity is independent but may integrate government functions in different ways. As a polity moves to the left on this spectrum, it gains greater power for itself; likewise, as it moves to the right, it loses power. This thesis therefore will explore how national polities move from the right to the left, gaining more autonomy with the goal of crossing the threshold of independence. Not all nations will seek full independence, and many that do will settle for greater autonomy; nevertheless, the process remains the same.

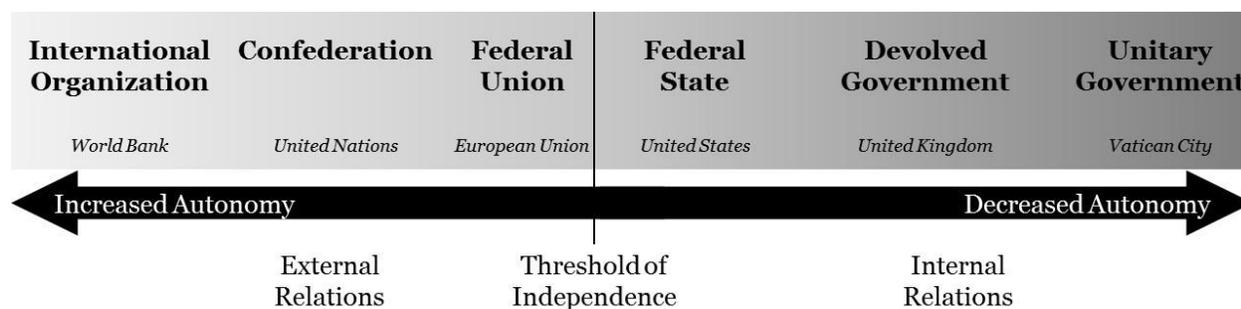


Figure 2.1: Spectrum of Autonomy

Defining the relationship between forms of polity and levels of governance is challenging and the political science literature has yet to come to a consensus on how exactly to define the varying levels autonomy. John Law, in *How Can We Define Federalism*, argues that while many contend there are overlapping definitions of government structures, there is an objective way to categorize them. He does this by defining attributes of government that can be affirmed or denied by an observer, including whether there are multiple states, whether they exhibit a division of powers, and whether they share an equality of status. The more attributes that are affirmed or denied, the more specific one can be with the description of the government.<sup>2</sup> While this is helpful

in describing broader definitions of government structures, in practice there are far too many levels of government with varying nuanced amounts of power to effectively compare every government using Law's categories. In the classic story *Flatland*, as shapes increase their number of sides their angles become larger until eventually there are too many sides and the angles are indistinguishable, so the shape is considered a circle. Levels of autonomy likewise come in so many shapes and sizes that they become a fluid spectrum rather than just a few broad options.

Law illustrates “a pathway to regional integration” (Figure 2.2), on which sits six structures. Two of these, on either pole, are absolutes; Law's four categories in the middle are qualified, defined, and encompass the majority of governing polities in the world. Law defines a confederation as a “multi-state political system in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government and the general government is subordinate to the regional governments.” He uses the United Nations as an example for this type of integrated government. More integrated than a confederation, a “federal union of states is a multi-state political system in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government of equal status.” He uses the European Union as an example for this type of integration. Even further integrated, “a federal state is a single state political system in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government of equal status”, like the modern day United States\*, and a “system of devolved government is a single state political system in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government and the regional governments are subordinate to the general government”, like the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

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\* The first government of the United States, under the articles of confederation, was undoubtedly a confederation, wherein the states exercised enough autonomy to be independent. The current constitution, which was ratified in 1788, shifted the United States into the broader category of a federal union of states. The United States later shifted to the federal state structure following the American Civil War.

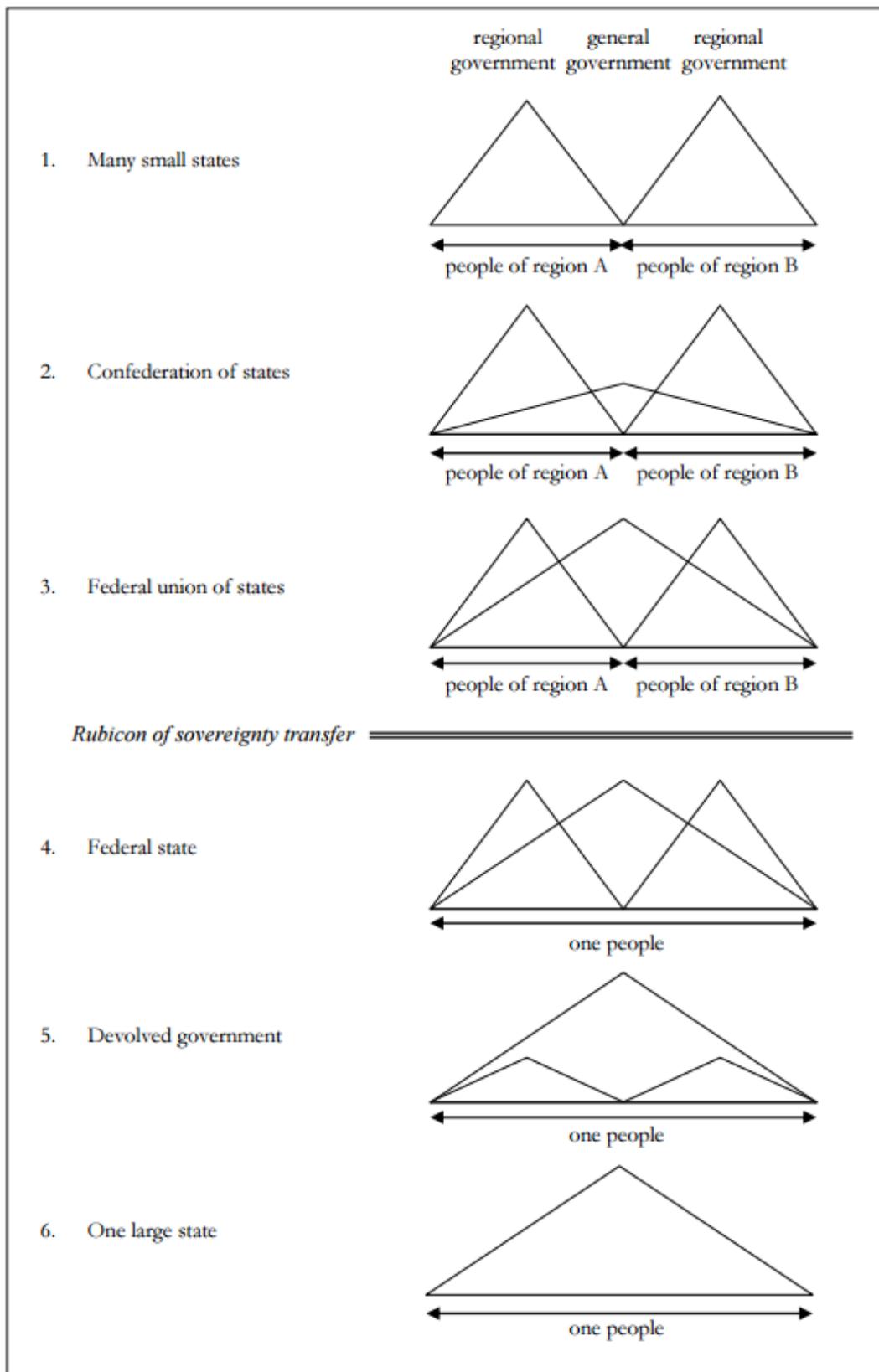


Figure 2.2: Law's "Pathway to Regional Integration"<sup>4</sup>

The spectrum of autonomy I offer uses Law's definitions, with some modifications. I have added a category to include international organizations, such as the World Bank, which involve a delegation of some power, but they do not form another government (Figure 2.1). Nearly all states delegate their power to some degree because of the inherently challenging nature of governing, thus one would be hard pressed to find an example of a unitary state. Due to its size, Vatican City comes close as the Pope rules over the several hundred people that live in the city, with only a few levels of bureaucracy in between. Law's system of categorization helps define the threshold of independence, which Law calls the "Rubicon of sovereignty transfer"<sup>5</sup> and is a crucial point on the spectrum of autonomy. The area to the left of the threshold of independence is the objective for national independence movements.

### **Defining Nationhood**

Nationhood is a subjective construction of the international order. Defining such groups is therefore the most difficult part of studying them. Just as autonomy has multiple levels of existence (state, province, municipality, etc.), nationhood can be built around tribes, ethnic groups, clans, and more. When do these groups qualify as nations and when is appropriate not to consider them as such? What is an appropriate determinant between a nation and an ethnic group or a nation and a group of people who share a religion? The key factor is whether the group of people actively identifies as one nation; for example, the Kurds have tribes, but have for hundreds of years and particularly the better part of the last century, actively identified themselves based on their common Kurdish identity. Therefore, they constitute a nation, despite the political divisions to which they are currently subject.

Ernest Renan, in his 1882 essay, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? (What is a Nation?)*, contemplates this determination of nationhood; he argues that aspects like economic interest, race,

language, and religion “invites to unite; [but it] does not force”.<sup>6</sup> Geography, “so called-natural frontiers, certainly has a considerable shape in the division of nations” and is “the key factor in history”.<sup>7</sup> It is here that he eloquently draws the critical connection between people and land that allows states and nations physically to form. No interests are sufficient to bind people into nations over long distances<sup>†</sup> because “The land provides the bedrock, the field of the fight and work; [but] Man provides the soul.”<sup>8</sup> He concludes by saying:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things that, frankly, are but one, constitute [a nation]. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue promoting the legacy we received undivided... The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice and devotion... A heroic past... is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; have done great things together, want to do yet, these are the essential conditions for being a people. We love in proportion to the sacrifices we have made, the pain we suffered.<sup>9</sup>

Renan argues that the “most legitimate” method of tapping into the requisite memories, is through ancestor worship. This is in part because nationhood is built around a sense of common sacrifice; something ancestors inevitably do in some manner for their posterity.<sup>10</sup>

One notion that complicates Renan’s ideas of legitimate nationhood is that nations can be created. The creation of the Kingdom of Italy, forcibly orchestrated by the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia during the nineteenth century, is one such example of fabricated nationhood. Since the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the peninsula had been fractured into a plethora of independent states that all identified in a much more local way than they do today, though strong regional cultures and dialects do exist. It was Massimo d’Azeglio, a nineteenth century Italian statesman, who made the now famous remark, “we have made Italy; now we must make Italians”<sup>11</sup> in

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<sup>†</sup> East and West Pakistan provide an excellent example of this concept. While initially united through their common Muslim faith, they could not sustain a union due to significant geographic separation.

memoirs published following his death in 1866.<sup>12</sup> Nation building is a time-tested process of cultivating (and imposing) a sense of commonality amongst the people of a state.

In addition to common sacrifice, Renan argues that “forgetting, I would even say, historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation...”<sup>13</sup> This is because “the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.”<sup>14</sup> In France, for example, no citizen “know(s) whether he is Burgundian, Alain, Taifale, Visigoth; every French citizen must have forgotten Saint Bartholomew, the massacres of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>15</sup> It is essential that they forget what makes them different and focus on what they have in common; this allows them to actively identify as one group, rather than around membership in multiple and separate groups.

Therefore, one can define nations as groups of people that actively identify around a shared attribute or set of beliefs; to do so, they must not only share one or more attribute like geography, economy, religion, language, or race, but must also forget those attributes that they do not share. They must create a history, and thus a future, together through common struggle and sacrifice. Renan asserts that “the existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite, as the existence of the individual is a perpetual affirmation of life.”<sup>16</sup> To do so, a narrative is constructed around that which is shared and ignores that which can be used to divide.

Nationalist rhetoric is commonly used in anti-colonial struggles when a colony seeks independence. Some of these struggles, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, where colonial lines were drawn wholly without regard to the peoples that lived there, were perhaps stateless nations seeking independence. However, many of them were in actuality false national struggles. The independence movements used the rhetoric of nationalism, and may have rallied a nation or multiple nations to their cause, but the people they rallied were not cooperating in order to leave

their respective empires because of a national identity. Rather, the people rallied to leave their respective empires because their entire political entity was not being represented. The people were able to come together along a shared sense of identity because one had been constructed by their respective colonial states.<sup>17</sup> One such example is the nationalist movement that freed India, but later was divided because of religious differences which showed that, in fact, several nations, not one, had been a part of the movement.

Once independent, and often before, these peoples no longer sought to identify with one another; they became divided on ethnic or tribal lines, which better represent the nations to which the people identified. Colonial borders were often drawn without respect to national or tribal borders. This often-arbitrary division created many stateless nations like the Kurds, the Yoruba, or the Sikh. The nature of these divisions helps explain the subsequent struggles for power and independence based on ethnic and national lines, primarily in Africa and the Middle East following the independence of their respective states.

In *Theorizing Indigenous Rights*, Anaya makes a distinction between national minorities – also called stateless nations or homeland minorities – and indigenous groups.<sup>18</sup> The distinction is based on the level of involvement the group had in the process of state formation. Anaya describes this distinction, saying:

As a rule, stateless nations were contenders but losers in the process of European state formation, whereas indigenous peoples were entirely isolated from that process until very recently... [homeland minorities] would have liked to form their own states, but lost in the struggle for political power, whereas indigenous peoples existed outside this system of European states.<sup>19</sup>

Anaya explains that national minorities are “groups who have been settled for centuries on a territory they view as their homeland; groups who typically see themselves as distinct ‘nations’ or ‘peoples’, but who have been incorporated (often involuntarily) into a larger state.”<sup>20</sup> The key

distinction is that national minorities contended for a state and lost, while indigenous peoples never had a realistic chance at competition or state creation. This is an interesting concept because it helps us to understand the reasons, methods, and experience of a nation seeking independence.

Applying Anaya's definitions, we can see that the process of European state formation played out in Germany, where the Prussians conquered dozens of small principalities and forcibly created the state of Germany. It can be seen as well in Italy, where principalities were consolidated into the Italian state. These are two examples where nationality was later successfully developed to be greater than the original level of identification. However, in Spain, the Catalans are an example of a nation that lost in the European process of state formation, but never fully identified as Spanish. Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, have existed outside of this system of state formation because they were effectively powerless over their state formation; examples include the Nunavut in Canada, Mayans in Central America, and Kurds in the Middle East.

The level of influence a nation has in a state is crucial for understanding the modern concept of a nation-state; that is, a state whose people belong entirely to the same national identity. A nation-state is one that represents as its majority a particular nation and crafts its sense of statehood around the same unifying factors with which its nation actively identifies. There are few, if any, states in the world that would be considered absolute nation-states. Some states like Iceland, the Maldives, and San Marino are monoethnic enough to be considered a nation-state. There are even more that are relatively nationally homogenous where the majority nation exercises control over the state. When a majority nation does exercise control over the state, minority nations, or stateless nations, often fear their national identity will be eroded by policies that promote the majority nation's identity. These stateless nations thus seek greater autonomy or independence to have their government protect and promote their national identity.

## Defining Sovereignty

Sovereignty is closely related, but not the same as autonomy. Sovereignty represents the right, usually through international recognition, to exercise self-rule. This important claim is one that national independence movements seek to justify and link closely with their nation building efforts. A justified claim to sovereignty can ensure that a nation that achieves independence maintains it in perpetuity.

There are two prevailing theories for what determines sovereignty: constitutive and declarative. The constitutive method of sovereignty argues that a state is defined as sovereign – and therefore possesses the right to exercise self-rule – *if* other sovereign states recognize it as such. This could, in theory, mean that only one state must recognize the sovereignty of a state for it to be true, regardless of its recognition by the rest of the world order or its degree of autonomy, though this is not a common occurrence. Moreover, the theory contends that there must be an entity responsible for the determination of statehood. In the present world order, the highest authorities are states. Therefore, acting alone or in concert, states must be the determinants of their equals.<sup>21</sup>

The constitutive theory is historically the accepted definition of sovereignty because there has never been a higher international body than the state. In the modern day, membership in the United Nations has become broadly accepted as the sufficient measure of international recognition needed to be sovereign, which posits the United Nations as the representative of the international order. This approach is satisfactory for nearly all states of the world, but has its own instances where it falls short of accurately describing the international state of affairs, such as Taiwan.

While the constitutive method requires the approval of other states, the declarative method, born from the 1933 Montevideo Treaty, has a different set of rules. In article one, it recognizes the sovereignty of any state that possesses: “a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c)

government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states.”<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the last property does not stipulate that a state enter into relations with other states, but rather simply have the ability to do so. It also must have achieved these characteristics peacefully.

The Montevideo Treaty was signed at the Seventh International Conference of American States by states, many of which were former colonies. These states sought to create a definition of sovereignty that “applied strictly in the formative stages of the states, but more loosely once its continuity is at stake.” Many of these states faced problems becoming recognized as independent states rather than colonies, so they created a definition that included more *de facto* metrics than simply recognition, which has in practice been only “the affirmation of statehood”.<sup>23</sup>

Examples abound that challenge both theoretical definitions of sovereignty. Sovereignty alone cannot define a state because, though statehood is in many ways a construction of international norms, the autonomy of a state also has an absolute existence: independence. Sovereignty remains the right to exercise self-rule, not the ability to do so.

The constitutive method fails to recognize that *de facto* independence and self-governance can be achieved without the approval of the world order. For example, the absence of the approval of the world order does not negate the reality that Transnistria and Abkhazia have *de facto* independence and have not been governed by the states in which they are often included on maps for quite some time. Further, using the United Nations as a metric ignores states like Taiwan, which one cannot argue is actually subject to China and thus not independent, yet due to an inherently political process, and indeed political dealings in the latter half of the twentieth century, is not represented.

The declarative method in turn fails by allowing places like the Principality of Sealand, which sits off the eastern coast of England and is not recognized by the world order, to assert that

it is sovereign. Sealand asserts its sovereignty through a series of legal arguments. These legal arguments include that it sits on Fort Roughs, a man-made fortress island constructed by the government of the United Kingdom during the Second World War in the North Sea. The fort was built in international waters and abandoned after the war. Because it was in international waters and abandoned, the government of Sealand maintains that it was rendered unclaimed territory or *terra nullius*. The government of Sealand claims *de facto* recognition because during a legal battle, a United Kingdom court ruled that the British Government had no jurisdiction over Fort Roughs. Though it has defined borders, debatable *de facto* recognition, and a government, Sealand suffers from a lack of permanent population, as well as a lack of any official international recognition or relations. Here is an example where the declarative method allows an entity to assert its sovereignty, but the constitutive method does not allow it to maintain that sovereignty. It is also an example of an entity that has the ability to self-rule, but is denied the right to self-rule.

Nevertheless, both definitions are useful to evaluate attempts of stateless nations to gain sovereignty as they seek independence from their ruling states. In the case studies of Chapters 5 and 6, I will look to the role of the declarative method as a more accurate representation of the *de facto* state of affairs, particularly as a means of gaining independence, and the role of the constitutive method as a means of cementing a state's place as an equal in the international order.

The power dynamics and level of autonomy that a nation enjoys are crucial to understanding national independence movements. As stateless nations seek to cross the threshold of independence, they must attain greater autonomy. In addition to understanding autonomy, understanding the role of the nation in autonomy seeking is crucial. Nations are constructed around commonalities with which the people of a nation actively identify and these commonalities are used by nationalist movements to further define and reinforce the concept of nationhood. To justify

their endeavor for an independence, nationalist movements also employ tactics such as assertions of sovereignty and nation-building rhetoric. Chapter 3 explores the strategies and tactics used by stateless nations in pursuit of independence.

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<sup>1</sup> Hurst Hannun, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 27.

<sup>2</sup> John Law, “How Can We Define Federalism”, *Perspectives on Federalism*, Vol. 5, Issue 3, (2013), 90-104.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*, (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1882), 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Massimo d’Azeglio, *I Miei Ricordi*, trans. Google (London: Chapman and Hall, 1868), [https://archive.org/stream/recollectionsma02unkngoog/recollectionsma02unkngoog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/recollectionsma02unkngoog/recollectionsma02unkngoog_djvu.txt)

<sup>12</sup> Charles L. Killinger, *A History of Italy*, (London: Greenwood, 2002), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 2006) 164.

<sup>18</sup> Will Kymlicka, “Review: Theorizing Indigenous Rights”, *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 49 (1999): 282.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>21</sup> James R. Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, (Oxford Scholarship Online: 2010), 19-21, accessed October 3, 2016, <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199228423.001.0001/acprof-9780199228423-chapter-1>.

<sup>22</sup> “Convention on Rights and Duties of States (inter-American); December 26, 1933.” The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy. Yale Law School. Accessed October 3, 2016. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/intam03.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam03.asp). (Accessed October 3, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Gerard Kreijen, *State Failure, Sovereignty and Effectiveness, Legal Lessons from the Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2004), 110.

### Chapter 3

## **In Pursuit of Statehood: Strategies of Independence Movements**

*“Independence is never given to a people, it has to be earned; and, once earned,  
must be defended.”*

Chaim Weizmann<sup>1</sup>

## Reasons to Pursue Statehood

While this thesis is primarily concerned with the actual power dynamics of national independence movements, that is whether nations *are* able to exercise autonomy and to what degree, it is nevertheless important to understand the theories surrounding why nations *should* be independent and the tactics used to pursue that independence. In pursuit of statehood, nations make assertions of sovereignty – often drawing upon self-determination theory, nation-building rhetoric, peaceful protests and political movements, violent conflict, and more. These efforts are intended not only to give the nation greater autonomy, but to set a foundation to solidify that autonomy in perpetuity.

Nations seek to cross the threshold of independence because attaining that level of autonomy grants them powers over their affairs that are otherwise restricted in some manner. They seek to shape a state that more accurately and fairly reflects their national identity than the state in which they currently reside. Independence gives states, and therefore nations, the ability to shape their economies, social laws, immigration policies, welfare entitlements, tax policies, and more. Furthermore, independence gives nations the ability to protect and preserve their cultural norms, language, religion, and other defining characteristics.

One of the primary reasons nations seek statehood is that they feel a sense of oppression. Oppression comes in many forms from, for example, the lack of political representation, the degradation of language or history, economic discrimination or disadvantage, and ethnically based exclusion. The want for the power to redress these grievances is often used as a justification for nationalist independence movements. Nations therefore argue they have a right to independence. There are two strategies for attaining independence: violent or peaceful. Stateless nations using a

violent strategy employ violent tactics, such as guerilla war or terrorism. Stateless nations using a peaceful strategy use civil disobedience, protest, etc.

### **Rights of a Nation**

Arguments over when a nation deserves statehood rather than simply increased autonomy weigh heavily on the efforts of national independence movements. If the international community acting multilaterally or a state acting unilaterally is going to adjust borders, there must be a compelling reason to do so.<sup>2</sup> Such discussions are critical to independence movements for stateless nations like Tibet, Palestine, and Kurdistan. The question facing the international community is when does a nation have the right to be independent?

Dahbour argues that there are three prevailing theories on the justification of the right of nations to exercise self-determination. The first, the “general-nationality” argument, contends that nations have an absolute and inherent right to self-determination; the right exists if nationhood exists. The second, “general-minority” argument, holds that only minority groups within a state can exercise this right; the right exists if nationhood *and* minority status exist. The third – which Dahbour contends is the only “coherent” argument (by that, he means logically consistent) – is the “special-minority” argument, which holds that only oppressed minorities may exercise the right of self-determination and “only when particular conditions of oppression, exclusion, or discrimination” exist. Thus, the right exists when nationhood, minority status, *and* oppression exist. Without all three of these attributes, Dahbour argues, adjusting a country’s borders to make room for a new state is essentially too extreme; otherwise changes should come in the form of increased autonomy, but not independence.<sup>3</sup> However, Margalit and Raz disagree, arguing:

A history of persecution is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the instrumental case for self-government. It is not a necessary condition, because persecution is not the only reason why the groups may suffer without independence... Persecution is not a sufficient condition, for there may be other

ways to fight and overcome persecution and because whatever the advantages of independence it may... only make their members worse off.<sup>4</sup>

The “special-minority” argument is nevertheless useful in exploring why a nation seeks independence because nations universally seek independence under at least a perceived oppression.<sup>5</sup> The search for independence becomes most urgent when a nation feels that the existence of its cultural values, language, religion – its collective identity – is threatened. Independence can be a solution to this threat because it creates public protection of the nationality, though in some cases greater autonomy can suffice. The invocation of oppression, persecution, and a threat to national survival is crucial to building and sustaining independence movements. These claims are also used to justify a right to self-determination.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory is based on the fundamental principle that a nation has the right to choose its own government. Though it is primarily a moral argument, the legal basis for this is widely established in international law. One can point to President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the United Nations charter as critical documents for understanding the international legal basis for self-determination.

President Wilson’s Fourteen Points (Table 1) were published following the First World War (WWI). While the empires of the world were making peace in Paris in 1919, Wilson attempted to ensure a war on such a scale would never occur again. He laid out Fourteen Points, which were to be the “programme of the world’s peace”.<sup>6</sup> These points called for a reduction in arms, open diplomatic relations and trade, freedom of the seas, and specific deconstruction of the losing empires. The borders of Italy, for example, were to be redrawn “along clearly recognizable lines of nationality”, the peoples of Austria-Hungary were to be “accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development”, the borders of the new Balkan states were to be “along historically

established lines of allegiance and nationality”, and the new state of Poland was to “include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations”.<sup>7</sup> This rhetoric lends itself to the understanding of self-determination that was afforded to the nations of Europe after WWI; the new borders were to be drawn along historical boundaries to include areas obviously belonging to a nationality.

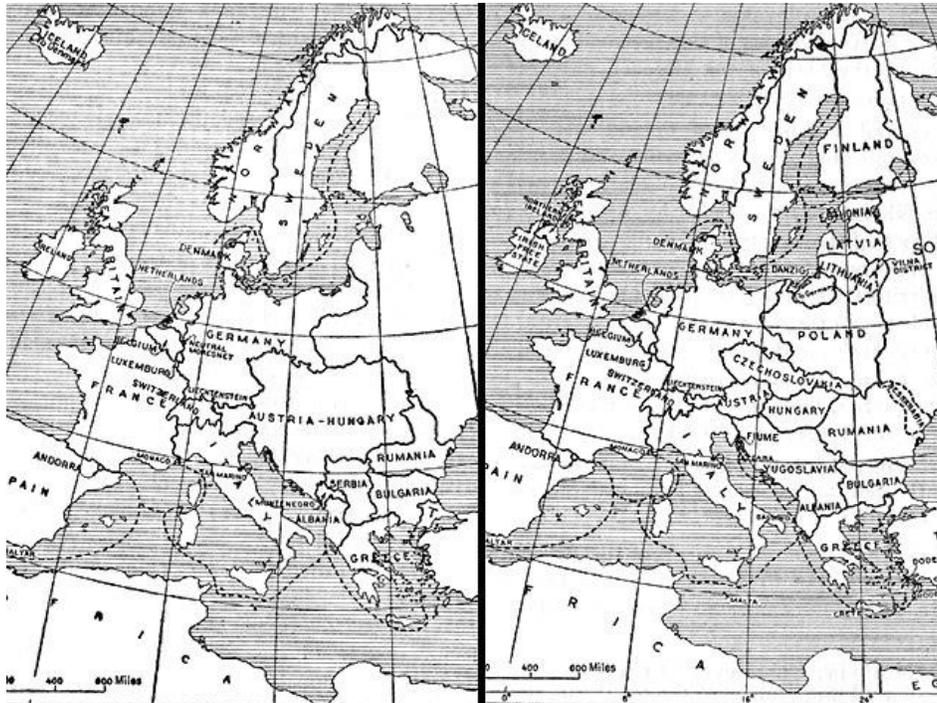


Figure 3.1: Map of Europe in 1914 and 1924<sup>8</sup>

Wilson’s Fourteen Points (Table 1) and the division of Europe had critical flaws; the rights of self-determination were only applied to European nations, not colonial holdings, and the people living in many of the disputed European lands did not have much say in the borders of their new states. Furthermore, the Fourteen Points only applied to the powers that lost the war. Great Britain, though it would later lose parts of Ireland to a nationalist independence movement, was not forced to free Ireland or any of its colonial holdings following the war. France and Italy similarly did not have to give up territory or free minorities or nations within their borders; in fact, both came away with territorial gains following World War I (Figure 3.1).

*Table 1: President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points*<sup>9</sup>

- I.** Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- II.** Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
- III.** The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- IV.** Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- V.** A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- VI.** The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.
- VII.** Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.
- VIII.** All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.
- IX.** A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
- X.** The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.
- XI.** Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.
- XII.** The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.
- XIII.** An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.
- XIV.** A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Wilson's Fourteen Points also sought to establish "a general association of nations... for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike".<sup>10</sup> This passage would become the basis for the League of Nations, whose very title shows the importance of nations in the international community. The League of Nations later failed to maintain the peace established after WWI. In part, it failed to guarantee the political independence and territorial integrity of states, allowing Germany to build up its power and challenge the international community, eventually resulting in World War II. But the League of Nations' successor, the United Nations, now represents the closest entity to a world government that history has seen.

In its charter, the United Nations seeks "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of the peoples...".<sup>11</sup> This concept is enshrined in Article I of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which reads, "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development".<sup>12</sup> Self-determination is guaranteed as a basic human right in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 15 of which guarantees the "right to a nationality" and that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality".<sup>13</sup> This notion was upheld by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Expelled Dominicans and Haitians v. Dominican Republic*, where the court ruled against practices by the Dominican Republic that rendered persons stateless and without a nationality.<sup>14</sup>

Legal guarantees of self-determination under international laws and agreements coupled with the modern assumption of the United Nations as the body that can grant sovereignty through the constitutive theory, provide a goal for many stateless nations. United Nations recognition

comes with an international legal right to exist, which is why stateless nations use self-determination arguments to justify their independence. International law nevertheless faces the fundamental issue that it lacks a judicial enforcer. The United Nations is the closest body that exists to such an end, but its nature as a confederation often stymies it and makes it unable to adequately respond to crises. It is unable to act unilaterally and is dependent on the collective agreement of its member states. Additionally, self-determination theory, while it guarantees a right to choose one's own government, does not guarantee the right to an independent state. Therefore, increased autonomy – a leftward progression on Figure 2.1 that falls somewhere short of the threshold of independence – could sufficiently qualify as self-determination in a theoretical sense. The international community must consequently strike a balance between maintaining the territorial integrity of an existing state and allowing self-determination that results in the creation of a newly independent state. Striking this balance has resulted in unclear criteria for stateless nations seeking to cross the threshold of independence.

### **Nationalist Rhetoric and Nation-building**

Nationalist rhetoric is a tactic employed by nationalist movements. To employ nationalist rhetoric, orators – often of some perceived authority like a government official, author, movement leader, or religious leader – use the traditional rhetorical devices of pathos, logos, and ethos. With these rhetorical devices, they engage commonalities, shared history, and perceived oppression. In addition to focusing on commonalities, nationalist movements actively erase, forget, and ignore differences amongst people in a nation, such as socioeconomic class or tribal identity, both before and after independence. Because existing states often seek to use class or tribal identity to divide members of a nation who would otherwise actively associate with one another, actively forgetting these differences is particularly key to nationalist movements.

Chaim Weizmann, as First President of Israel and leader of the Zionist movement, used the rhetorical devices of pathos, logos, and ethos throughout his life. When speaking to the United Nations about the rationale for an independent Israel, he discussed the “homelessness” of the Jewish people; a people who had spent “thousands of years of martyrdom and wandering”. This was a collective experience that bound the Jewish nation together. He argued that the experience, in addition to the aftermath of the Holocaust, and the Holocaust itself, was widely used to show persecution of the Jewish people: “There are six million Jews dead in Europe, and hundreds of thousands of Jews are languishing today either in D.P. camps or in countries where they are not wanted. It is proof that the situation demands speedy remedy”. He explained that Jews were “an ancient people with an old history, and you cannot deny your history and begin fresh”. Therefore, Palestine was the justifiable location for a new Jewish state.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to distinguish between nation building and state building. Nation building is the process of generating and expressing a collective identity using education and rhetoric of a shared history, language, cultural ideals, and language. State building is the construction of “governmental, societal, and economic institutions which must be built, not the concept of national identity... [it] means creating structures through which a society can govern itself in an orderly fashion...”<sup>16</sup> Such structures include state banks, security forces, justice systems, transport authorities, and customs authorities.

Nationalist rhetoric purposefully focuses on the shared experiences of a nation to subconsciously, though not necessarily subtly, create a sense of community in a nation. Benedict Anderson uses the novel *El Periquillo Sarnieto*, which describes many aspects of life in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexico, as an example of this subtle “national imagination”.<sup>17</sup> Where this rhetoric exists in literature, it captures broad commonalities to immerse readers in “a familiar landscape”.<sup>18</sup> In

addition to literature, nationalist rhetoric is used in journal articles and newspaper articles, sometimes by institutions designed to intentionally deliver nationalist rhetoric.<sup>19</sup>

In Turkey, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks sought to redefine their nation. They chose a common language as one piece of that definition and decided that “elements considered minorities... should be impeded from living in communities and using their traditional garments and their mother tongue”. They used an organization called Turkish Hearths to engage “in the compilation of handicrafts, architectural styles, folk songs, proverbs, dances and build museums to expose them...”<sup>20</sup> The efforts of Turkish Hearths have helped build a national identity in post-Ottoman Turkey.

Many nations use education policies to build a sense of nationalism that is rooted in language, geography, and shared history. After independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine set up an educational system founded on the belief that “Ukrainian state-hood can only be secured in the long run if it is supported by a cultural identity distinct from that of Russia.”<sup>21</sup> These efforts were used throughout the late 1980s and mid-1990s to dismantle the communist state ideology of the Soviet Union and reverse the Russification which Ukrainians had been subject to for many years.<sup>22</sup> Prior to independence, minority groups and nations often fight for the right to use and teach in their respective languages in schools. An education in a nation’s language, and the use of that language colloquially, is an important and widely-used tactic of – and therefore evidence for – nation building. Quebec has done just this since it passed bill 101 in 1977 which established French as the official language of the province.<sup>23</sup>

Nationalist rhetoric and other nation building tactics highlight the commonalities for active identification amongst the people of a nation. In highlighting what brings the people of one nation together, they also draw attention to the differences between nations. In pursuit of statehood,

national independence movements engage common history, literature, language, and cultural commonalities, to build movements and create a foundation for the nation-state once independence is achieved.

### **Methods of Pursuing Statehood**

In choosing strategies to pursue statehood, a nation has essentially two options: peaceful or violent. Nationalist movements using a peaceful political strategy take the form of mass civil disobedience, large demonstrations, nationalist political parties, and court challenges to defend their policies and goals. These movements are able to pursue this peaceful avenue to independence because they either have a leadership that espouses non-violence or they live in a state that has a relatively open political system in which those leaders can be actively involved and have measurable levels of success.

Movements using violent options for pursuing independence manifest in the form of civil wars, guerilla movements, terrorism, and riots. These take place in states where the political system is closed and does not allow for active participation or the system is designed to ensure that participation is ineffective. Sometimes, national independence movements begin peacefully but devolve into violence when the stateless nation determines that peace is a dead-end or when the state decides to react violently. When the state reacts violently, there is the possibility for one sided violence in the form of mass murder or genocide. Understanding the justifications, strategies, and tactics of national independence movements is crucial for understanding how stateless nations pursue independence. Catalonia and Kurdistan provide examples of peaceful and violent cases studies respectively. The next chapter will discuss methods of approaching these case studies as well as the justification for choosing these two from the many possibilities.

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- <sup>1</sup> Chaim Weizmann, *AZ Quotes*, accessed December 6, 2016, [http://www.azquotes.com/author/36776-Chaim\\_Weizmann](http://www.azquotes.com/author/36776-Chaim_Weizmann).
- <sup>2</sup> Omar Dahbour, “Self-Determination without Nationalism” in *Self-Determination without Nationalism*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013) 45.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>6</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points”, January 8, 1918, accessed December 16, 2016, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/wilson14.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp).
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> “Europe 1914 and 1924”, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe\\_1914\\_and\\_1924.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe_1914_and_1924.png)
- <sup>9</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points”.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Charter of the United Nations and State of the international Court of Justice, 1945, Article 1, Section 2, accessed December 16, 2016, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>.
- <sup>12</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 1966, Article 1, Section 1, accessed December 16, 2016, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20999/volume-999-i-14668-english.pdf>.
- <sup>13</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, , United Nations, Article 15, accessed December 16, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf), 32.
- <sup>14</sup> Case of Expelled Dominicans and Haitians v. Dominican Republic, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, August 28, 2014, [http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_282\\_ing.pdf](http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_282_ing.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> Chaim Weizmann, “Testimony of Chaim Weizmann at UNSCOP Hearings”, July 8, 1947, accessed December 16, 2016, [http://zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Weizmann\\_UNSCOP\\_TESTIMONY.htm](http://zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Weizmann_UNSCOP_TESTIMONY.htm).
- <sup>16</sup> John Kerry, “Nation Building: Can It Serve America’s Interest?”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1994), 52.
- <sup>17</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 2006) 29-30.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.
- <sup>19</sup> Sibel Özbudun Demirer, “Anthropology as a Nation-Building Rhetoric: the Shaping of Turkish Anthropology (from 1850s to 1940s)”, *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March 2011), 118.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.
- <sup>21</sup> Jan Germen Janmaat and Nelli Piattoeva, “Citizenship Education in Ukraine and Russia: Reconciling Nation-Building and Active Citizenship”, *Comparative Education* Vol. 43 No. 4 (Nov. 2007): 536.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 532-533.
- <sup>23</sup> “Bill 101 (Charte de la langue française)”, *Historica Canada*, accessed March 16, 2017, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bill-101/>.

## Chapter 4

### **Choice Points: Kurdistan and Catalonia as Case Studies**

*"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people."*

Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

## Approaching Case Studies

The strategies and tactics of Chapter 3 can only be understood in the geographical and historical contexts in which they occur. Those contexts are place and time specific, relying on the nuances of every nation's experience and culture. Case studies allow the detailed application of the theories of Chapters 2 and 3 to examine how and where nationalist independence movements develop in reality, not simply theory.

The Catalan and Kurdish independence movements were chosen from the dozens of stateless nations because they are contemporary and illustrate peaceful and violent strategies of achieving independence. Catalonia and Kurdistan offer insight into the pursuit of statehood by stateless nations because they have both achieved a great deal of autonomy and are on the threshold of achieving independence (Figure 4.1).

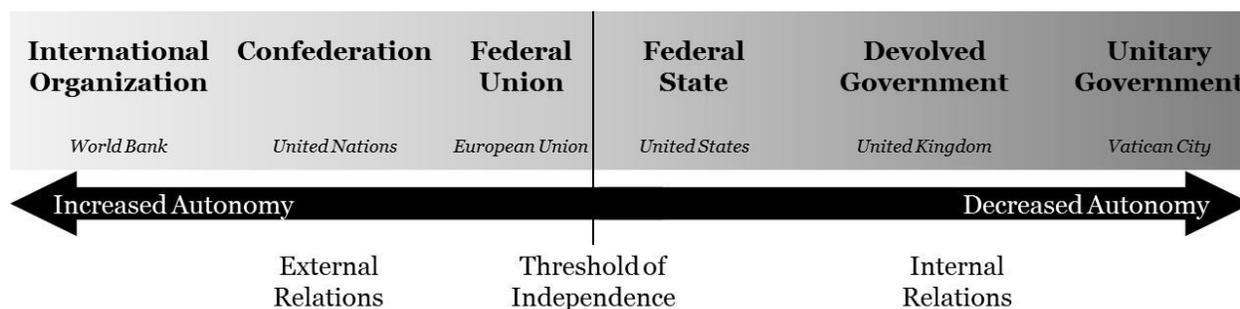


Figure 4.1: Spectrum of Autonomy (introduced as Figure 2.1)

The contemporaneous natures of the Catalan and Kurdish independence movements, put historical developments into a present context that has implications for current world affairs. Both have a lengthy history that includes significant shifts in autonomy over time, histories that illustrate how the process of seeking autonomy unfolds. Using Figure 2.1 (shown here again as Figure 4.1), I will assess the level of autonomy the nation had at the beginning of its nationalist independence movement and track changes in autonomy as a result of the nationalist independence movement. This assessment will use the constitutive and declarative methods of determining sovereignty

discussed in Chapter 2 to consider the legal level of autonomy a nation is afforded and the *de facto* level of autonomy that nation exercises. It will look to the declarative method as a more accurate representation of the *de facto* state of affairs, particularly as a means of increasing autonomy, and the constitutive method as a means of cementing a state's place as an equal in the international order.

Both case studies begin with a brief history of the independence movements and cultures of Catalonia and Kurdistan. The discussion focuses on former experiences as an independent state, the history of the nation in relation to its state, and the commonalities that define the nation. Next, I present a detailed exploration of the oppression faced by the nation, followed by an expanded history of the nation, highlighting shifts in autonomy showing transitions along the spectrum of autonomy. The case studies conclude with an overview of the tactics used by each of the movements and the consequences of the movements. This thematic structuring of the case studies allows for any stateless nation's independence movement to be compared in the same manner.

Catalonia and Kurdistan both have significant histories of oppression. Oppression is important to national identity and independence movements. The Kurds in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran have been subject to Arabization programs, genocide, and political exclusion. The Catalans in Spain were targeted on the basis of their language until the 1970s and have enjoyed greater political inclusion following the fall of Francisco Franco's dictatorial regime. Today, the Catalans believe the central government of Spain is unfairly redistributing wealth toward poorer regions of Spain, leaving the Catalans with less services and financial capital.

The Catalans and Kurds developed political movements in which to express and affect their ambitions for autonomy. Through this participation in the political realm, they have engaged in protests, civil disobedience, and other peaceful tactics designed to increase their level of autonomy.

The Catalans have maintained a politically engaged movement. Conversely, the Kurds were denied access to the political realm and engaged in violent tactics such as terrorism, war, guerilla fighting, etc. The case studies explore the origins of each nationalist independence movement and its historical progression, focusing on its use of political parties to attempt political inclusion and in the case of the Kurds, organize violent action. Literature, newspapers, and leaders of the respective nationalist movements will show the use of nationalist rhetoric by Catalan and Kurdish orators and political parties.

The Catalans and Kurds were also selected because of some important differences between their independence movements. They each represent one of the two strategies for becoming independent. The strategy of using violent tactics – which include guerilla campaigns, terrorism, and armed rebellion – is highlighted in Chapter 5, the case study on the Kurdish independence movement. Conversely, the strategy of using peaceful tactics – which includes holding referendums, challenging measures by the state in court, and passing laws to secure more autonomy – is highlighted in Chapter 6, the case study on Catalonia.

The Kurdish independence movement has existed in four countries, which has effectively created four separate experiences for the Kurdish nation and the independence movements in those countries. Despite these separate experiences, the Kurds have maintained a common national identity and increasingly coordinated their independence efforts. The Kurdish independence movement also presents significant international hurdles because a fully independent Kurdistan would require changing the borders of four countries. On the other hand, Catalonia is an intrastate movement, existing entirely within Spain; though it has small populations in Italy and France, these are relatively disconnected from the independence movement. Catalonia presents, essentially,

a purely domestic issue for the moment. Its international implications are largely related to the European Union, which has thus far left the issue in the hands of Spain.

The Catalans and Kurds represent two sides of the dichotomy presented in *Theorizing Indigenous Rights* where Anaya makes a distinction between national minorities – also called stateless nations or homeland minorities – and indigenous groups.<sup>2</sup> This distinction is in the level of involvement the nation had in the process of the formation of the state in which it currently resides. These differences in involvement are important here. National minorities are “groups who have been settled for centuries on a territory they view as their homeland; groups who typically see themselves as distinct ‘nations’ or ‘peoples’, but who have been incorporated (often involuntarily) into a larger state.”<sup>3</sup> Anaya further qualifies this national minority and indigenous group distinction:

As a rule, stateless nations were contenders but losers in the process of European state formation, whereas indigenous peoples were entirely isolated from that process until very recently... [homeland minorities] would have liked to form their own states, but lost in the struggle for political power, whereas indigenous peoples existed outside this system of European states.<sup>4</sup>

The Catalans represent a homeland minority. The Catalans would have liked to form their own state – in fact, they were once independent from Spain – but lost the struggle to maintain that independence over the centuries. The Kurds, on the other hand, represent an indigenous people that have existed outside of the system of state formation and are an example of an indigenous people. The current states in which the Kurds reside were crafted from a colonial legacy imposed upon the Middle East by a victorious Europe following World War I.

In studying these cases, the consequences of the nationalist independence movements can be viewed in detail and context. Peaceful and violent approaches have different consequences, such as war, recognition, refugee crises, genocide, economic instability, and social unrest. The

case studies allow us to look at the impact of these national independence movements on an intra- and inter-national level as the process of gaining autonomy plays out.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ghandi Quotes”, *Mahatma Ghandi Online*, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://www.mahatmagandhionline.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Will Kymlicka, “Review: Theorizing Indigenous Rights”, *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 49 (1999): 282.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

## Chapter 5

### **Kurdayetî: The Kurdish Struggle for Statehood**

*“The time has come to decide our fate, and we should not wait for other people to decide it for us.”*

Masoud Barzani<sup>1</sup>

## **Halabja, 1988**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 1988, Kamaran Haider, an 11-year-old Kurd, was playing with his brother in the garden of their family home in Halabja, Iraq. Suddenly Iraqi planes flew overhead and people ran to the nearest bomb shelter. “After one or two hours, we felt tears dropping from our eyes and a strange smell, like banana, garlic or apple,” he recalled. “We knew it was a chemical bombardment. It is horrible because it's not like other bombs: the chemical is mixed with the air. You can't run. You can't do anything.”<sup>2</sup>

Kamaran watched as an older brother ran out of the shelter to check on the situation outside. When his brother did not come back, his mother, sister, and another brother ran outside as well. Kamaran's entire family was killed that day, victims of the genocide committed by Saddam Hussein's regimes in the late 1980s. Kamaran now carries a photograph of his family lying dead outside his house. The photograph is a memory of a horrible experience, one that Kamaran is not alone in remembering; instead, it is a memory familiar to an entire nation.<sup>3</sup>

The Kurdish people are a nation of more than 30 million divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria (Figure 5.1). The Kurds are considered one of the largest ethnic groups in the world without a state of their own. There are 14.7 million Kurds in Turkey, roughly 8 million in Iran, 5.5 million in Iraq, and 1.7 million in Syria; Kurds constitute significant minorities in these countries ranging from 10 to 20 percent of the population.<sup>4</sup> Their independence movement is significant because it has a century's worth of setbacks and progress that have shaped international affairs. The Kurdish independence movement has seen some success over the decades as Kurds have gained increased autonomy, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

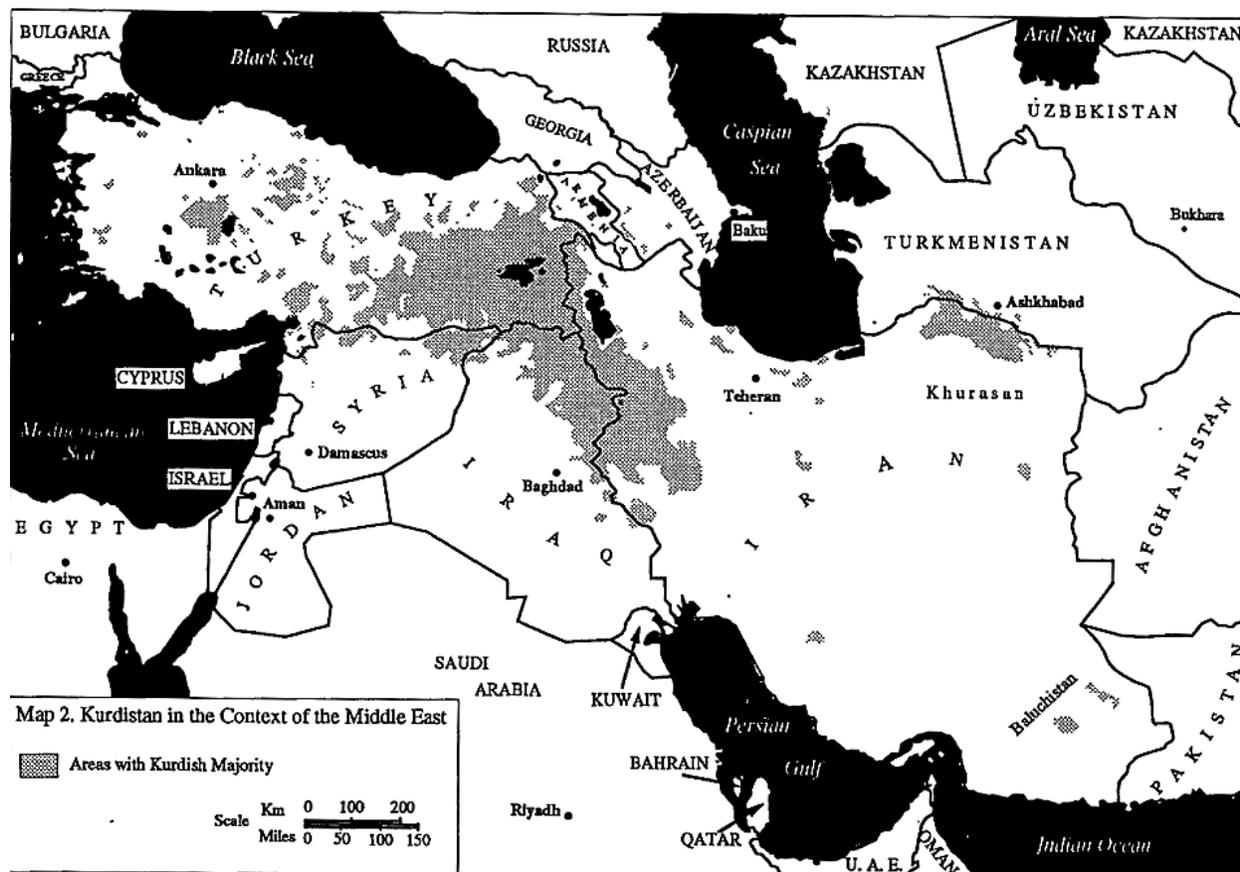


Figure 5.1: Areas with a Kurdish Majority in the Middle East in 1992<sup>5</sup>

The Kurdish nation has also seen a great deal of oppression over the last century following the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. In all four of the countries Kurds reside in, they have been the subject of campaigns to degrade their culture. In Iraq, the oppression of Kurds reached a horrifying pinnacle of genocide in the late 1980s. The Kurdish independence movement has seen most of its success largely through violent tactics. It has fought civil wars, guerilla movements, and employed terrorism. This conflict has had extensive negative impacts on the Kurdish economy, consequently, Kurds have left the region and created a large diaspora, most of whom live in Europe.

The Kurdish independence movement has never been a single coordinated independence movement, but rather several separate ones with the same goal of gaining greater autonomy and perhaps one day crossing the threshold of independence. As a nation, the Kurds have struggled to

coordinate these independence efforts. They have at times been divided by tribal lines and fought amongst themselves. While international boundaries have divided their independence movements, they remain a nation that identifies actively as Kurdish. Kurds have become important actors on the world stage, particularly now as the Peshmerga (Kurdish armed forces) have effectively become the main ground force in opposition to the Islamic State. They have achieved a great deal of autonomy and provide insight toward the impacts of violent tactics used in independence movements.

### **The Context of the Kurdish Nation: History and Culture**

The Kurdish nation is founded in a common history of strife and a culture that defies international divisions. This common history is thousands of years old and rooted deeply in the identity of the people that live there. The Kurds have lived in the mountains and plains of the central Middle East for thousands of years. Kurds claim a history that goes back to the Median Empire (612-549 BCE), which is reflected in their national anthem when they sing, “We [Kurds] are the children of Medes and Kai Khosrow [Cyxares], Both our faith and religion are our Homeland”.<sup>6</sup> For Kurds, their history is and has always been one of struggle, war, and oppression. A brief history and description of the Kurdish culture shows the foundation of Kurdish national identity.

Before World War I, the Kurds constituted a significant minority in the Ottoman Empire. When the empire was dissolved following the first World War, plans for an independent Kurdish state were derailed by Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. After World War I, the Kurdish national movement began in earnest. A series of minor rebellions took place in the couple of decades following World War I; these rebellions were successful when World War II turned the attention of the ruling regional colonial powers – France and the United Kingdom – toward Europe.

This provided the opportunity for Kurds to establish a nation-state of their own, with Soviet help: the Mahabad Republic, a small republic in western Iran. It was short lived, lasting the length of 1946, before Soviet forces that were supporting it withdrew and Iranian forces retook control (Figure 5.2).<sup>7</sup> At that time, Mustafa Barzani founded the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP).<sup>8</sup> Since then, more political parties have been established and become the chief method of organizing Kurdish nationalism.

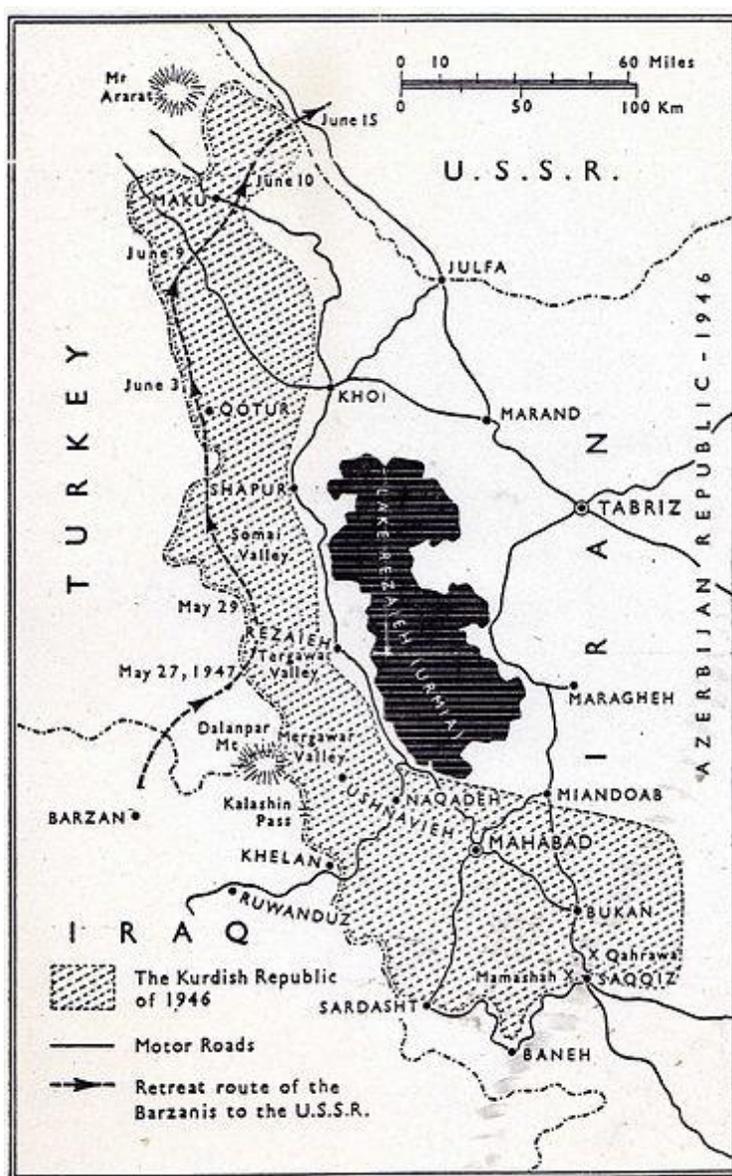


Figure 5.2: The Mahabad Republic in Western Iran<sup>9</sup>

In 1961, following unfulfilled promises of autonomy from the Iraqi President, Barzani led a rebellion against the government of Iraq.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1960s, civil war between the Kurds and the Iraqis has erupted more than five times. By contrast, in Iran, where Kurds were less oppressed, the movement did not become violent until more recently.<sup>11</sup> There Kurds supported the 1979 revolution, in large part, and were initially engaged in the new government. In Syria, the 1960s were a time of oppression and Arabization.

The Iran-Iraq War began in 1980 and lasted for nearly a decade; in 1988, as the war entered its final stages, the use of chemical weapons by Iraqi forces became commonplace.<sup>12</sup> The government used chemical weapons on civilians, mass executions, relocation and cultural destruction, and concentration camps, though all under the guise of military action, to wipe out the Kurds as a people. Estimates of anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 Kurds were killed in the campaign. Four thousand villages were destroyed and 1.5 million Kurds were displaced.<sup>13</sup> In 1984, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) began a guerilla insurgency in Turkey until a ceasefire in 1999. The violence from this insurgency killed thousands of Kurds and displaced hundreds of thousands.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1990s, the Kurds began to gain more autonomy in Iraq. The Kurds and the Shiites in the south rebelled once more against Saddam Hussein's regime following the First Persian Gulf War, this time with U.S. assistance. However, the U.S. failed to provide material support for the uprisings and Hussein was able to counter attack. More than 1 million Kurds fled north to Turkey, prompting the U.S. government to conduct Operation Provide Comfort. The U.S. dropped tons of supplies and – because the Iraqi government enjoyed unchallenged air superiority against the Kurds and Shiites – instituted a no-fly zone over the northern and southern sections of Iraq.<sup>15</sup>

In the mid-1990s, the two major Kurdish parties in Iraqi Kurdistan fought a civil war over who would lead the nationalist movement, which lasted four years. Nearly a decade later, the Kurds helped the U.S. depose Saddam Hussein's regime. During the U.S. occupation, the Kurds were given varying levels of power and autonomy, even beginning to draft their own regional constitution, but eventually lost all faith "in Baghdad's ability to protect their interests".<sup>16</sup> In recent years, Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria have constituted the primary ground opposition forces to the Islamic State; in Iran, Kurds have engaged in a low-level guerilla movement.

International borders have created four experiences for the Kurds, each particular to the state in which they reside. Iraq has long been the center of much of the conflict and the worst of the oppression, not in the least because Iraqi Kurds faced outright genocide. In Syria, Kurds have been denied citizenship for decades and have declared self-rule in the northeast in recent years as they combat the Islamic State. In Turkey, Kurds have been denied their culture and persecuted, and have responded with violence and terrorism. In Iran, Kurds have established a guerilla movement seeking to reclaim the independence of the Mahabad Republic. Though each of these experiences has been unique, they are all a part of the common struggle for greater autonomy and eventually an independent nation-state.

The Kurds have retained their common identity for thousands of years, despite linguistic, religious, and tribal divisions which challenge the traditional western definitions of nationhood. Their common identity is centered around a culture that stands out from its neighbors and forms the basis of active identification today. Kurds have their own distinct folklore and oral traditions, symbolism, languages, dance, food, and costumes.

Kurds have a rich folklore that carries on the wisdom of their ancestors and ancient religious figures that continue to inform their worldview. Their folklore protects stories like that

of Shah Khushin, an important spiritual figure. He is conceived when his mother is impregnated by a sun ray and the pregnancy lasts only 21 days, a lucky number for the Kurds. Today these traditional symbols are placed prominently on the Kurdish flag.<sup>17</sup>



*Figure 5.3: The Flag of Kurdistan<sup>18</sup>*

The Kurdish flag has been a unifying symbol for the independence movement. The flag is a horizontal tricolor of red, white, and green, with a yellow 21-pointed sun in the center. The number 21 and the symbol of the sun have important cultural and religious symbolism. Traditional Kurdish religions believe that the soul takes 21 days to be reincarnated after death; the 21 rays of the sun are therefore intended to be a symbol of the rebirth of the Kurdish nation. It has been adopted as the flag of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq (Figure 5.3).<sup>19</sup>

Kurds speak predominantly two dialects: North or South Kurmanji (Figure 5.4). Sorani (South Kurmanji) is the official language of the Iraqi Kurdish population and widely spoken in the Kurdish regions of Iran, but many sub-dialects and composite dialects are used in literature and radio. The Kurds are predominantly Muslim, largely following the Sunni Muslim traditions. However, Kurdish lands have always hosted small pockets of other religions and ethnicities; as a result, Kurds are sectarian and tolerant of other minorities such as the Shiites, Yazidi, or Turkomen populations.<sup>20</sup>



## **An Oppressed Nation: The Al-Anfal Campaign & Arabization**

Kurds have sought greater autonomy and independence throughout the last century because they perceive an economic, cultural, and political oppression. In Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey, they have been subject to measures that deny them the ability to publicly express their cultural tenets, forcibly remove them from their homes and ancestral lands, deny them the profits of the resources from their lands, deny them access to political legitimacy and participation, and kill them in an organized genocidal campaign. This oppression, though occurring in separate states, is a shared experience for the Kurds that has created a sense of urgency and necessity to independence.

### Arabization in Iraq

Iraqi Kurds have been subject to some of the most horrifying oppression, in particular the Arabization campaigns of the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein and the Al-Anfal Campaign committed by his forces in 1988. The “sweeping campaign to ‘Arabize’” parts of Kurdistan occurred throughout the 1960s and 70s, though it saw its most fervent use in the 1970s. Throughout the 1970s, hundreds of villages were destroyed and the people relocated to government-controlled camps (Figure 5.5). By 1975, more than 50,000 Kurds had been systematically relocated; however, that number may near 200,000. Poor Shia Arabs from the south were encouraged to move into the emptied areas, where inexpensive housing was established by the government. In doing this, the Iraqi government tore apart communities and destroyed the traditional agrarian way of life to which the Kurds subscribed.<sup>23</sup> By tearing apart Kurdish communities, the Iraqi government sought to weaken the ability for the Kurds to operate as a nation. By increasing the relative population of Arabs in the region, the government sought to invalidate Kurdish claims to those lands.

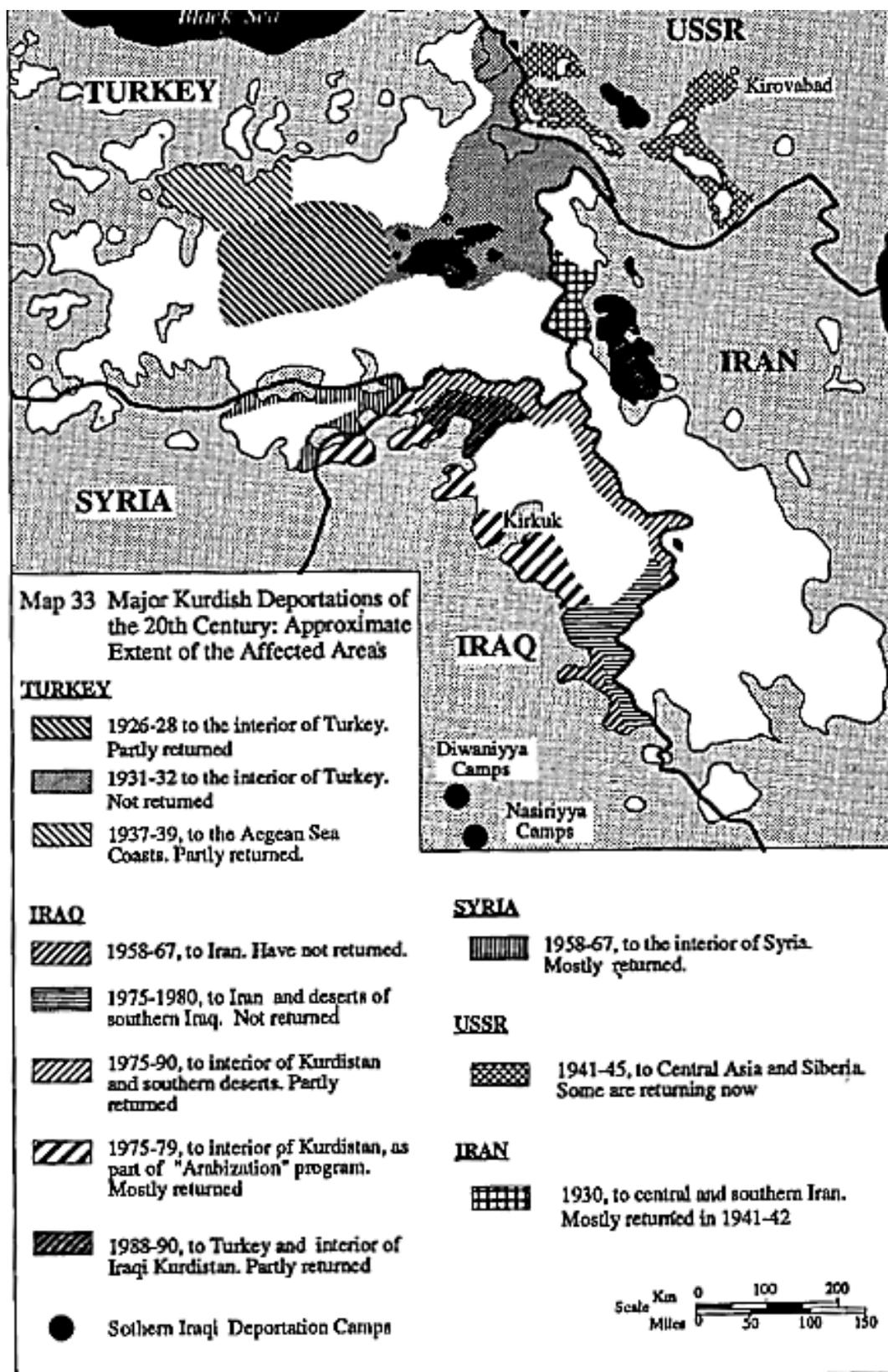


Figure 5.5: Major Kurdish Deportations and Arabizations of the 20th Century<sup>24</sup>

One of the places heavily targeted for Arabization in the 1970s was the area around Kirkuk, historically a Kurdish city on the edge of Kurdish lands, but important to the Iraqi government because of its nearby oil fields. Arabization was not a new policy, as it had been used in Kirkuk in 1963 to the same effect.<sup>25</sup> The change in Kirkuk's demographics created the potential for conflict should the Kurds ever receive *de jure* independence. Mosul is another city that lays on the edge of Kurdish regions and has a significant Kurdish population. In the event of independence, the city would likely be divided over the issue of which country it would fall into, especially considering the treasure and blood the Kurds have devoted to liberating the city from the Islamic State. These cities have in the past been points of conflict between the Arab Iraqis and the Kurds and will continue to be so.

In the 1980s, the Iraqi government continued its coordinated effort to rid Kurdistan of its Kurdish inhabitants and replace them with Arabs. Kurds rebelled with Iranian support and initially enjoyed success. However, the Kurds were defeated by Iraqi forces when Iranian forces withdrew support. The Iraqi government responded to the insurrection with the genocide known as the Al-Anfal Campaign.

#### The Al-Anfal Campaign

The Al-Anfal Campaign was led by Ali Hassan Al-Majid, the cousin of Saddam Hussein, later known as "Chemical Ali". He was feared for his brutality, which was coupled with directives from Baghdad that unleashed horror on the Kurdish people. According to Human Rights Watch, Al-Majid issued:

A sustained pattern of decrees, directives and actions by the security forces leaves no doubt that the intent of the Iraqi government was to destroy definitively the armed organizations of the Kurdish resistance and to eradicate all remaining human settlements in areas that were disputed or under *Peshmerga* control--with the exception of those inhabited by the minority of tribes whose loyalty to Baghdad was indisputable.<sup>26</sup>

Those directives ordered the bombing of the Kurdish countryside “in order to kill the largest number of persons present” and “all persons captured in those villages shall be detained and interrogated by the security services, and those between the ages of 15 and 70” should be executed “after any useful information has been obtained by them”.<sup>27</sup>

The Iraqi military used mustard and sarin gas on Kurdish forces and civilian centers, dropped by aircraft overhead, to achieve this goal. Peshmerga forces covered their faces with rags and sacks for lack of any protective equipment. One of the most famous and worst of these attacks was at Halabja, a town by the border with Iran; this is the town where Kamaran Haider lived. Halabja was a Kurdish stronghold of forty to sixty thousand at the time of the battle there. Iranian and Kurdish forces, coordinating in the Iran-Iraq War, sought to divert Iraqi resources from other parts of the front by attacking military outposts near the city. On the morning of March 16, 1988, a wave of air strikes dropped what was either napalm or phosphorus.<sup>28</sup> That afternoon, the Iraqis conducted more bombings with multiple gases including mustard, sarin, tabun, VX, and possibly cyanide.<sup>29</sup> The civilians hid in air raid shelters and began to smell the gas;<sup>30</sup>

...sheep and goats were falling in the streets, birds were dropping from tree limbs. Soon people began feeling the effects of chemical weapons — stabbing pain in the eyes, uncontrollable vomiting, tremors, confusion.<sup>31</sup>

Somewhere between 4,000 and 7,000 died as a result of this attack alone.<sup>32</sup>

After the aircraft dropped gas on the towns and villages, ground troops would move in to the area. Once they arrived, they burned, bulldozed, and looted villages. They put townspeople into trucks and took them to holding camps. The largest of these camps was Topzawa, near Kirkuk, with, at any given time, a population of four to five thousand.

Topzawa processed prisoners on “an industrial scale” and had an average stay of only a few days. Here, the people were separated by officers upon arrival – some were immediately killed,

others were imprisoned. Those that were not immediately killed endured horrible conditions. They were questioned on their actions as Peshmerga; their answers, and militant or civilian status, mattered not at all to those doing the interrogations. Prisoners were given little to eat and defecated on the floor or, if they were fortunate, in a can. Children were torn away from their mothers in the middle of the night. Men were routinely beaten in front of their spouses. Thousands of prisoners, civilian and military alike, were taken away in trucks, led to long grave trenches, and systemically killed in mass executions.<sup>33</sup>

Even after the Iraqis drove Iranian forces to accept a ceasefire in 1988, the genocide continued on the Kurds. Estimates of anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 Kurds were killed in the campaign. The Peshmerga was nearly completely destroyed for a second time in twenty years. Four thousand villages were destroyed and 1.5 million Kurds were displaced.<sup>34</sup> After the Al-Anfal campaign ended in 1989, an estimated ninety percent of the villages had been effectively wiped out and landmines across the countryside prohibited people from returning to their homes. The Iraqi government created prohibited areas that civilians were not allowed to live in or return to after the civil war in the late 1980s.<sup>35</sup> This prohibition from returning to their homes was intentional. It, along with the destruction of villages across Kurdistan, was part of a coordinated effort to rid the region of its Kurdish and destroy the foundation of the Kurdish nation. The end of the Al-Anfal Campaign coincided with the demilitarization that accompanied the end of the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>36</sup> Figure 5.6 shows a map of the areas in which the Al-Anfal campaign was committed, the locations of major known gas attacks, and the location of major extermination camps.

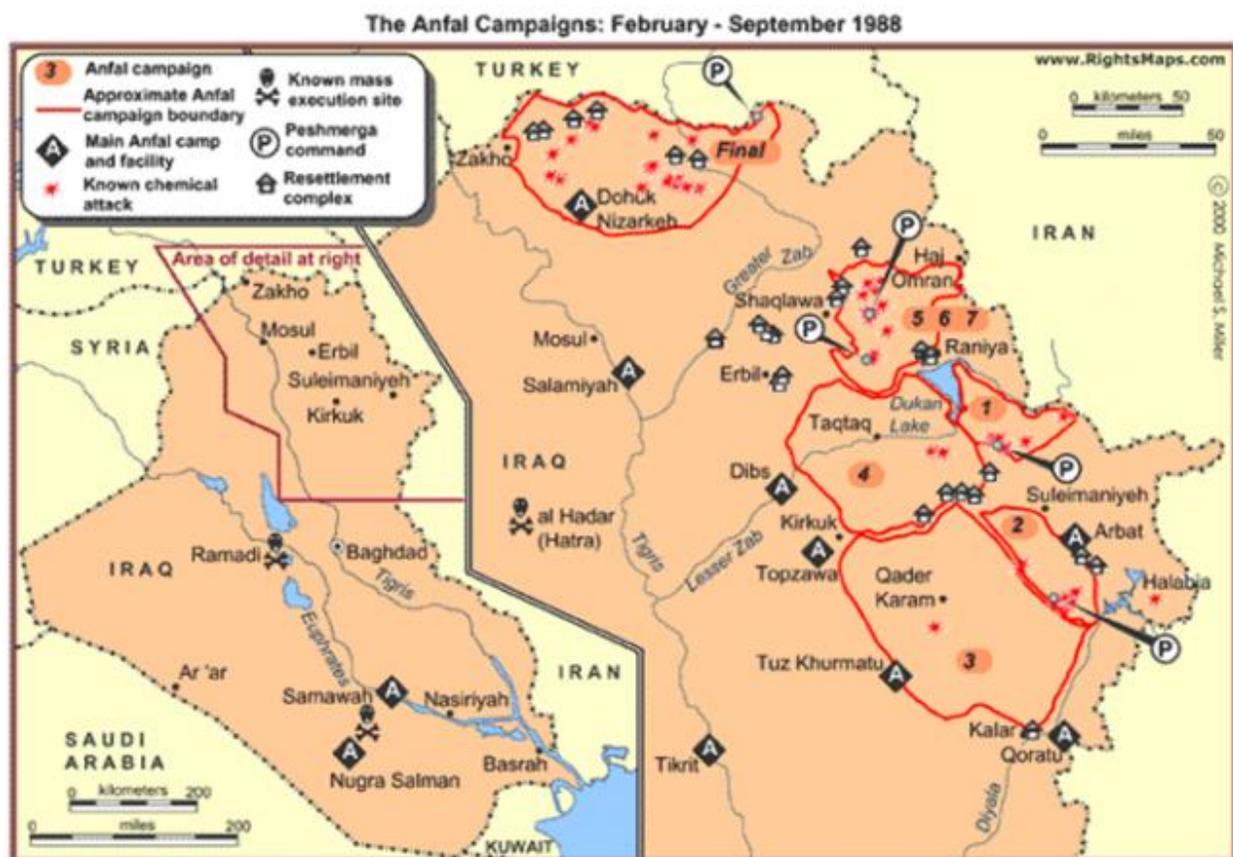


Figure 5.6: The Al Anfal Campaign<sup>37</sup>

For the Iraq government to convince its soldiers to commit a genocide, the Iraqi rhetoric surrounding the Kurds was important. Kurds were differentiated from Arabs due to their Kurdish ethnicity, establishing and promoting a decades old us-versus-them mentality. Kurds were called criminals, terrorists, and insects; they were dehumanized and treated as cattle that could be moved in herds. The Baathist Party, led by Saddam Hussein, was fiercely pan-Arab nationalist, which helped fuel their disdain for Kurds. The Baath focus on Arab nationalism helped unite Sunni and Shiite Iraqis against the Kurds; this is an example of two peoples transcending otherwise divisive lines in favor of unifying commonalities. The campaign that was glorified by the government; according official Iraqi documents, “villages [were] ‘purified’ during ‘the Heroic Anfal Operation’”.<sup>38</sup>

## Turkey

The Kurdish experience in Turkey was less violent than that of Iraq. Following World War I, the Ataturk administration in Turkey not only derailed early plans for a Kurdish state, but he also instated policies “of coercive assimilation”. His government “denied language and cultural rights” to Kurds and even “denied their existence”. In 1924, the Turkish government set out to destroy Kurdish identity in Turkey. Kurdish madrassas, newspapers, and other organizations were shut down.<sup>39</sup> In response to Kurdish rebellions in Turkey, the government put Kurdish regions under martial law. They outlawed the use of the Kurdish language, baby names, dress, and folklore. The Turkish government also criminalized Kurdish political parties and limited rights to association, making it difficult for Kurds to organize and express their national identity.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1960s, the Turkish government made it illegal to use the term *Kurd* in public. Commando units were deployed to Kurdish villages to enforce marital law; they terrorized the people and threatened genocide against the Kurds.<sup>41</sup> Kurdish communities were denied the ability to identify as Kurdish in the public sphere and were instead forced to identify as Turkish.<sup>42</sup>

## Syria

In Syria, the first anti-Kurdish oppression emerged after the union of Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic in 1958 in response to Kurdish attempts to engage in the political process and increased Arab nationalist sentiment. The government destroyed Kurdish publications, and arrested many in the leadership of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria.<sup>43</sup> The government denied citizenship to 120,000 Kurds in the early 1960s. The census at the time required that Kurds be able to prove their residence in Syria prior to 1945. If they could not do so, their citizenship was revoked and hence were unable to travel, vote, own property, operate business, marry, or exercise any other rights afforded to citizens. This measure left them a stateless people in Syria.

Hafez al-Assad, father of Bashar al-Assad, also pursued a campaign of Arabization to create an “Arab belt” in the resource-rich (Figure 5. 7 shows the oil fields of northeastern Syria) and Kurdish-inhabited northern border with Turkey, displacing Kurds from their homes (Figure 5.5).<sup>44</sup>

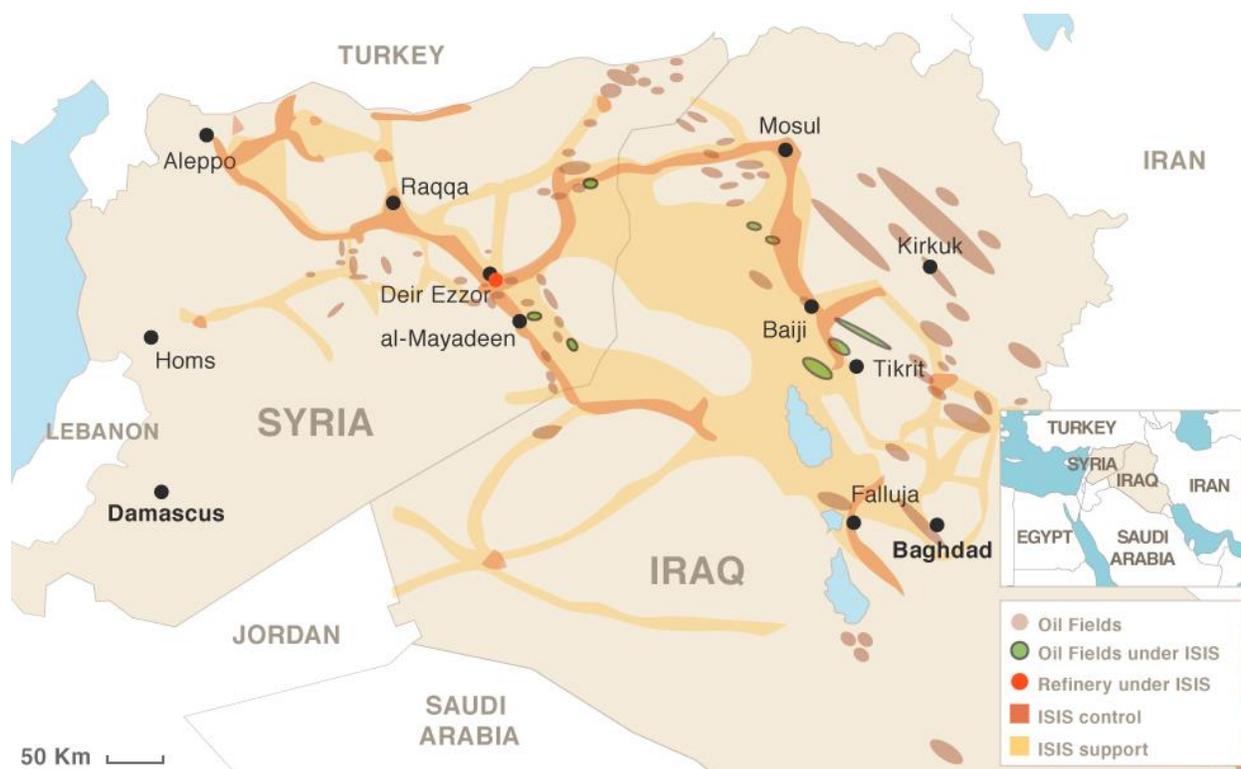


Figure 5.7: The Oil Fields of Syria and Iraq, including areas controlled by the Islamic State in September 2014<sup>45</sup>

### Iran

In Iran, Kurds have had perhaps the least oppressive experience, though they have seen oppression. They are largely regarded by society as relatively equal members due to the similarities between Kurdish and Persian culture, such as sharing the same calendar and celebrating many of the same holidays like Nowruz.<sup>46</sup> Upon the fall of the Mahabad Republic, following the withdrawal of Soviet forces, Iranian Kurds saw some of their political parties disbanded and cultural expressions restricted. Iran became a police state and political involvement was unproductive and dangerous for Kurds. The Shah arrested those that were suspected of Kurdish nationalist sympathies.<sup>47</sup>

After a brief period of political freedom in 1979, following Kurdish support of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the newly powerful Ayatollah Khomeini cracked down on Kurds once again and returned them to a police state. They were removed from political posts, banned from discussions of autonomy, and placed under military rule.<sup>48</sup> In the following decades, urbanization followed a decline in economic opportunity in rural areas. This caused Kurds to move to the cities where many became homeless, unemployed, and impoverished. During the Iran-Iraq War, Kurds suffered bombings of their villages by the Iraqis and the deaths of family members.<sup>49</sup> Since 2000, Iranian Kurds have seen a military crackdown on guerilla violence in Western Iran that has killed hundreds.<sup>50</sup>

The oppression experienced by Kurds has both resulted in and been the result of changes in autonomy and the tactics used to realize it. Since the fall of the Mahabad Republic, Kurds in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran have lived under centralized military control, autonomous regions, and *de facto* independent states.

### **New Lines in the Sand: Changes in Autonomy**

Over the past century, the Kurds have seen significant but discontinuous movement along the spectrum of autonomy toward the threshold of independence. Figure 5.8 shows the borders of regions in which Kurds successfully – if only temporarily – gained independence between 1922 and 1975 and the boundaries claimed by Kurds in a 1945 petition for independence to the United Nations. The Mahabad Republic is considered the only time in the last 100 years that Kurds were independent; however, this did not last long and they have not since crossed the threshold for independence until the Syrian Civil War in 2012 and rise of the Islamic State in 2014 created a power vacuum that allowed Syrian and Iraqi Kurds to achieve *de facto* independence. Looking at all four countries, it is clear that Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria have all made progress

toward greater autonomy and independence, with the Kurdish regions of Syria and Iraq realizing the most success. In Iraq, this progress – and regression – has occurred in three major stages as the Iraqi Kurds first sought autonomy (1958-1970), then attempted and failed to become independent (1970-1988), then slowly achieved *de facto* independence (1991-2014).



Figure 5.8: Kurdish Political Enclaves, 1920-1975<sup>51</sup>

### Iraq (1958-1970): Creating Autonomy

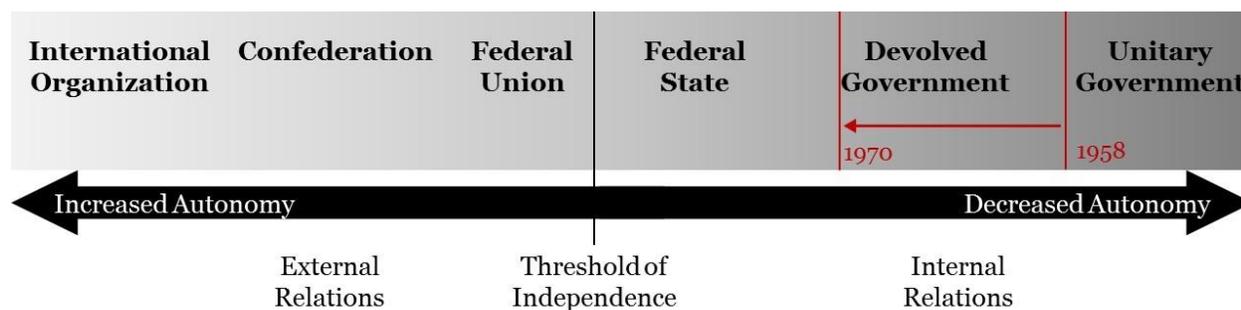


Figure 5.9: Iraqi Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1958-1970

Between 1958 and 1970, Iraqi Kurds successfully struggled through a series of rebellions to create an autonomous region in Northern Iraq. In 1958, following the expulsion of the British from Iraq, the new Iraqi government was led Brigadier General Abd al-Karim Qasim. As Figure 5.9 shows, Iraqi Kurds had little autonomy during this time. However, Qasim's government promoted an Iraqi-first identity and included the Kurds in that concept. He initially promoted more autonomy for the Kurds within a greater pan-Arab nationalist movement. Qasim quickly withdrew from this position in the face of political pressure from Arabs and he became the first of several Iraqi leaders that attempted to give autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan, but instead increasingly restricted their political space.<sup>52</sup>

Iraq, in the 1960s, experienced open rebellion by the Kurds and a series of failed campaigns by the Ba'athist regime to reestablish control over the northern part of the country, resulting in and frustrated by a series of coups in the Iraqi government. In 1970, the new Ba'athist regime in Iraq began to make steps toward autonomy by implementing parts of a plan to create a Kurdish administration, with limited self-rule and cultural expression. The Kurdish Autonomous region (Figure 5.8) created by this measure included roughly 60 percent of the Kurdish population and did not include strategic areas like the border with Iran, oil rich Kirkuk, or the major city of Mosul (Figure 5.7).<sup>53</sup>

### Iraq (1970-1988): Seeking Independence

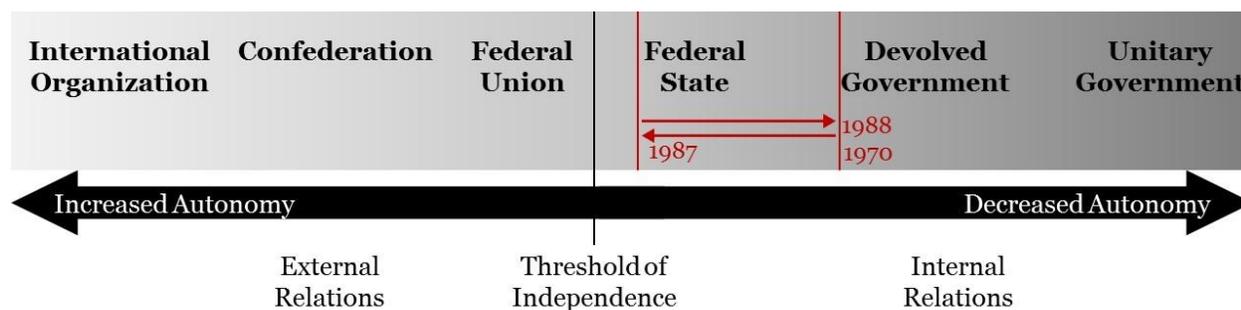


Figure 5.10: Iraqi Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1970-1988

Following the creation of an autonomous region in 1970, Iraqi Kurds struggled to turn that autonomy into independence and briefly approached the threshold of independence in the late 1980s. Figure 5.10 shows the dramatic gain and subsequent loss of autonomy between 1970 and 1988. In 1984, the Iraqi government attempted to integrate the Peshmerga into the Iraqi military as a separate branch for defense of the northern borders of the country, giving *de jure* recognition to the security role the Peshmerga was playing, but the agreement was short lived. In 1986, during the war with Iran, the Iraqis expanded the draft to include Kurds, many of whom promptly joined the Peshmerga forces, increasing its power. Many enlisted Kurds deserted from the Iraqi army and joined the Peshmerga; they often brought with them supplies and arms from the Iraqi military.<sup>54</sup>

In February of 1987, the Kurds settled internal political disputes and created the Kurdistan National Front (KNF). They began to seize military centers and major towns, moving out of their small town and mountain strongholds. They supported the Iranian advance in the region, often occupying towns ahead of the Iranian army. The Iraqi government's response was to put Kurdish prisoners in camps where they tortured and executed them. The next step was to target the source of Peshmerga power: the Kurdish people. The Iraqi government's response was the genocidal Al-Anfal Campaign which set the Kurds back in terms of power in the region.<sup>55</sup>

### Iraq (1988-2014): Achieving *de Facto* Independence

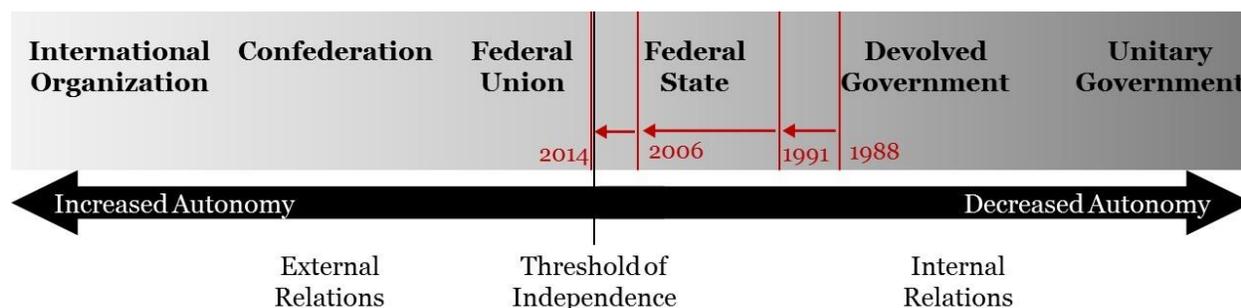


Figure 5.11: Iraqi Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1988-2014

The gradual shifts in Iraqi Kurdish autonomy from 1988-2014 are shown in Figure 5.11. During this time, the Kurds focused on legal means toward autonomy and taking advantage of power vacuums left by a failed Iraqi state. Doing so created incremental – and perhaps more permanent – changes in the autonomy Kurds enjoyed, as opposed to the drastic changes of the late 1980s.

Following the First Gulf War in 1991, the Kurds saw increased autonomy through the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), which was protected from Baghdad by an American no-fly zone. This autonomy was further reinforced when the Hussein regime was toppled in 2003. The Kurds focused on legal autonomy rather than independence at this time and became crucial members of the transitional government. The 2004 Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and subsequent constitution of 2006 gave the Kurds the legal autonomy they have today.<sup>56</sup> Article 117 of the Iraqi constitution established the federal region of Kurdistan, with considerable self-governing power.<sup>57</sup>

Since the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, the Kurds have exercised power over much of northern Iraq because the Iraqi central government has been unable to exercise its own power there; it now sits on the Threshold of Independence. The Kurds have taken advantage of the failure of the Iraqi state in Northern Iraq, now controlling more than double their autonomous region. Figure

5.12 shows a map of Iraq displaying Kurdish claims, autonomous regional boundaries, and Peshmerga control just before the Islamic State invaded Iraq in 2014. Today the Islamic state and Iraqi government control Mosul and the areas immediately to the south.



Figure 5.12: Disputed Territories and Kurdish Controlled Areas in Iraq, 2013<sup>58</sup>

### Turkey (1922-2014)

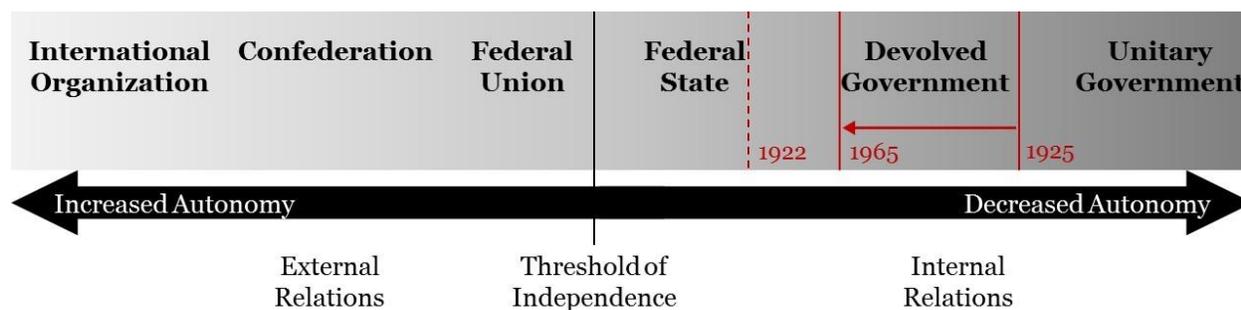


Figure 5.13: Turkish Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1922-1965

Figure 5.13 shows significant shifts in autonomy in Turkey as Turkish Kurds struggled for inclusion in the Turkish political process. In post-Ottoman Turkey, the Kurds enjoyed a great deal of political inclusion. Kemal Atatürk, in an effort to increase his base of support, included the Kurds in the new government of Turkey. Kurds were representatives in the legislature and recognized by the legislature. In 1922, a bill was submitted to the Grand National Assembly that provided for Kurdish autonomy. However, like in Iraq, these early messages of inclusion soon gave way to oppression in the face of internal political pressure from Turks. Atatürk put the Kurdish regions of southeastern Turkey under the control of military governors in 1925.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, Turkish Kurds attempted to engage in the Turkish political system.

In the 1950s, Turkey began the process of liberalizing its political system. In 1965, Turkey removed the military governors. Kurds took advantage of that and founded the Kurdish Democratic Party of Turkey. Unlike the Iraqi KDP however, this party was not legitimized by the central government in any way. In the 1960s, the Turkish Worker's Party (TIP) attained seats in the Grand National Assembly and drove the discussion of Kurdish rights. Kurds increasingly integrated into the government, but continued to not express their Kurdish identity – doing so would result in negative reaction by the Turkish government – opting instead to be members of the Turkish state. In 1993, the People's Labor Party (HEP), a Kurdish nationalist party, also won

seats in the legislature.<sup>60</sup> Kurds have increasingly become recognized (although not officially) by Turkey as it has allowed the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq to sell oil through Turkey and engaged in negotiations with the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK).

#### Iran (1946-2011)

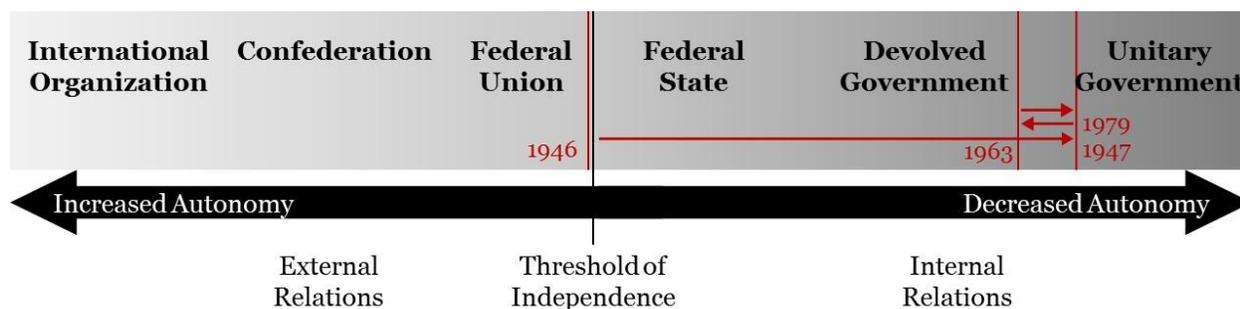


Figure 5.14: Iranian Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1946-1979

Following the fall of the Mahabad Republic in 1947, Iranian Kurds fell under the control of the Shah of Iran. Like Turkish Kurds, Iranian Kurds attempted to engage in the political process. Figure 5.14 shows the relative little shift in autonomy experienced by Iranian Kurds in the twentieth century. In 1952, Kurdish political candidates won 80% of votes in Kurdish dominated regions but were denied political office. In 1963, some Kurds were permitted to enter the political realm, but only those hand-picked by the Shah.<sup>61</sup> Iranian Kurds supported the 1979 revolution, during which they were engaged in the political process. The first cabinet included Kurds in two important political posts as Minister of the Economy and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The new government began to discuss self-determination and autonomy for the Kurds.<sup>62</sup>

Iranian Kurds soon became divided on the issue of just how much autonomy they sought to attain following the revolution; some advocated for independence while others advocated for autonomous rights within Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini annulled the constitution and by November of 1979 had solidified control over Iran and installed an Islamic government.<sup>63</sup> Kurds in Iran were restricted from that time on and increasingly turned toward hostile tactics. In 2004, the Party for a

Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) was founded in Iran and sustained a guerilla campaign against Iran until 2011 when PJAK agreed to a cease-fire following a deadly Iranian military campaign against the Kurds.<sup>64</sup>

### Syria (1945-2012)

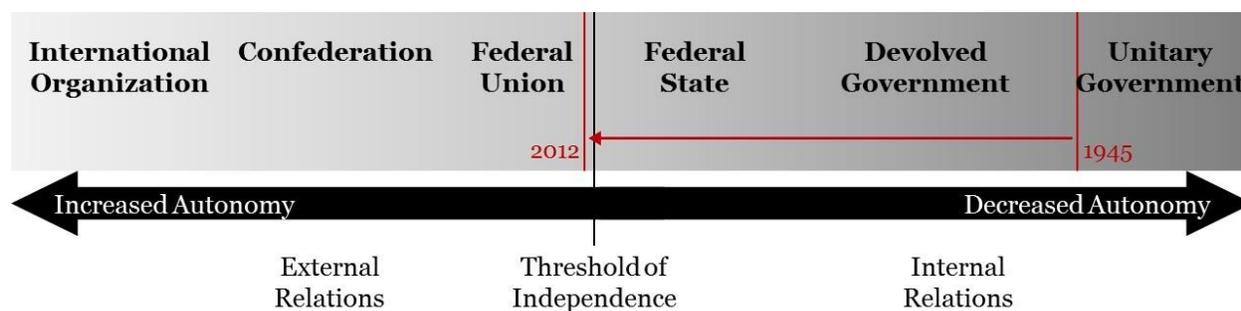


Figure 5.15: Syrian Kurdish Shifts in Autonomy, 1945-2012

Figure 5.15 shows the single drastic change in Syrian Kurdish autonomy over the last century, which only occurred following the outbreak of civil war in 2012. Conversely, Kurds in Syria have had little involvement in the government and little autonomy since the end of World War II. Following the war, there were a series of coups orchestrated by Kurdish officers; the success of these coups caused the government to purge Kurds from the military in the mid-1950s. Kurds were significantly oppressed in the following decades, though some were elected to the Syrian parliament in 1991, a meaningless gesture given the Assad regime's continued absolute control over the country.<sup>65</sup>

Following the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the region at the outbreak of the civil war in 2012, Syrian Kurds in the northeast, using local militias, took control over a large portion of the country (Figure 5.15). They have gained *de facto* independence and control a 200 mile stretch of land along the northern border of Syria, where they have established a federal system of government. The Kurds call this region Rojava (Figure 5.16), or “the west”, which refers to the three cantons, or administrative regions of the Kurdish controlled territory.<sup>66</sup>

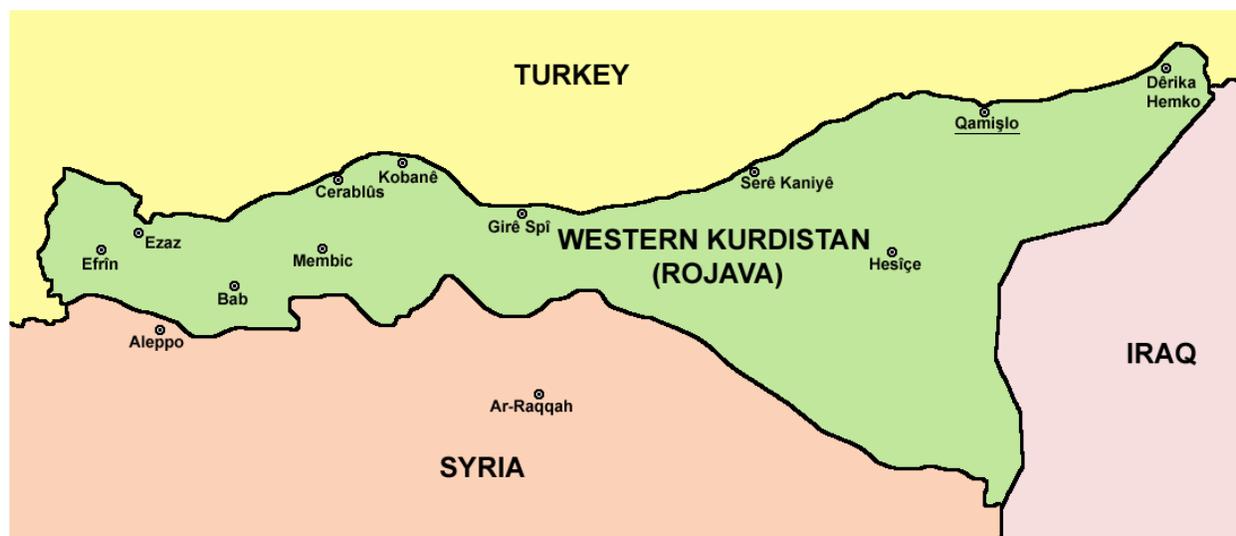


Figure 5.16: Claimed borders of Western Kurdistan, much of which is controlled by Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State<sup>67</sup>

### **Peshmerga and Political Parties: Tactics of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement**

Understanding how Kurds have sought to achieve autonomy over the years is critical to understanding the nationalist independence movements of the Kurds. The Kurdish nationalist movements have primarily used violence to achieve greater autonomy because the political systems in which they lived did not allow Kurds to participate. Kurds have used terrorism, sustained guerilla movements, put hundreds of thousands of Peshmerga forces into the field in outright contests for land, and organized political parties to fuel their nationalism. Two of the most famous and most powerful political leaders are Masoud Barzani, now President of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq, and Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK in Turkey. These men are considered orators with the authority to speak for the nationalist cause.

#### Nationalist Rhetoric

Barzani has engaged ethos, logos, and pathos throughout the years to support his nationalist rhetoric. He has called for independence with statements like “the time has come to decide our fate, and we should not wait for other people to decide it for us”<sup>68</sup> and “What I really wish is to see an independent Kurdistan”, which he has called the Kurdish peoples’ “natural legitimate

right”.<sup>69</sup> Others like Rezan Javid, a political leader in PJAK, have made similar appeals to the Kurdish people, saying, “Every day the regime is killing our people for nothing other than seeking their rights, and the world remains silent.”<sup>70</sup>

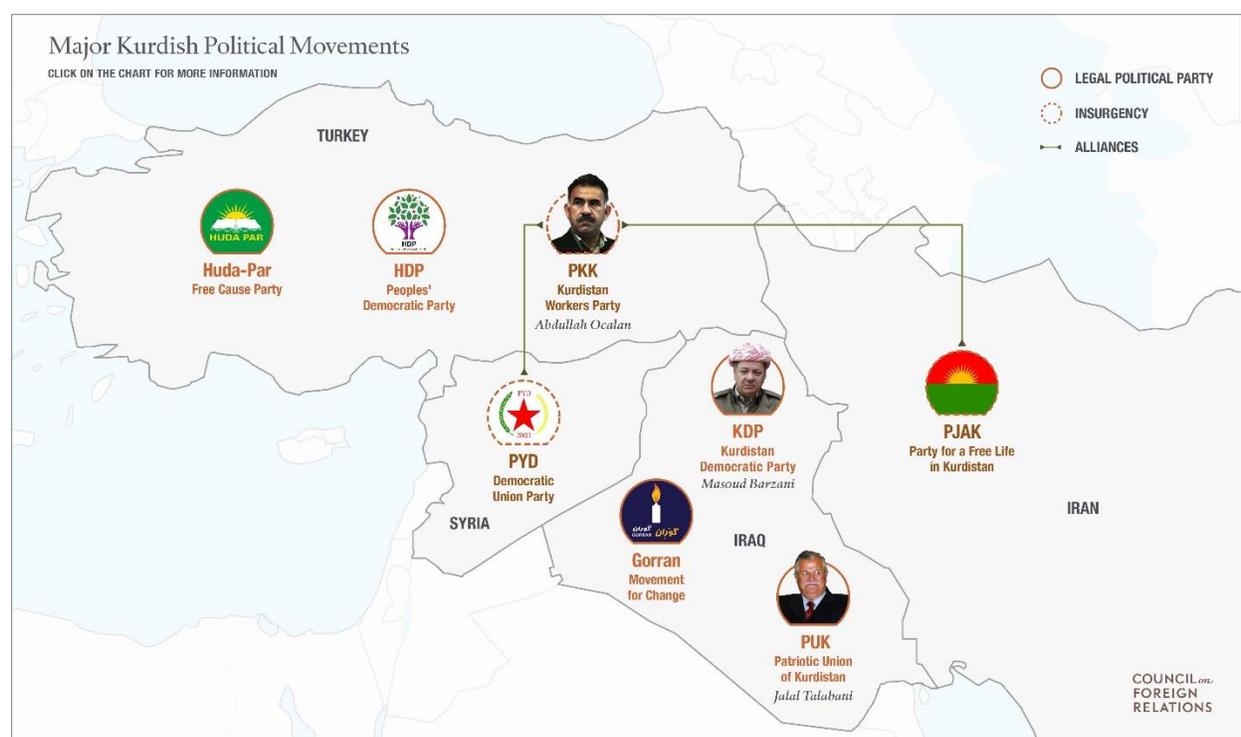
Using statements like these, the Kurdish leaders invoke national sentiments of a common struggle against oppression, the shared experiences of genocide and cultural degradation, and the idea that independence is a natural right of a nation. The struggle for independence has become a part of the Kurdish identity that the nationalist movement promotes. In Kurdistan, many of the ruling political parties operate their own radio stations, print their own literature, and operate schools to promote these ideas. The division seen in the nationalist movement between countries and political parties has been one of the leading challenges to the Kurdish movement and a primary reason that Kurds remain a nationless state.

### Kurdish Political Parties

The Kurds have developed political parties to represent their interests in their respective states. Table 2 lists the major political parties and their dates of founding while Figure 5.17 puts many of these parties in a geographic context. These political parties have become the primary method of organizing nationalist movements. Each of the parties faced similar challenges and responded in different ways. The tactics used were largely uncoordinated until the 1990s, when globalism and increased communication abilities allowed Kurds to coordinate to a greater degree. The emergence of the Kurdish Regional Government has also played a critical role because since its creation, it has acted as a base of support for movements in Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

Table 2: Major Kurdish Political Parties by Country<sup>71</sup>

State	Name	Acronym	Date Founded
Iran	Free Life Party of Kurdistan	PJAK	2004
Iraq	Kurdistan Democratic Party	KDP	1946
Iraq	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan	PUK	1975
Iraq	Gorran		2009
Syria	Kurdistan Democratic Party in Syria	KDPS	1957
Syria	Kurdish Union Party (Yekiti)		2009
Syria	Kurdistan Freedom Party (Azadi)		2005
Syria	Democratic Union Party	PYD	2003
Syria	Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria	KDPP	1965
Turkey	Kurdistan Workers' Party	PKK	1978
Turkey	Peace and Democracy Party	BDP	2008

Figure 5.17: A flowchart showing major Kurdish political movements<sup>72</sup>

In Turkey, the predominant political party is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK has bases in Iraqi Kurdistan but operates in Turkey. The PKK was founded in 1978 in response to armed and political oppression. Its founding leader, Abdullah Ocalan, has been imprisoned since 1999, but is still alive and leading the organization. The PKK was founded as a Marxist organization that sought an independent Kurdistan; it has used violence since 1984 to

achieve this goal. In the post-cold war world, the PKK has abandoned its Marxist rhetoric and focused on Kurdish nationalism. Since 2009, the PKK has been intermittently engaged in peace talks with the Turkish government.<sup>73</sup>

In Iraqi Kurdistan, there are two major political parties. The oldest, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was founded in 1946 by Mustafa Barzani as an alternative to the Mahabad Republic. Barzani's sons have continued as party leaders and now represent the political and economic leadership of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The party's control is essentially limited to Iraq; its affiliates in Syria, Turkey, and Iran have little influence in those countries. In 1975, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was founded following a military defeat of the KDP by Iraqi forces. Both parties fought a civil war in 1994 following the Gulf War then joined a united government that is the basis for the KRG after the U.S. invasion in 2003.<sup>74</sup>

The Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was founded in 1945 in Mahabad. Its leaders were imprisoned when the republic fell but the party and its members went underground and waited out the Shah's regime.<sup>75</sup> Due to the repression of the Shah, the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran did not have political leaders or a political voice until the 1979 revolution. Following the 1979 revolution, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI) was able to express its goals and was given legitimacy, but no power, by the new government. The KDPI, which has been in existence for roughly 30 years, has made public claims for autonomy. They published newspapers and textbooks in Kurdish to disseminate their nationalist movement.<sup>76</sup>

The nationalist movement in Iran has tended to lean more toward greater autonomy within a federated state of Iran rather than outright independence.<sup>77</sup> In 2004, the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) was founded; it has connections to the PKK in Turkey and a guerilla force of a few thousand. In 2011, PJAK agreed to a cease-fire with the Iranian government following another

deadly military campaign.<sup>78</sup> PJAK has been labeled a terrorist organization by the United States for its guerilla activities.<sup>79</sup>

The predominant Kurdish party in Syria is the Democratic Union Party (PYD). It was founded in 2003 as an offshoot of the PKK and maintains close ties with them. The PYD has focused on increasing autonomy for Syrian Kurds, particularly with an eye on creating a federal system. Syrian Kurds have worked closely with Iraqi Peshmerga and the United States in the fight against the Islamic State. This coordination made effective resistance possible and has increased the sense of nationalism that Kurds in Syria and Iraq share. However, political divisions exist between the People's Defense Unit (YPG) in Syria, which is tied to the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the PKK in Turkey, and the KRG led by Barzani in Iraq. These are a result of political and ideological differences between the PKK in Turkey and the KRD in Iraq, which stem from their competition to be the leading Kurdish political party.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Kurdish Diaspora: Consequences of Seeking Independence**

The consequences of the Kurd's campaign for greater autonomy and independence have been decades long and reached around the world. Kurdish nationalist movements have repeatedly destabilized the region, led to large-scale refugee movement and cultural diaspora, and caused the deaths of tens of thousands over the decades. The violence employed by the Kurds was in response to violent political repression, but in turn has generated violent reactions by the Iraqi, Syrian, Turkish, and Iranian governments including genocide.

A diaspora of an estimated two million Kurds has developed as they fled the Middle East over the course of the last century, most prominently in Europe.<sup>81</sup> Of that diaspora, an estimated 1.5 million Kurds live in Germany.<sup>82</sup> This diaspora is politically active and attempts to pressure the European parliament to raise awareness of the Kurdish movements.<sup>83</sup> Kurds in Europe have

demonstrated solidarity with Kurds in the Middle East on many occasions. Demonstrating said solidarity on one such occasion, demonstrations broke out following the brutal crackdown of the Assad regime on Kurdish protesters in 2004.<sup>84</sup>

In Rojava, the Kurds have established new systems of governance and institutions to further their culture and nationality. Freedom of movement across this land is greater than any other part of Syria for anyone traveling there. There is a resurgent sense of Kurdish identity that is observable and has “liberated” the Kurds “psychologically”. This liberation was evident at a funeral “where participants celebrated even as they mourned, singing songs about ‘Kurdistan’ and ‘freedom’ that would have been unimaginable before the uprising against Assad.” Kurds have created their own oil company, electric company, universities, and media sources.<sup>85</sup>

Kurdish Regional Government President Masoud Barzani has called Iraq “effectively” partitioned following the rise of the Islamic State. He has argued “Everything that’s happened recently shows that it’s the right of Kurdistan to achieve independence” and “From now on, we won't hide that that's our goal. Iraq is effectively partitioned now. Are we supposed to stay in this tragic situation the country's living? It's not me who will decide on independence. It's the people. We'll hold a referendum and it's a matter of months.”<sup>86</sup> That referendum has been postponed following the rise to power of “Haider al Abadi, a respected politician, to replace Maliki [the former Prime Minister, whose government Kurds had lost faith in]” and the increased focus on fighting the Islamic State. President Barzani’s chief of staff, Fuad Hussein said “We now have a priority: to clean the area of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). ISIS must not remain our neighbour. When you have this priority, some other priorities will be delayed.”<sup>87</sup>

Barzani’s statements on the effective partition of Iraq have come true in the wake of the 2014 rise of the Islamic State. Kurdistan has achieved *de facto* independence in the conflict against

the Islamic State and coordinates with Syrian Kurds to control of much of the Kurdish territory in Syria as well. If it were to be given *de jure* independence, what would the consequences be? It is likely there would be a destabilization of Iran and Turkey as their Kurdish populations sought to join an independent Kurdistan. Turkish Kurds have historically sought to leave Turkey and have been oppressed for such activism. It would therefore not surprise historians, diplomats, or foreign relations experts if Turkish Kurds sought to leave Turkey once more in the face of an independent Kurdistan. Furthermore, some scholars argue that civil war is made more likely when there is an ethnic kin outside of a country that support an ethnic group's potential insurgency, such as the Kurdish diaspora and Kurdish populations in neighboring countries.<sup>88</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Kurdish nation's quest to cross the threshold of independence has met success and failure. Today, Kurdistan falls short of statehood because the international community does not recognize it as independent. However, in Iraq and Syria, the Kurds have not only achieved *de facto* independence, but also engage the international community in a way they have never done before. Due to their success against the Islamic State, foreign governments are forced to engage with the Kurds as members of the international community particularly as they support the Kurds in the fight against the Islamic State. Kurds in Iraq also participate in the international community by selling oil and bypassing the Iraqi government.

Today the Kurdish nation sits on the precipice of crossing the threshold of independence. The rise of the Islamic State has created a power vacuum that Kurds are poised to fill. The autonomy and *de facto* independence gained by the Kurds in the wake of this bloodshed has put the Kurds closer than ever to securing their place on the international stage. When the Islamic State is finally defeated, the Kurds stand to gain *de jure* independence if they play their cards right.

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- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> “The Time of the Kurds”, *Council on Foreign Relations*.
- <sup>5</sup> Mehrdad R. Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook*, (Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1992) 4.
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- <sup>7</sup> Lortz, Michael G., “Willing to Face Death: A History of Kurdish Military Forces – the Peshmerga – From the Ottoman Empire to Present-Day Iraq” (2005). *Electronic These, Treatises and Dissertations*. Paper 1038. 10-26.
- <sup>8</sup> “The Time of the Kurds”, *Council on Foreign Relations*.
- <sup>9</sup> Image in public domain, accessed March 6, 2017, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_republic\\_of\\_mahabad\\_and\\_south\\_azerbaijan\\_1945.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_republic_of_mahabad_and_south_azerbaijan_1945.jpg).
- <sup>10</sup> “The Time of the Kurds”, *Council on Foreign Relations*.
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- <sup>12</sup> “Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)”, *GlobalSecurity.org*, accessed December 7, 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm>
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- <sup>14</sup> Oso Sabio, *Rojava: An Alternative to Imperialism, Nationalism, and Islamism in the Middle East*, 27.
- <sup>15</sup> Nancy Soderberg and David Phillips, “Task Force Report: State-Building In Iraqi Kurdistan”, *Institute for the Study of Human Rights*, (New York: 2015), 1-3.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1-3.
- <sup>17</sup> Izady, *The Kurds*, 239-240.
- <sup>18</sup> Image is in public domain, accessed March 7, 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_Kurdistan..](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Kurdistan..)
- <sup>19</sup> “Kurdistan Flag”, *The Kurdish Project*, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-flag/>.
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- <sup>21</sup> “Kurdish Newroz”, *The Kurdish Project*, accessed January 30, 2017, <http://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-newroz/>.
- <sup>22</sup> Izady, *The Kurds*, 171.
- <sup>23</sup> George Black, “Chapter One: Ba’athis and Kurds” in *Genocide in Iraq, Human Rights Watch*, (New York: 1993), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/index.htm#TopOfPage>.
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- <sup>25</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill and Molly Dunigan, “Iraqi Kurdistan, 1961-1975 Case Outcome COIN Win” in *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, (Rand, 2013), 216-217.
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- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.
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- <sup>54</sup> Lortz, Michael G., “Willing to Face Death, 54-56.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.
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- <sup>59</sup> Natali, *The Kurds and the State*, 71-79.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-103, 110.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-137.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-142.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.
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- <sup>73</sup> Rodi Hevian, “The Main Kurdish Political Parties”.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> Natali, *The Kurds and the State*, 143.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.
- <sup>78</sup> “The Time of the Kurds”, *Council on Foreign Relations*.
- <sup>79</sup> Hevian, “The Main Kurdish Political Parties”, 97.
- <sup>80</sup> Solomon, “Special Report”.
- <sup>81</sup> “The Time of the Kurds”, *Council on Foreign Relations*.

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<sup>82</sup> Nancy Soderberg and David Phillips, "Task Force Report", 1.

<sup>83</sup> Natali, *The Kurds and the State*, 175.

<sup>84</sup> "The Time of the Kurds", *Council on Foreign Relations*.

<sup>85</sup> Erika Solomon, "Special Report: Amid Syria's violence, Kurds carve out autonomy", *Reuters*, January 22, 2014, accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-kurdistan-specialreport-idUSBREAOL17320140122>.

<sup>86</sup> "Iraq Kurdistan Independence Referendum Planned", *BBC*, July 1, 2014, accessed December 12, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28103124>.

<sup>87</sup> Roy Gutman, "Kurds Agree to Postpone Independence Referendum", *thestar.com*, September 5, 2014, accessed December 12, 2015,

[http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/09/05/kurds\\_agree\\_to\\_postpone\\_independence\\_referendum.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/09/05/kurds_agree_to_postpone_independence_referendum.html).

<sup>88</sup> Douglas, Lemke, "Transnational Rebel Groups", Class Lecture, Civil Wars from The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, November 12, 2015.

## Chapter 6

### **Independència Països Catalans: The Quest for an Independent Catalunya**

*“The revolutionary posters were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues... Down the Ramblas... where crowds of people streamed constantly to and fro, the loudspeakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night... I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for...”*

George Orwell<sup>1</sup>

## La Rambla

On a warm summer night in Barcelona, La Rambla, the pedestrian boulevard that divides the neighborhoods of El Raval and Barri Gotic (the gothic quarter), is bustling with life. Tourists shuffle up and down the street patronizing restaurants, drinking sangria, and listening to the music spill out of the buildings that wall the streets. It is another beautiful night in a thriving part of the city. Just around the corner, in a dark, tight, alley, a small unmarked store sits quiet. Inside are two men in their fifties, chatting behind at the counter.

A few foreign tourists walk into the store to see its wares. They see shirts hanging from the wall depicting images of Palestine, Scotland, and other regions with significant independence movements. On most of the shirts, “independència països Catalans” is written on the chest in gold and red. These colors are significant because they are the colors of the Catalan flag, which flies over Barcelona as the provincial flag (Figure 6.1). One of the tourists, in fluent Spanish, begins to talk to the men about their store and their movement. The first man, the friend of the shopkeeper, responds in Catalan, the local language, which shares a great deal of similarities with Spanish, but is in a different language family and not mutually intelligible. The tourist replies, in a half-Catalan/half-Spanish mix, that he is trying to learn Catalan but can only speak Spanish. Nevertheless, the friend of the shopkeeper refuses to speak to him in Spanish. The shopkeeper steps in and speaks in Spanish, recognizing the tourist’s plight, and sells him several shirts.

The shopkeeper’s friend’s behavior may seem strange and unaccommodating to a foreigner, especially one who was clearly sympathetic to his cause, but only able to express such sentiment in Spanish. However, it is indicative of the passion that the shopkeeper’s friend felt about the Catalan nation. He is a Catalan nationalist, one of a growing number that believe Catalonia should be independent from Spain.



*Figure 6.1: Catalan flag flying over Montjuïc in Barcelona<sup>2</sup>*

In 2016, there were 7.5 million people living in Catalonia, a region in northeastern Spain that borders France and the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 6.2). Most of these people live in Barcelona, which has a population of 5.5 million and is the political, cultural, and economic center of Catalonia.<sup>3</sup> Catalonia has been seeking independence from Spain since it was conquered hundreds of years ago, but the modern independence movement emerged in the beginning of the twentieth century. The modern independence movement has had significant impacts on the internal affairs of Spain.



*Figure 6.2: Catalonia's position in northeastern Spain<sup>4</sup>*

The Catalan nation has been under the control of Spain since the mid fifteenth century. For the past six hundred years, the Catalans have been subject to oppressive measures including being denied the right to use and teach their language, excluded from political participation, and denied the ability to express their cultural tenets. Today, the Catalans feel they are subject to exploitative taxation and poor public services. The Catalan independence movement has taken the form of mass protest, political engagement, and court battles and has seen an increase in support following the global recession of the late 2000s. This case study provides insights into the strategy of using peaceful tactics to gain autonomy and, ultimately, independence.

### **The Context of the Catalan Nation: History and Culture**

Catalonia, or Catalunya to use the Catalan spelling, is a region in northeastern Spain centered around the major city of Barcelona. The Catalan nation is founded in a history that stretches back to the Middle Ages. The Catalan history and culture are central to the identity of the

people who live in the region. Catalan nationalist claims are the remnants of the Kingdom of Aragon, a great Mediterranean empire that stretched from Spain to Sicily and southern Italy. Aragon ceased to exist upon the union of the Crown of Aragon and the Kingdom of Spain in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The central government allowed a great deal of local rule to continue until the war of Spanish Succession (1702-1715), when a Bourbon dynasty was established in Spain.<sup>5</sup>

During the nineteenth century, Catalonia benefited from an increase in industrialization that fed an increase in population. Social conflict between economic classes erupted occasionally, especially as Catalonia developed a strong socialist movement. The Spanish Republic was established in 1931 upon the fall of the Bourbon Monarchy. Catalans sided with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War that followed the collapse of the short-lived Republic. Many socialists, anarchists, and communists fought alongside the Republicans, thus creating what was both a war of nations and a war of classes and ideologies.<sup>6</sup>

The Republicans lost the war and Francisco Franco's nationalist government ruled until his death in 1975. Franco's regime imposed a great deal of cultural repression including bans on the Catalan language and the Catalan national dance, the *sardana*.<sup>7</sup> This period is the center of narratives surrounding Catalan oppression; it is still a living memory for many that grew up or lived through the Franco era. Following Franco's death, Spain established a constitutional monarchy, with a constitution that allowed for an autonomous Catalonia that includes its own Parliament and President.

Following the 2008 recession, calls for outright independence have increased in the face of Spanish economic and political difficulties. Catalonia is a heavily industrialized region of Spain and pays more in taxes than it receives in return via services. This gap, coupled with political deadlock over finances in Madrid, has created an increased Catalan national sentiment and support

for independence. Large protests of hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom wave the Catalan independence flag (Figure 6.3), have brought the Catalan national movement to the forefront of Catalonian – and Spanish – politics. The Catalan government has continually called for referendums on independence to be voted upon by the Catalan people. These referendums have been deemed unconstitutional by the Spanish constitutional court.



Figure 6.3: *La Senyera Estelada*, the flag of the Catalan independence movement<sup>8</sup>

The Catalans have retained their common identity for hundreds of years, despite the challenges of expressing themselves in a country that, at times, outlawed and actively worked to destroy Catalan cultural expression. Their common identity is centered around language, customs, and a worldview that stands distinct from that of the Spanish people.

Language is a critical piece of Catalan nationalism. Catalan is the official language, along with Spanish, of the autonomous region of Catalonia and is spoken in the Western Mediterranean, as shown in Figure 6.4.<sup>‡</sup> Franco's regime often claimed Catalan was a dialect of Spanish, an attempt to invalidate one of the central tenets of the Catalan nation. Though similar, Catalan is not a dialect of Spanish, nor is it mutually intelligible. Catalan is just as closely related to the languages of southern France. There has been an increase in urbanization and immigration into Catalonia that

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<sup>‡</sup> Catalan is the official language of the principality of Andorra, where it is spoken as the common tongue. Andorra is a microstate and is the only fully independent Catalan-speaking country. It shares close economic, political, and cultural ties with Catalonia and France.

has been occurring since the mid twentieth century; Spanish is consequently the common tongue between, for example, a native Catalan and a Spanish speaking immigrant to Barcelona and therefore more often used as a primary language between the residents of Catalonia, particularly in cities like Barcelona. Inhabitants of rural areas are far more likely to speak solely Catalan. The language varies slightly in the south and in the north, where it crosses the border into the Roussillon region of France.<sup>9</sup>



Figure 6.4: A map of the Catalan language<sup>10</sup>

The Catalan people, like those living in neighboring Spain and France, are predominantly Catholic. They have a distinct culture that has produced and influenced some famous artists, in particular Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, and the architect Antoni Gaudi. Barcelona, as the cultural center of Catalonia, is home to many of the works of these artists in museums like the Picasso Museum and historic buildings like Casa Mila and La Sagrada Familia.

Antoni Gaudi is the most famous and influential Catalan architect. He practiced in the late 1800s into the early 1900s. His works have shaped the cityscape in Barcelona. La Sagrada Familia, by far his most famous work, is a cathedral that has been under construction for more than a

hundred years and is a living expression of Catalan art. When completed, La Sagrada Familia will be the largest cathedral in Europe; though it already towers over Barcelona, it now stands at roughly half its intended height. Park Guell, a stunning expression of art that overlooks the city, provides a view of Barcelona like no other. Figure 6.5 shows La Sagrada Familia under construction as seen from Park Guell. Gaudi's use of light in his work is perhaps no better captured anywhere than Casa Mila or Casa Batllo, now museums and cultural icons. These works of art are points of pride for the Catalan people.



*Figure 6.5: The view from Parc Guell with the Mediterranean Sea and La Sagrada Familia under construction in the distance<sup>11</sup>*

### **The Spanish Civil War & Linguistic Oppression**

Catalans have sought greater autonomy and independence throughout the last century because they perceive an economic, cultural, and political oppression. They have been subject to measures that deny them the right to speak their own language, political legitimacy and

participation, and the ability to express their cultural tenets. These experiences have created a belief amongst Catalans that the Spanish government cannot and will not serve their interests, and independence is a necessity.

The Catalan history of oppression began under Philip IV of Spain with taxation policies that led to a decade long rebellion.<sup>12</sup> Only 50 years later, Felipe V, the Bourbon king of Spain became the next oppressor. Catalonia had sided with the Hapsburg claimant to the throne in the War of Spanish Succession, not Felipe V. Felipe V won the war and captured Barcelona on September 11, 1714; September 11<sup>th</sup> is now considered Catalan national day. Felipe V targeted the Catalan nation, eliminating their parliament, suppressing the language, and closing the University in Barcelona.<sup>13</sup>

During the nineteenth century, class conflict became increasingly apparent in Spain. Catalonia had developed industry that essentially created the only real proletariat in Spain during the nineteenth century. In contrast, Castilian Spain remained largely conservative and agricultural. Catalonian industry was based largely on textiles, and the industrial growth fueled a growth in population as well. The Spanish government largely disregarded Catalonian industrial interests, which led to a brief tax-payer strike and the imposition of martial law. Labor strikes and anarchist attacks were not uncommon in the early twentieth century in Catalonia. In 1924, increased political activism led to a military coup in Spain and subsequent authoritarian rule, further denying the Catalan people a political space.<sup>14</sup>

On July 18, 1936, the Spanish Civil War began as half of the Spanish army declared its support for the growing Fascist Party, the Falange, led by General Francisco Franco, and half the army declared its support for the Spanish Republic. The war raged for roughly a year, until May of 1937, before Catalans threw their full support behind the Republic. By this time, it was too late

to stop the nationalist advance. With the assistance of the Germans and Italians, Franco's forces closed in on Republican forces in early 1938, leaving devastation in their wake that is significant to the Catalan common national memory and enshrined in its cultural works.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 6.6: Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, depicting the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War<sup>16</sup>

Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali are two famous contributors to Catalan art and known around the world. Many of Picasso's famous later works are housed in museums in Madrid – a move seen by some Catalans as stolen culture. One of Picasso's most famous works, *Guernica* (Figure 6.6) is important to the Catalan national identity and experience. *Guernica* depicts the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. It is an expression of the horrors of war, a memory that is still close in the minds of the Catalan people. The bombing killed an estimated 1,000 people and destroyed much of the town.

Similar bombings caused significant damage to Barcelona in January of 1938, killing as many 2,200. Food rationing and power shortages plagued the Catalonian cities as the war dragged on. It took another year for the nationalists to reach Barcelona. The fall of Barcelona in 1939 effectively marked the end of the Spanish Civil War and the beginning of the Franco regime. As

Xavier Munoz, a witness to the war and later a leading Socialist politician said, “the war had finished, but peace had not arrived.”<sup>17</sup>

In the years following the war, Franco’s regime executed an estimated 200,000 prisoners on top of the 500,000-1,000,000 that were killed in the war. Franco held nearly 110,000 arbitrary military tribunals and brutally repressed any remaining guerilla fighters. He generally acted with impunity from the international community due to the latter’s focus on the Second World War. Nearly 400,000 Republicans fled Spain as Franco’s forces advanced; many of them later found themselves in Nazi concentration camps or returned to Spain and were prosecuted by the Franco regime.<sup>18</sup>

Under Franco, the Spanish insisted that Catalan was merely a dialect of Castilian Spanish. This is not true; in fact, Catalan has a long, rich history as a language that is separate from the literature and history of Castilian Spanish. Franco sought to eliminate the Catalan language entirely because he saw that the language connected Catalans to a strong sense of Catalan nationalism. Catalan was subsequently banned from schools, media, and public use. Franco had Catalan books burned and fined citizens on the street for the use of Catalan. Oddly, Catalan was allowed in universities and private secondary schools.<sup>19</sup> Franco’s regime supported the use of Castilian Spanish with signs that read “Speak the language of the Empire”.<sup>20</sup> Franco’s regime even required that children be christened with Castilian names, not Catalan ones.<sup>21</sup>

In a modern context, finances dominate the oppression perceived by the Catalan. In 2012, 80% of Catalans said they believed that Catalonia is underfunded. This sentiment has been exacerbated by the 2008 recession and the austerity measures that the Spanish government subsequently instated. Catalans feel that their money goes to subsidize lazy lifestyles in other parts of Spain, particularly Andalusia. They point to toll roads in Catalonia whereas roads are free in

other parts of the country and to parking that costs twice as much in Barcelona than in Madrid. Some citizens, in an act of civil disobedience, have refused to pay the tolls; instead, they pay the fines. Alfonso López Tena of the Solidaritat Catalana party said during a rally in the coastal town of Mataró, “Spain also steals [their] pension money. We pay Swedish-style taxes but have Senegalese-style public services”.<sup>22</sup>

Spain’s central government collects taxes from the autonomous regions but does a great deal of redistributing of resources to poorer regions.<sup>23</sup> The difference between taxes sent to the central government and those returned in services in Catalonia was 16 billion euros in 2012. That amounted to 8% of the region’s gross domestic product. In 2012, rising debts forced Catalonia to ask for and accept a 5-billion-euro bailout from the central government – a moment that was humiliating for many Catalans.<sup>24</sup> Identification with this economic oppression, cultural denial, and devastation of war and terrorism creates a unique common experience and sense of urgency to independence.

### **The Struggle for Autonomy in Catalonia**

Catalonia has a nearly 500-year long history of changes in the degree of autonomy that has seen both progress toward greater autonomy and complete centralized control from Madrid. There have been five major phases of the Catalan independence movement: the early monarchy (1469-1716), decentralizing the monarchy (1716-1833), fighting for autonomy (1833-1929), a taste of independence (1924-1939), and a new political movement (1939-2010). Since 1714, Catalonia has exercised *de facto* independence for only one year, between 1936 and 1937. It has seen its regional government, the Generalitat, suspended and disbanded on multiple occasions. The modern independence movement has been entirely political; an aversion to violence stems from the painful recent memory of the Spanish Civil War and Basque terrorism in the twentieth century.

### Catalonia (1469-1716): The Early Monarchy

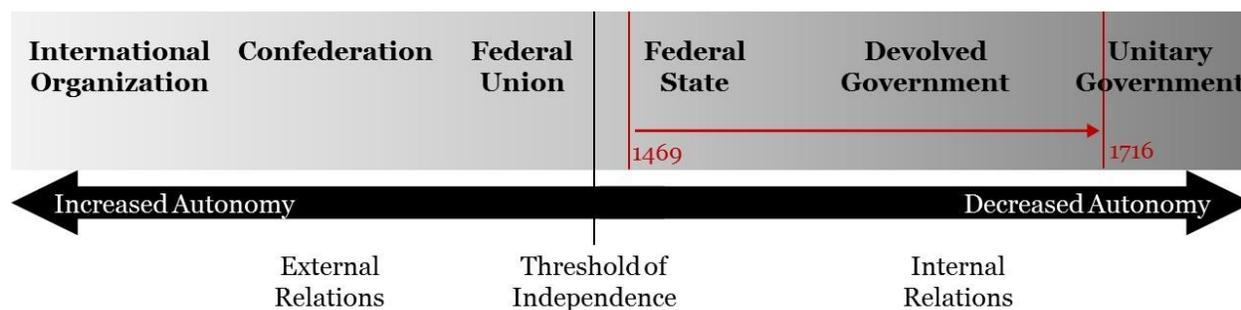


Figure 6.7: Catalan Shift in Autonomy, 1469-1716

Figure 6.7 shows that the Catalan experience during its first couple centuries under the Spanish crown did not differ much from its previous state until 1716. In 1469, Isabella of Castile was married to Ferdinand of Aragon, then ruler of Catalonia as well. This union set the foundation for one united Spain, but left in place many of the local legal structures. Thus, Catalonia remained effectively autonomous.<sup>25</sup>

In the early 1600s, Catalans felt the tax and draft policies of King Philip IV were unfair and oppressive. The Reaper's war (1640-1652), was started by farmers, preparing for the annual harvest, as a violent reaction to King Philip IV's policies. During the Reaper's war, Catalonia was briefly declared a republic under French protection but with significant French influence. Catalonia was later reoccupied by Spanish forces in 1652.<sup>26</sup> Catalonia later lost about a fifth of its population when the province of Roussillon was ceded to France in the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659.<sup>27</sup>

Nearly fifty years later, the Catalans rebelled once more, this time meeting with a more severe response from the Spain monarchy. Catalonia had backed the Hapsburg claimant to the Spanish throne, instead of Felipe V. The 1714 fall of Barcelona and end to the Spanish War of Succession resulted in a drastic change in Catalonian autonomy. In reprisal, Felipe disbanded the Generalitat, removing all remaining vestiges of local rule, and brought Catalonia under centralized control by 1716.

### Catalonia (1716-1833): Decentralizing the Monarchy

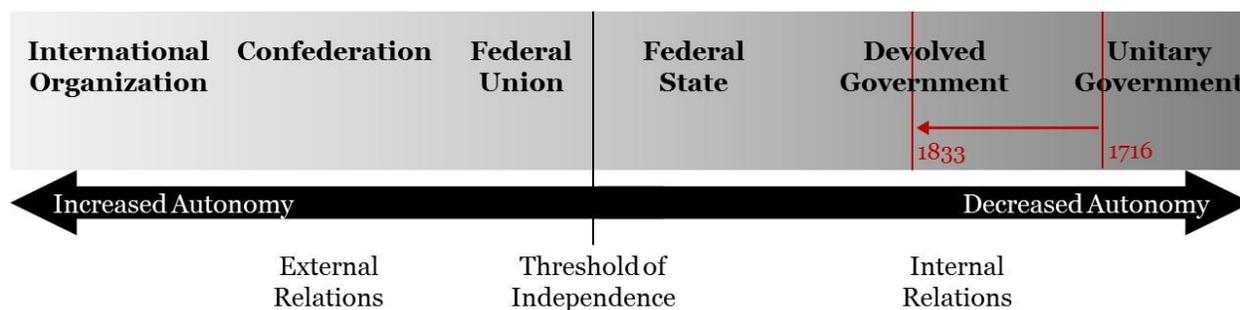


Figure 6.8: Catalan Shift in Autonomy, 1716-1833

From 1716 to 1833, the Catalans struggled to regain some of the autonomy it had once enjoyed under the crown. Figure 6.8 shows that Catalans had regained some autonomy in 1833. From 1812-13, Napoleon Bonaparte briefly annexed Catalonia into France. It was quickly returned to Spain following an armistice signed with the Duke of Wellington. A series of power struggles for the Spanish throne known as the Carlist Wars played out largely in Catalonia throughout much of the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

In 1833, in response to one of these wars, the old regional divisions of Spain were erased by the monarchy and 49 new provinces were established (Figure 6.9); they were modeled on the French *departements*. These provinces were grouped into “historical regions”, which had no actually power devolved to them, but would, 150 years later, become the basis of the autonomous regions that exist today. The historical region of Catalonia included (and continues to do so) the provinces of Barcelona, Gerona, Lerida, and Tarragona; each province had its own governor, appointed by the central government in Madrid. This represented an imposition of centralized policy, but it was implemented “through the intersecting and overlapping networks of social power which exist at [the] national and local level[s].<sup>29</sup>



Figure 6.9: Territorial Division of Spain, 1833-1978<sup>30</sup>

#### Catalonia (1833-1924): Fighting for Autonomy

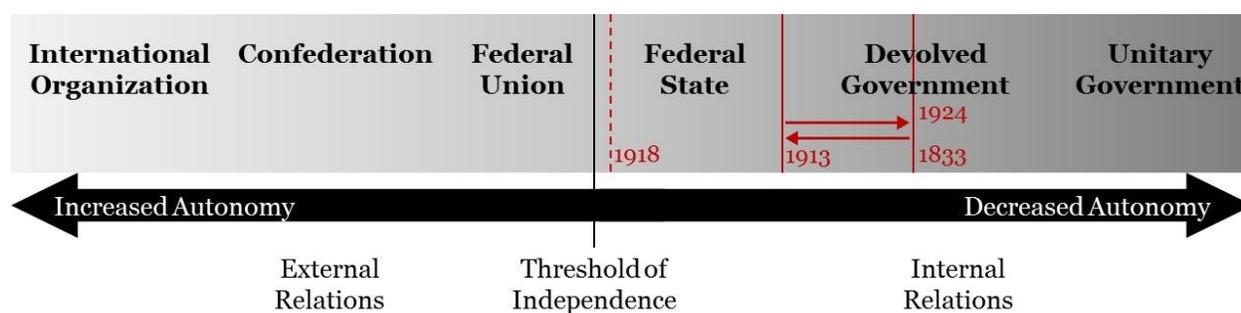


Figure 6.10: Catalan Shift in Autonomy, 1833-1924

Figure 6.10 shows the shifts in autonomy that Catalonia experienced as its modern nationalist movement developed and attempted to gain regional autonomy between 1833 and 1924. Catalan nationalist sentiment increased in the latter part of the nineteenth and earlier part of the twentieth centuries. As a result, in 1913 Catalonia gained limited self-government with the creation

of the Commonwealth of Catalonia in 1913, under the administration of President Enric Prat de la Riba. This limited self-government was a unification of the responsibilities devolved to the provinces into a regional federation called the Mancomunitat.<sup>31</sup>

In 1918, following World War I, Catalonia was given an opportunity to be an autonomous region, but rejected it. Factions internal to Catalonia wanted to achieve full independence and did not want to strengthen the Spanish constitutional monarchy by cooperating with it. The leverage that these factions intended to exert collapsed soon after the opportunity passed and Catalonia went through a period of social divide and internal political fighting. In response to instability in the Spanish government, General Primo de Rivera dismantled the parliamentary system and established a dictatorship, though he left the monarchy in place. He dismantled the Mancomunitat and, in a major setback to Catalan autonomy, returned the region to more direct centralized control.<sup>32</sup>

#### Catalonia (1924-1939): A Taste of Independence

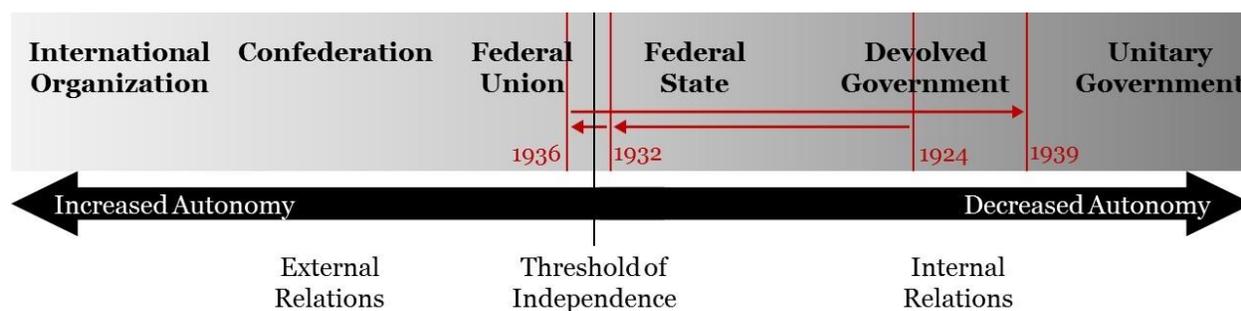


Figure 6.11: Catalan Shift in Autonomy, 1924-1939

In 1931, the monarchy collapsed, setting in motion a series of events that led to brief Catalan autonomy and the Spanish Civil War; these major shifts in autonomy are shown in Figure 6.11. On April 14, 1931, a “Republic of Catalonia within the Democratic Federated Republic of Spain” was proclaimed by Francesc Macia, founder of the Democratic Nationalist Federation, a Catalan political party which later changed its name to Estat Catala. The Generalitat was restored

and Macia was installed as the provisional President of the shadow Generalitat just prior to the restoration of the body. A republic was established in Madrid, supported by this new Catalan government. A plebiscite held in Catalonia returned a near unanimous vote in favor of Catalan autonomy with a turnout of nearly 80 percent. In 1932, Catalonia was given a fully autonomous regional government with an executive, a parliament, police powers, and administrative sovereignty over internal affairs; by 1934, all of these powers had been transferred to the Catalan government.<sup>33</sup>

In the early twentieth century, Catalonia increasingly felt the social effects of the growth brought on by the industrial revolution over the nineteenth century. A growing proletariat, with anarchist and socialist ideological sentiments, became increasingly at odds with the republican and capitalist Spanish elite. In 1934, brewing class tensions erupted in a socialist rebellion in Catalonia. It failed to gain ground and was quickly defeated by a brigade of Spanish regulars. The Republic suspended Catalonia's autonomy and reinstalled central administration. Only two years later, Francisco Franco's rebellion brought autonomy back to Catalonia. While the Republican government was focused on combatting Franco, Catalonia exercised *de facto* independence, fueled by anarchist revolutionaries, between July of 1936 and May of 1937. During this time, the Generalitat took control over customs, railways, docks, hydro-electric plants, and currency printing. In May of 1937, the Republican government, fleeing Franco's forces, moved to Barcelona and Catalonia began to devote its attention to the civil war in order to retain the autonomy it enjoyed.<sup>34</sup> In 1939, Franco's forces captured Barcelona, ending the war and establishing centralized rule once more.<sup>35</sup>

### Catalonia (1939-2016): A New Political Movement

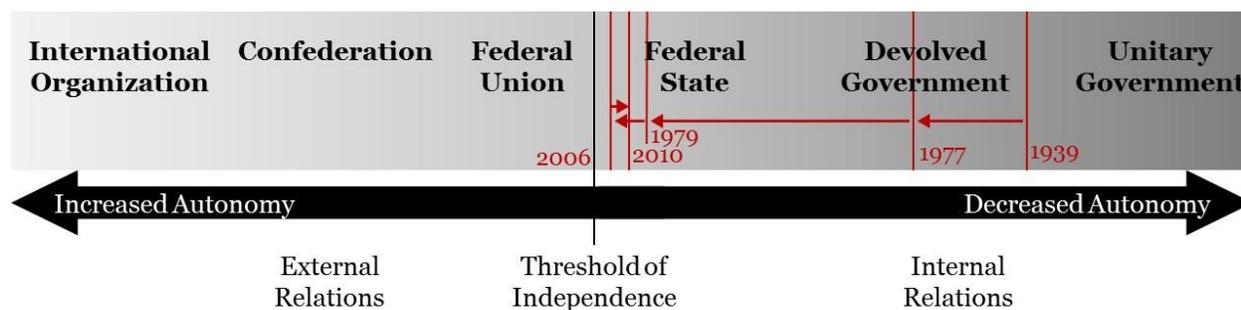


Figure 6.12: Catalan Shift in Autonomy, 1939-2010

Figure 6.12 shows the show acquisition of autonomy by the Catalans following the death of Francisco Franco, which was the catalyst for the modern political movement. During his reign, Franco had reestablished and maintained the monarchy by fashioning himself as regent of the throne. In 1975, Francisco Franco died and Spain came under the authority of his successor, Juan Carlos. King Juan Carlos soon began the slow transition to democracy. In 1977, regional governments were reestablished, restoring the Generalitat. In 1978, the new constitution recognized that Spain was not one nation, but rather several distinct ones. In 1979, Catalonia was given the recognition as a nation and given a statute of autonomy.<sup>36</sup> Catalonia now had its own parliament and executive. By 1983, 17 autonomous regions had been established throughout Spain (Figure 6.13).<sup>37</sup>

Catalan autonomy did not change greatly again until 2006, when the Catalanian parliament, the Spanish congress, and the people of Spain ratified a new statute of autonomy, which gave Catalonia greater control over many sectors of government, including new internal administrative divisions called vegueries and financial autonomy.<sup>38</sup> In 2010, after a lengthy challenge in court, the Spanish Constitutional Court gutted many of the provisions of this statute, cutting back Catalan language status, powers on immigrations, taxes, the judiciary system, the vegueries, and the right to call referendums.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 6.13: Autonomous Regions of Spain 1983<sup>40</sup>

### Protest and Referendum: The Tactics of the Catalan Nationalist Movement

The modern Catalan nationalist movement has been primarily a peaceful political one. Though moments of violence such as the Spanish Civil War or the War of Spanish Succession have existed, these were not wars initiated by the Catalans solely for the goal of greater autonomy or independence, nor have they been the tactics used systematically by the nationalist movement. Instead, they were used to retain autonomy or to react to succession crises in the Spanish monarchy. The peaceful political tactics include protests, political engagement, and referendums organized primarily through political parties. Policies have been enacted by nationalist politicians, for example, that force movies to be in Catalan and compel professors to be fluent in Catalan.<sup>41</sup> Politicians like Artur Mas, former President of Catalonia, are considered leaders of this movement.

Mas has appealed for Catalan separatism on multiple occasions. During his time as President of Catalonia, he repeatedly called for a referendum on Catalan independence. In a televised speech in 2012, Mas argued that it was the “duty and responsibility” of Catalans to “leave for future generations a country that they can be proud of” and that his commitment to doing so democratically included a desire for “all the citizens to decide freely and peacefully our future as a nation”.<sup>42</sup>

Mas and others invoke feelings and memories of hundreds of years of oppression as a means of stirring nationalist sentiment. However, they focus primarily on the fiscal imbalance between Catalonia and the central government because financial worries are more pressing in the minds of the people. As a means of claiming sovereignty – and thereby justifying the right to rule – nationalist leaders even claim a history of independence that goes back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

The Catalans have organized this independence movement through the creation of political parties. The roots of political engagement began in the late 1800s with the rise of support for a federalist structure that would grant autonomy to all lands of the former Crown of Aragon; this movement was led by Valenti Almirall. He founded the first daily Catalan newspaper in 1880, *El Diari Catala* and in 1882 founded what was essentially the first Catalan political party, *Centre Catala*.<sup>43</sup>

In 1901 two Catalan political coalitions, the Centre Nacional Catala and the Unio Regionalista, created the first Catalanist ticket in the national parliamentary elections. They won four seats, disrupting the traditional two party system that existed in Spain, which did not include Catalan nationalist groups. The Centre Nacional Catala and the Unio Regionalista later combined to form the Lliga Regionalista, which was the defining force in Catalan politics from 1901-1923. In 1914, Lliga successfully took majority control of the government of the newly established

Mancomunitat.<sup>44</sup> Lliga's rise in the early twentieth century brought Catalan nationalism into the Spanish political scene, creating a dynamic in Spanish politics that has persisted in the ensuing century.

Though Franco shut Catalans out of the Spanish political realm, following his death and establishment of Catalonian autonomy, the Generalitat was dominated by the Convergencia i Unió, a Catalan nationalist political party. The party lost power to the Socialists in the early 2000s but won a great deal of support in 2010 amid the economic turmoil of the Great Recession. Artur Mas, who became President of the Generalitat, pledged to move forward with a referendum on independence.<sup>45</sup> He began the movement toward an independence referendum in 2013 when the Catalonian regional parliament approved a declaration of sovereignty. This set the stage for a referendum on independence to be held in November of 2014. The Spanish court and parliament subsequently invalidated that measure as unconstitutional, forcing Mas' vote to be a non-binding one rather than binding. The referendum was held despite the ruling and returned an 80% vote in favor of independence after about two million Catalans voted.<sup>46</sup>

For his role in the referendum – and for defying the court order not to hold it – Artur Mas was charged with disobedience against the state and wrong-doing as a public official. In response to these charges, the Catalan people protested in solidarity with him as he went to court in February 2017.<sup>47</sup> Figure 6.14 shows Mas waving to a crowd of supporters as he arrived for his court appearance in 2017. Mas was convicted in March 2017 and fined €36,500 and barred from office for two years.<sup>48</sup>



*Figure 6.14: Former Catalan President Artur Mas as he arrived to court in Barcelona<sup>49</sup>*

Polls have continuously showed increased support for Catalanian independence. A 2016 poll found support for independence to be growing significantly since the recession of 2008. Of the respondents, 67.2 percent said Catalonia had an “insufficient level of autonomy”. In the same poll, 41.6 percent indicated their desire to see it become “an independent state”, whereas roughly an equal number said they wanted to be either Catalonia to be an autonomous community (26.5%) or a state in a federal Spain (20.9 %). A slight plurality of 47.7 percent answered yes when asked “Do you want Catalonia to become and independent state”.<sup>50</sup>

Major annual national day protests have also become a systematic method of gaining power, increasing awareness, and increasing public support for the Catalan independence movement. In 2012, a protest in Barcelona gathered 1.5 million people from the city and surrounding provinces. For several years, organizers only organized marches in Barcelona, so those that wanted to march had to come from the countryside where support for independence is

highest. In 2015, protests were organized in four other major cities in Catalonia, bringing the protests closer to the supporters of independence. Figure 6.15 shows one of these protests.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 6.15: Supporters of Catalan independence march in the street on Catalan national day<sup>52</sup>

Catalan politicians have used legal battles to defend – and define – their autonomy and have both challenged and defended a number of issues in court since the fall of the Franco regime. In 1983, the Catalan Generalitat enacted the Linguistic Normalization Law which defined Catalan as an equal language with Castilian Spanish. It was intended to “encourage and extend the presence of the Catalan language in public administration, education, and mass media”. This law was challenged by the Spanish government and made its way through the courts until the national Supreme Court confirmed its legality in late 1994.<sup>53</sup>

One of the most important methods of Catalan national expression is through sports. In 2010, Catalonia became the first province in Spain to outlaw the practice of bullfighting, on the grounds that it constituted cruelty to animals. When the ban was approved, it was part of the larger Catalan Independence conversation and came just one month after the Spanish Constitutional

Court's decision on the 2006 Catalan Autonomy statute. Bullfighting is a Spanish tradition, though it was also historically popular in Barcelona. Because the bullfighting ban was politically motivated, rather than simply motivated by animal rights, the ban did not outlaw a Catalan tradition called the *correbous*. The *correbous* are summer festivities where bulls are taunted and chased through Catalan towns. The bullfighting ban forced the closure of the last bullfighting ring in Barcelona. The ban was overturned by the constitutional court in 2016 because the practice of bullfighting was “enshrined in the cultural patrimony of the Spanish state” and therefore could not be prohibited. It was enshrined as such by the time of the court's ruling because the conservative Popular Party controlled government in Madrid had bullfighting defined as part of Spanish culture after the ban went into place.<sup>54</sup>



Figure 6.16: The Plaza Monumental bullring in Barcelona Spain in 2011; it was inaugurated in 1914 and shut down after 97 years<sup>55</sup>

Today, football (soccer) is one of the biggest venues of the Catalan independence movement. The Barcelona team, FC Barcelona, has a fierce rivalry with the Madrid team, Real Madrid. Many FC Barcelona fans are openly in favor of independence and not afraid to express the sentiment through sports. In the 2015-2016 season, FC Barcelona was fined by the Union of European Football Associations for “waving Estelada flags at matches and shouting *Independencia!* at minute 17.14 of each half”. Fans did this in commemoration of the fall of Barcelona in 1714. In the same year, independence flags were banned at the national soccer tournament because they “incited violence”. This measure was overturned by the courts by May of that year, in time for the Copa Del Rei Final against Sevilla.<sup>56</sup>

### **Cultural Exclaves: Consequences of Seeking Independence**

The consequences of seeking independence have been felt by the Catalan people for hundreds of years. The Catalan nationalist movement has repeatedly destabilized Spanish politics, resulted in increased oppression, and the loss of autonomy. The modern movement’s peaceful tactics have been a result of access to the political sphere and the ability to engage in peaceful advancement of nationalism without violent repression.

Today, the independence movement has increased nationalist sentiment in Catalonia. Catalonia has also reached its greatest level of autonomy except for the brief period during the civil war from 1936-1937. This autonomy has led to a resurgence in Catalan culture and national pride in Catalonia. However, the independence movement is limited to the borders of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia. Catalan communities outside of Catalonia are not included in the Catalonian polity and are not able to benefit from its independence. This lack of inclusion and inability to engage in the success of the Catalan independence movement has led to the continued decline in Catalan culture outside of Catalonia.

In Alghero, Italy, one city remains a bastion of Catalan language and culture on the island of Sardinia. Catalan soldiers first arrived in the fourteenth century. About 25 percent of the residents speak Catalan, but it is not popular amongst young people and scarcely taught in schools. Italian authorities have neither encouraged the use of Catalan nor have they discouraged it – however, the ban on Catalan in Spain under Franco may have encouraged its use because doing so was a form of resistance. Residents of the town feel that losing the language is akin to losing a key part of their identity.<sup>57</sup>

In France, nearly 450,000 Catalans live just over the border in the province of Roussillon, which was transferred to France in the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. A French plan to reduce the country's number of regions includes placing these “Catalans of the North” in a new province, which they worry will make them invisible. In particular, they object to naming the new region after the Occitan culture and want to include Catalan in the new name. A local pastry shop owner argued, “A name gives identity, so this reform has made us a lot more aware of who we really are, especially since were being told that our culture will be buried under a name that has never been ours”. One Catalan performer added, “We have our identity and culture, so don't erase us from the map” then went on to sing a popular protest song that included the lyrics, “We're not Occitans, we're Catalans, we're not going to change our accent nor the color of our blood”.<sup>58</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Catalonia today sits closer to the threshold of independence than it has since the 1930s. It has broad support for independence within its borders. Yet it lacks international support for its movement and the permission from the Spanish government to attain independence. To gain sovereignty, it will need the support of the international community; in Europe, that means it would need to join the European Union following independence. In early 2017, one European Parliament

member rejected the idea of Catalonian independence on the grounds of a questionably legal referendum, but that sentiment could change if the Spanish government gave its permission to hold another referendum.<sup>59</sup>

The Catalan independence movement has nevertheless been thus far quite successful. Though its autonomy has been taken away on several occasions, it has made measurable progress. Independence feels like a real possibility for many Catalans and their continued engagement in protests, civil disobedience, and referendums suggests as much. Political engagement has kept this a peaceful movement, but without Spanish cooperation, Catalonian independence will not happen. It remains to be seen if denying this political engagement will lead to a more violent reaction.

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<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, (New York: Harcourt, 1952) 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Catalan flag flying over Mont Juic in Barcelona*, McQuillin Murphy, July 3, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> “Population. 1900-2016”, *Official Statistics Website of Catalonia*, accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=245&lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> Catalonia’s position in Spain, *Wikimedia Commons*, accessed February 14, 2017, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/2b/Localizaci%C3%B3n\\_de\\_Catalu%C3%B1a.svg/2000px-Localizaci%C3%B3n\\_de\\_Catalu%C3%B1a.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/2b/Localizaci%C3%B3n_de_Catalu%C3%B1a.svg/2000px-Localizaci%C3%B3n_de_Catalu%C3%B1a.svg.png)

<sup>5</sup> David T. Gies, “A Country in Spain”, *The Wilson Quarterly* Vol. 18 No. 1 (Winter, 1994) 72.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism”, *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 6 No. 1, (1971) 40.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-73.

<sup>8</sup> “Catalan Flags”, *Barcelonas.com*, accessed February 12, 2017, [http://www.barcelonas.com/catalan-flags.html#gallery\[pageGallery\]/0/](http://www.barcelonas.com/catalan-flags.html#gallery[pageGallery]/0/).

<sup>9</sup> “Catalonia Profile”, *BBC*, accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20345071>.

<sup>10</sup> Map of Catalan Language, *infoCatalonia.eu*, accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.infocatalonia.eu/w/beyond-barcelona/>

<sup>11</sup> *Parc Guell in Barcelona Spain*, BCN Events and Crawls, accessed February 14, 2017, <http://www.bcneventsandcrawls.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Park-Guell-in-Barcelona-Spain.jpg>

<sup>12</sup> “Catalonia Profile – Timeline”, *BBC News*, January 15, 2015, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20345073>.

<sup>13</sup> David T. Gies, “A Country in Spain”, 72.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism”, 22-31.

<sup>15</sup> John Payne, *Catalonia: History and Culture*, (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2009) 100-107.

<sup>16</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 11 ft. by 25.6 ft., Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, accessed February 12, 2017, <http://www.pablocicasso.org/guernica.jsp>.

<sup>17</sup> John Payne, *Catalonia*, 107-109.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-117.

<sup>19</sup> David T. Gies, “A Country in Spain”, 73.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism”, 49.

<sup>21</sup> Earl L. Rees, “Spain’s Linguistic Normalization Laws: The Catalan Controversy”, *Hispania* Vol. 79 No. 2 (May, 1996) 314.

<sup>22</sup> Giles Tremlett, “Catalonia’s tax burden: ‘If you put up with it they keep taking your money’”, *The Guardian*, November 20, 2012, accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/20/catalonia-tax-burden-independence>.

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- <sup>24</sup> Giles Tremlett, “Catalonia’s tax burden”.
- <sup>25</sup> David T. Gies, “A Country in Spain”, 72.
- <sup>26</sup> “Catalonia Profile”, *BBC News*.
- <sup>27</sup> David T. Gies, “A Country in Spain”, 72.
- <sup>28</sup> “Catalonia Profile – Timeline”, *BBC News*.
- <sup>29</sup> Mary Vincent, *Spain, 1833-2002: People and State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 25-27.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.
- <sup>31</sup> Stanley Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism”, 27-29, 39.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.
- <sup>35</sup> John Payne, *Catalonia*, 105.
- <sup>36</sup> “Catalonia Profile – Timeline”, *BBC News*.
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## Chapter 7

### **Conclusion**

*“Nation building has become a term of derision, denoting entanglement in someone else's business without furthering US interests. However, if we strip away the political rhetoric, nation building can serve US interests depending on the relevant circumstances, as is the case with many questions in the post-Cold War world. Nation building should be viewed as a tool for advancing US foreign policy goals, not as a goal unto itself.”*

John Kerry<sup>1</sup>

## Summary of Findings

The ramifications of the endeavor to attain greater autonomy by stateless nations in the pursuit of independence are extensive. Stateless nations have been the impetus for conflicts across centuries, creating refugee crises, terrorist movements, civil unrest, civil war, etc. The cases of Catalonia – in the War of Spanish Succession, the Carlist Wars, and the Spanish Civil War – and Kurdistan – in the civil wars of the twentieth century – illustrate that when nations are denied a political voice, they react violently. When they are given political access, such as that of modern Catalonia, or that which the Kurds have seen in Iran, Turkey, and Iraq at different times over the last century, they pursue autonomy peacefully; thus, states can avoid the worst manifestations of nationalist independence movements through peaceful political engagement.

Understanding the relationship between sovereignty and autonomy is crucial to understanding national independence movements. The spectrum of autonomy provided in Chapter 2 can reflect the actual state of affairs of any given nation. It depicts a national polity's ability to rule itself. Attaining both the ability and right to rule simultaneously is the preferred course of action for nations and they seek to do so through political means. Gaining autonomy through extralegal means, thereby gaining the *ability* to rule without the *right* to do so, is therefore the secondary course of action for nations seeking statehood.

The desire of nations to engage in the political process is clear through the frameworks that they employ. Nations create political parties as the primary unit of organization. Political parties are channels for the rhetorical and political tools employed by nationalist independence movements. The Catalans and the Kurds have created and used their own political parties. When faced with political denial, these political parties are also used to organize violence, as is the case

with the Kurdish PKK in Turkey and PJAK in Iran, the Basque ETA in Spain, and Sinn Fein in Ireland.

Nations also look to political leaders as leaders of their movements. Masoud Barzani is president of the Kurdish Regional Government and leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP). Artur Mas is the former President of the Generalitat, the government of the autonomous region of Catalonia. These men are considered authoritative figures because of their political status and therefore have the ability to steer the conversation about national independence. The rhetoric they use therefore has a weight to it that the common person may not have. However, in the age of social media, the power of the common person's voice is changing, making it easier for people that do not hold an official leadership role to break into one.

Rhetoric is used to reinforce the concept of a nation in the minds of its people. It engages common language, culture, and history, especially history of oppression. A history of oppression is essential to national independence movements because it creates a sense of urgency behind the endeavor to cross the threshold of independence. For the Catalans, this history of oppression is centuries of central rule from Spain. Most recently it is the policies of the Franco regime and modern financial disagreements with the central government. For the Kurds, the history of oppression is younger and more violent. Kurds have faced Arabization programs in Syria and Iraq; in the latter, they have fought a series of civil wars with the Iraqi government, one of which involved a devastating genocide.

The Al-Anfal Genocide of the Kurds raises questions that are worth noting because of their implications for national independence movements. Why, when the Kurds had fought several earlier civil wars with the Iraqis, did the Iraqi state react with the level of severity seen in 1988? What was different about this war that caused the genocide to occur? It is the context of a civil war

that may provide some insight to the question. Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay look at the conditions in which mass killings occur during a civil war. They argue mass killings are employed under two conditions: 1) in a last ditch effort by the state against guerilla tactics or 2) when the rebels are successful by enjoying mass support, killing many government soldiers, or winning the war.<sup>2</sup> Krain argues that “major structural change caused by wars, civil wars, decolonization, and extraconstitutional changes can provide such windows of political opportunity” that allow for genocide and mass killings to take place and that there is a connection between “large-scale conflict and state sponsored murder”.<sup>3</sup>

The possible results of ‘major structural changes’, driven by ‘extraconstitutional’ influences, are the primary complicating factor of attaining independence through violent means. While these ramifications are less likely when independence is through peaceful political means, they remain possibilities and thus complicate political solutions as well. Nevertheless, political solutions are primarily complicated by their eponym: politics. Political solutions require consensus, capable bureaucracy, and stability – attributes for which the international community is not renowned.

### **Policy Implications for the International Community**

Stateless nations are prolific and persistent. Their plights are not new, nor are they likely to go away. I believe the international community needs to approach stateless nations in a new way. The following are my personal policy implications and suggestions, not an application of any current country’s policy or application of international law. I provide these recommendations with the hope they will challenge the international community and individual states to be deliberate and proactive with policy and actions directed toward stateless nations.

The international community, led by the United Nations, should focus on creating proactive policies that can be applied by international bodies and individual states to reduce and avoid the adverse effects that can stem from independence movements of stateless nations. The United Nations should support what is already enshrined in international law: the right to self-determination. However, this right of self-determination is currently too vague; it is thus a necessity to create clear guidelines for what groups qualify, processes for how they might go about deciding to change their level of autonomy or become independent, and then recommendations on how to create new states.

The denial of legitimacy and a voice in the international community for stateless nations is irresponsible and ignores the lessons of history regarding the perseverance of national independence movements. Denying nations legitimacy creates conflict and destabilizes entire regions, leading to crises to which the international community is often forced to react, either collectively through multi-lateral intervention, or through individual state response.

Creating policies for qualifying nations is perhaps the most difficult challenge. Nations are ambiguous social constructs – their very nature makes them flexible and dependent on the active identification of people. Nations can have few or many people, spread across a large area or a small region. A nation is a sort of know-it-when-you-see-it entity – unfortunately, that is not a sufficient definition. Former Secretary of State John Kerry argues that “for [state-building] to succeed, a sense of nation must already exist”.<sup>4</sup> Nations have cultures, languages, and histories that distinguish them from the states in which they reside. If they actively identify around these aspects and can create political parties to further their interests, then they exist and these nations and their representative parties should be considered legitimate.

To create a peaceful political process for nations to gain more autonomy, states must simultaneously act unilaterally and through international institutions. States should create legal frameworks to allow the people of a nation to vote in referendums, or through governing bodies that represent just the nation, to determine the level of autonomy that they desire. If the desired level of autonomy is independence, then states should include a legal framework for secession. The international community should support and encourage these efforts through international institutions such as the United Nations – if need be through the imposition of sanctions, thereby making it costlier for a state *not* to engage in a peaceful political process. Stateless nations that exist across international borders threaten to destabilize neighboring states if independence is achieved for part, but not the whole of the nation. States and international institutions that seek to be proactive leaders in the international community should assist in creating consensus amongst states where these cross-states nations exist in order to mitigate this risk of destabilization.

In the context of Catalonia, creating such a democratic process means that the Catalan people – that is the people who live in the autonomous region of Catalonia – should be allowed to vote for independence in a referendum or via their governing body, the Generalitat of Catalonia. If they choose to join Catalonia, the people of Valencia and the Balearic Islands should be allowed to do so in the same manner. Spain has in the past insisted that such a vote be by the whole country – however, this is a political move that would clearly keep Catalonia in Spain and violates the ‘self’ in self-determination. The international community should pressure the Spanish government to allow Catalonia to vote on independence. The European Union should welcome Catalonia into the European Union and make the transition seamless – so long as Catalonia meets the standards the European Union requires for its membership. The United Nations should likewise do the same and welcome Catalonia as a member of its General Assembly.

Kurdistan presents a more complicated case. The Kurds have achieved *de facto* independence in Syria and Iraq and are unlikely to relinquish that power peacefully. Due to the destabilized state of affairs in the region, it is likely an international solution will be required. The international community should begin a process to create new borders in the region and allow regions to democratically elect to leave or stay in the states in which they lie. This would require the cooperation of Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey – cooperation which is unlikely to come about without further incentives from an international coalition. For the latter two countries, independence next door would likely further destabilize their own regions with high Kurdish populations.

Creating states is an incredibly difficult endeavor, even when the institutions required for governing are inherited from a previous regional or autonomous government and already in place. It becomes even more difficult when those institutions must be built from the ground up. It is here where the international community must learn to engage effectively in state-building – often mischaracterized as nation-building. The international community, through international institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank, should provide the support the new state needs to build its economy, security forces, and governing capabilities. It is important to note, as former Secretary of State Kerry does, that “the purpose of [state-building] should not be to build a nation where none exist, but to provide a period of stability for people who already possess a national identity, and to assist in the development of the structures of a state.”<sup>5</sup>

Because states are rooted in land, determining the territory they would gain from an agreement is another of the most difficult decisions faced in the process of creating a new state. For Catalonia, this is relatively simple because the borders of the autonomous region – and neighboring autonomous regions that might choose to join Catalonia – follow closely the places

inhabited by the Catalan nation. Kurdistan on the other hand – and many other stateless nations – must deal with provincial boundaries that do not necessarily include the entirety of the nation.

Unfortunately, the boundaries of a nation are never as clear cut as the boundaries of states; therefore new and old states should expect some members of their nation to be outside of their borders even at the end of the political process and should take measures to assist in relocation those on the ‘wrong’ side of the border.<sup>§</sup> In Iraq, a secessionist agreement would certainly include the provinces already governed by the Kurdish Regional Government, but contentious discussions would no doubt ensue over the other parts of the country with large Kurdish populations and the areas that were historically Kurdish but do not have a Kurdish majority or plurality. In Syria, it might just include the areas that have attained *de facto* independence. However, in Turkey and Iran, determining which provinces would be included would be much more difficult, especially because these countries lack any existing Kurdish regional governments. Figures 7.1 and 7.2, both of which include an independent Kurdistan, are examples of what the Middle East might look like with its borders redrawn to better reflect national groups.

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<sup>§</sup> In 1947, following independence from the British Empire, Pakistan and India parted on religious lines. In the region of Punjab, the even mixture of Hindus and Muslims provided no clear geographic division. The border was subsequently drawn through the center of the province and a large-scale refugee crisis began as people scrambled to get on the ‘right’ side of the border. The result was horrendous violence and large-scale death.



Figure 7.1: An alternative map of the Middle East charted by four experts of the region based on its more “natural” (ethnic, historical, and physical) divisions, inspired by the work of Lawrence of Arabia<sup>6</sup>



Figure 7.2: A map of an alternative Middle East developed by an Army major and presented at the US National War College<sup>7</sup>

Divisions of land would be further complicated by the resources and infrastructure that sit on or under that land. The Kurds and Iraqis would certainly disagree over the fate of the oilfields of Northern Iraq; the same is true about the oil fields of northeastern Syria. Distribution of resources, debt, and security equipment would also complicate such an agreement. States should allow enlisted military personnel to enlist in new security forces, while international support is provided in training and supplying those new forces. Perhaps even a proportionate division of military assets based on population would be appropriate. New states should also expect to shoulder their share of a state's debt and should do so based on their relative share of the gross domestic product. To do such calculations on a per capita basis could otherwise incentivize relatively wealthy regions – such as Catalonia – to secede and burden the rest of the country with unbearable debt disproportionate to their relative ability to generate wealth.

### **Further Considerations: Quantitative Analysis, Local Geography, and Historic Success**

The limitations of this thesis are primarily that it provides no quantitative analysis and is confined to two case studies. Entire books can and have been written on the nationalist independence movements of Catalonia and Kurdistan. I chose the two case studies because they have rich history of events, both horrifying and inspiring. Those that I chose are contemporary, but historical stateless nations with nationalist independence movements – both successful and unsuccessful – could provide critical insight into the practices that led to the successes and failures of those movements.

A quantitative analysis could provide statistical support to this thesis and determine the percentages of stateless nations that choose peaceful or violent strategies in their endeavor for independence. A quantitative analysis could also provide insight on the parts of the world that have higher rates of stateless nations which can be more susceptible to destabilization and the other negative impacts of nationalist independence movements.

If I were to expand this thesis, or explore areas that were not explored, I would focus on the local impact and manifestation of nationalist movements. The impact on the geography of the streetscape would be a fascinating and valuable contribution to this study; the introductions to both case studies provide brief glimpses of this sort of contribution. A case study on a stateless nation that has been successful in crossing the threshold of independence would be a valuable contribution as well. Such a case study would provide an in-depth look at the actual impacts of crossing the threshold of independence on the politics, economy, and identity of a nation, both positive and negative, rather than just the theoretical impacts laid out in Chapters 2 and 3. Further exploration of the challenges of dividing states and establishing new ones would be a useful contribution, especially when applied to specific cases studies.

The contemporary rise in nationalism around the world would be a valuable phenomenon to apply this thesis and prompts challenging questions. Are these essentially nations of people who *feel* stateless and underrepresented by their government? How do these movements use existing nations to further their causes? The development of nationalism, and its potential use of existing nations, is likely to increase the tensions within and between nations in the world, not alleviate them. In turn, more nations will seek to ensure they are represented and attempt to protect their national identity.

### **The Importance of Nations**

Finally, we must once again confront the question of why stateless nations deserve to be given a place in the international community. What is the vested interest for the international community – and for individual states – to support national independence movements? What, beyond decreased violence and political turmoil, do newly independent nations contribute to the world? Why, in a world seemingly so inclined toward globalization, metropolitanism, and cosmopolitanism, do nations matter anymore?

Globalism, metropolitanism, and cosmopolitanism have an identity-blending and therefore identity-threatening characteristics. Do these global trends cause nations to feel their identity is threatened and react because of it? In the United Kingdom, the vote to leave the European Union was driven by the English nation. The Scottish, Welsh, and Irish voted decidedly to ‘stay’. The results of the ‘Brexit’ vote to leave the European Union has caused First Minister Nicola Sturgeon of Scotland to react by calling for a referendum on Scottish independence.<sup>8</sup> It would therefore behoove governments of the world to better understand these movements and address them proactively if they seek to mitigate conflict.

Nations – even those that have been stateless for centuries – have endured. They are likely to continue doing so. Nevertheless, they face an existential threat if not given the proper space on the international stage. The Kurdish diaspora risks losing its sense of nationhood as conflict spreads it across the world in a growing diaspora. The Catalan nation risks losing its identity if Spanish remains the primary language used in its largest cities. The Uighurs of Xinjiang, China risk losing their uniqueness if their way of life is dismantled to make room for Chinese settlers.

Stateless nations are groups of people yearning to be allowed the freedom to express their version of humanity on the world stage. The preservation of this perspective is in the international community's interest – even at the expense of states that might lose territory, population, and a tax base. Ultimately, avoiding the negative factors that threaten international and individual state interests in stateless nations is the incentive for proactively providing a peaceful pathway to independence.

Nations are inherently expressions of an identity. Each nation has a uniqueness; one that is rooted in history lived only by their ancestors, a culture that can only be celebrated by those people, and a language that can only be spoken and truly understood by themselves. When nations are denied a space to live, thrive, and evolve, they die. When nations cannot practice their unique dance, it is lost; when they cannot speak their own language, it is forgotten; when nations cannot recall their history, it becomes legend. In losing these things, the world loses a unique perspective, an inimitable expression, of what it means to be human.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Kerry, "Nation Building: Can It Serve America's Interest?", *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1994), 51.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "Draining the Sea: Mass killing and Guerilla Warfare", *International Organization* Vol. 58, No. 2 (2004): 401-403.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew Krain, "State-Sponsored Mass Murder: The Onset and Severity of Genocides and Politicides", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (1997), 355-356.

<sup>4</sup>John Kerry, "Nation Building", 54.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 52.

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<sup>6</sup> Cullen Murphy, “Lines in the Sand”, *Vanity Fair News*, December 31, 2007, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2008/01/middle-east-cultural-political-map>.

<sup>7</sup> “Proposed Map of the Middle East”, *The M+G+R Foundation*, 2007, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://www.mgrfoundation.org/ProposedMapOfME.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Scottish Independence: Nicola Sturgeon to Seek Second Referendum”, March 13, 2017, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-39255181>.

<sup>9</sup> Kat Eschner, “Four Things That Happen When a Language Dies”, *Smithsonian.com*, February 21, 2017, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/four-things-happen-when-language-dies-and-one-thing-you-can-do-help-180962188/>.

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## ACADEMIC VITA

Carver P. Murphy

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### EDUCATION

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The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA *Class of 2017*  
Paterno Fellow, Schreyer Honors College  
B.A. History ▪ B.A. Political Science ▪ Minors in Chinese (Mandarin), Asian Studies, and  
Geography

#### Thesis

*Stateless Nations and Their Endeavor for Independence*

Supervisor: Dr. Roger Downs

Reader: Dr. Deryck Holdsworth

#### Awards

President's Freshman Award

Spring 2014

Dean's List

### PROFESSIONAL & HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

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Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society  
Gamma Theta Upsilon Honor Society  
Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society  
National Society of Collegiate Scholars

Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society  
National Honor Society  
North American Vexillological Association  
Toastmaster's Youth Leadership Program

### WORK EXPERIENCE

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**The Centre County Planning and Community Development Dept. | Bellefonte, PA**

**Historic Preservation Intern**

**January – May 2017**

- Surveyed and researched flood risk buildings of historic value in Milesburg, PA
- Identified and cataloged historic buildings not previously identified by Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
- Determined flood mitigation measures to protect historic value of buildings researched

**The Centre County Community Foundation | State College, PA** **January 2015 – May 2017**

**Centre PACT Advisor**

- Advising the Centre County Community Foundation working to establish a Youth Advisory Committee for grant making and development in Centre County modeled on the Berks County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committee
- Led development simulations and advised the writing of request for grant proposals

**Lion Ambassadors: Penn State Student Alumni Corps | State College, PA      2015 – 2017**

**Lion Ambassador**

- Communicate Penn State's history, school spirit, and tradition to prospective students, current students, administration and alumni through touring and university-wide programming

**Service Chair**

- Found opportunities for the membership to engage in and provide service to the University and greater State College community

**Committee to Elect Adam Hinds | Pittsfield, MA      May – August 2016**

**Assistant Campaign Manager**

- Oversaw day-to-day operations in winning state senate campaign headquarters, organized phone banking and canvassing, supervised interns and volunteers, and participated in strategic campaign meetings
- Assisted candidate with policy briefing, research, and materials
- Scheduled, tracked, and organized campaign finances, fundraising calls, and fundraising events.
- Frequently used campaign data software and crafted communications

**Penn State International Affairs and Debate Association | State College, PA      2014 – 2017**

**Vice President for Membership**

**2016 – 2017**

- Address the concerns of the membership, maintain healthy organizational culture, and promote good morale in the organization
- Coordinate efforts to recruit, welcome, and retain members through social events, outreach, and a series of internal programs designed to enhance the membership experience

**Integrity Counselor**

**2016**

- Introduced and successfully enacted comprehensive policy recommendations to provide for structural and cultural reforms to a failing organization
- Implemented a new logo branding strategy
- Authored and assisted in the complete review, overhaul, and implementation of the constitution
- Acted as an internal reporting mechanism for the organization
- Provided proactive counsel to the Executive Board and General Membership

**Pennsylvania United Nations Conference Committee Head**

**2015, 2016, 2017**

**Undersecretary for Committee Development and Crisis Development, PHUNC**

**2016**

**United Nations Campus Advocates | State College, PA**

**Vice President for Strategic Planning**

**2015 – 2016**

**State Senator Judy Schwank | Reading, PA**

**May – August 2015**

**District Office Intern**

- Coordinated neighborhood outreach in the Wyomissing Heights and Hyde Park Neighborhoods of Berks County, going door to door listening to concerns, providing information, and addressing issues
- Interacted with constituents on a daily basis over the phone or in person in the district office

- Worked on a bill for the Senator to introduce that sought to help students be informed about their student debt and prepare them for the long-term burdens of student debt
- Worked on several research projects and reports including taxes and issues concerning sewage systems.
- Coordinated a press conference for PLCB grants to local municipalities and schools

**The State Theatre | State College, PA**

**Development Intern**

**October 2014 – March 2015**

- Coordinated an online Giving Tuesday Campaign and raised \$2,630
- Launched, coordinated social media communications, and recruited volunteers for an online ambassador program as part of the Giving Tuesday Campaign
- Authored and consulted on The State Theatre’s development plan in preparation for a complete strategic plan, outlining goals, expectations, and processes related to grant applications and board engagement

**The Berks County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committee | Reading, PA**

**Grant-Awarding and Development**

**2009 – 2013**

- Drafted proposals and helped lead the granting of over \$80,000 dollars to local non-profits
- Assisted in raising over \$24,000 for the Berks County Community Foundation’s Youth Fund

**Team Leader**

**August 2012 – June 2013**

- Coordinated a team of 5 on non-profit site visits and development asks, ran and presented in meetings, and conducted development simulations

**Russian National Foundation’s Youth Philanthropy Conferences** **Ivanovo, Russia (2012)**  
**Togliatti, Russia (2009)**

- Traveled to Russia to meet with Russian Youth Banks (Youth Advisory Committees) to exchange ideas, compare organizational operations, share work done in our communities, gain insight into our respective cultures, and learn and teach about youth philanthropy on an international scale

**Presented on youth advisory committees to the Philanthropy New Zealand Annual Conference** **2013**

**Berks Conservancy’s Eco-Adventure Camp | Reading, PA**

**Creative Energy Director**

**Summers 2013-2014**

- Worked with children ages 4-12
- Developed detailed weekly lesson plans focusing on environmental sustainability concepts and exercise

**Counselor**

**Summers 2011-2012**

**Volunteer Counselor**

**Summers 2009-2010**