

# Ontological Foundations of State Sovereignty

Danielle Limbaugh<sup>1,\*</sup>, John Beverley<sup>2,3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy, Cornell University, Ithaca NY, USA

<sup>2</sup>Department of Philosophy, University at Buffalo, Buffalo NY, USA

<sup>3</sup>National Center for Ontological Research, Buffalo NY, USA

<sup>4</sup>Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Buffalo NY, USA

## Abstract

State sovereignty plays a foundational role in international law and global governance, yet existing data representations treat it as an intrinsic and often binary property of states, obscuring disagreement, provenance, and normative structure. This paper presents first steps toward an ontological foundation for modeling state sovereignty that accommodates contested claims while preserving logical coherence. We characterize sovereignty as a role borne by states, grounded in normative expectations concerning authority, independence, and recognition, rather than as a purely empirical attribute. Drawing on international legal theory and United Nations practice, we distinguish justificatory principles such as self-determination from institutional mechanisms of validation, including bilateral and multilateral recognition. We identify three core features of sovereignty—sufficient internal authority, sufficient external independence, and recognition—and show how each is best understood normatively. To support formal representation, we introduce a lightweight structure linking sovereignty assertions to explicit acts of recognition and public documentation. This approach enables the representation of conflicting sovereignty claims without contradiction and allows differences in inferential weight among recognitions to be preserved. The proposed framework supports ontology-driven integration of geopolitical data, enabling transparent reasoning over sovereignty claims, their sources, and their practical significance in international contexts.

## Keywords

Ontology Engineering, State Sovereignty, United Nations, Formal Ontology, Rights, Ontology

## 1. Introduction

The work presented here is a short primer on the nature of state sovereignty and the importance of claims about it. Despite the centrality of sovereignty to global politics, there remains a significant amount of ambiguity and contradiction in the available data regarding whether, and to what extent, a state is sovereign — and perhaps even more importantly, concerning the provenance of such claims. Given the complexity of this domain, we here take first steps towards an ontology of sovereignty, by clearing up logical subtleties arising from how the domain is often characterized among various stakeholders in the international community. In this respect, we aim to ultimately provide scholars, policymakers, and legal practitioners with a more rigorous framework for navigating the intricate intersections of sovereignty, self-determination, and state recognition, laying groundwork for future ontology-driven research in international relations.<sup>1</sup>

We approach state sovereignty as an ontological phenomenon, emerging from claims, practices, and normative structures that shape the existence and recognition of states within the international community. Sovereignty has long occupied a foundational position in political theory, shaping both the relationships among geopolitical entities and the bonds between states and their citizens. It is inextricably tied to the normative and social frameworks that govern international interactions.

To ground the analysis, we take as a starting point the declarations of the United Nations (UN), which exert a significant and practical influence on the discourse surrounding sovereignty. UN declarations

---

*Proceedings of the Twelfth Semantic Technology for Intelligence, Defense, and Security (STIDS) Conference, October 22-23, 2024, Woodbridge VA, USA*

\*Corresponding author.

✉ dzl4@cornell.edu (D. Limbaugh); johnbeve@buffalo.edu (J. Beverley)

ORCID 0009-0006-8572-2409 (D. Limbaugh); 0000-0002-1118-1738 (J. Beverley)



© 2024 Copyright for this paper by its authors. Use permitted under Creative Commons License Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

<sup>1</sup>Whether this also means that claims about state sovereignty are metaphysically prior to sovereignty or perhaps merely epistemically prior is not addressed here.

frequently serve as flashpoints for international disputes and competing claims regarding sovereign status. Accordingly, the ability to model UN declarations concerning sovereignty constitutes a primary desideratum of this project. Our aim is not to attribute any intrinsic authority to the UN over the nature of sovereignty itself, but rather to recognize that the UN, as the preeminent forum for international diplomacy among sovereign states, provides a uniquely influential and widely acknowledged articulation of how sovereignty is operationalized in practice. Modeling data on sovereignty without reference to the UN would render the analysis purely theoretical and disconnected from the structures within which sovereignty is currently negotiated.

We approach state sovereignty as an *ontological phenomenon* emerging from claims, practices, and normative structures that shape the recognition and operation of states within the international community. Sovereignty is not treated as an intrinsic or purely empirical property of geopolitical entities, but rather as a role grounded in social and institutional relations. As such, it is inseparable from the normative frameworks governing international interaction.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section 2 highlights the complexity of state sovereignty. Examining data (mostly unstructured) on state sovereignty reveals why an ontological foundation is essential for addressing current challenges. Relevant sources of international law are then explored 3 to help discover the features of state sovereignty 4. These features pave the way for the formal modeling of the relationship between a state, the sovereignty role, and claims about that state bearing an instance of the sovereignty role 5. Finally, section 6 concludes.

## 2. The Complexity of State Sovereignty

L.F.L. Oppenheim sheds light on the intricate and contentious nature of state sovereignty when he says [1],

There exists perhaps no conception the meaning of which is more controversial than that of state sovereignty. It is an indisputable fact that this conception, from the moment when it was introduced into political science until the present day, has never had a meaning, which was universally agreed upon.

The complexity of state sovereignty arises for at least two reasons. First, international law holds immense importance in shaping the global order, yet it remains inherently under-described. Unlike domestic legal systems within nations, where centralized authorities enforce laws and provide definitive interpretations, the international sphere lacks a universal jurisdiction with comparable authority.<sup>2</sup> This absence of a cohesive enforcement mechanism or interpretative body results in ambiguity and inconsistency, leaving room for varied interpretations and disputes. Second, discussions about state sovereignty often result in miscommunication because the term “state sovereignty” is used in multiple ways. For instance, it can refer to normative beliefs, such as whether a particular state should or should not be sovereign. Normative beliefs such as this are widespread in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict [2]. Alternatively, it may describe the functional reality of sovereignty, such as whether a state does or does not operate as a sovereign entity. For example, while Ukraine is considered a sovereign state, its ability to exercise sovereignty is limited due to Russia’s external interference [3].

Given the complexities of state sovereignty, it is essential to distinguish between ambiguities introduced by data standards (e.g., naming conventions in GENC) and genuine ontological ambiguities about sovereignty itself. Our primary concern is modeling the latter. Data surrounding state sovereignty is

---

<sup>2</sup>There are organizations that attempt to provide such universal jurisdiction, such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which strives to provide a framework to address disputes between states, rooted in principles of international law that transcend national boundaries. However, international law is riddled with questions regarding the authority of such organizations, an issue magnified by the reliance in international law on voluntary participation and consent of sovereign states. States often choose to prioritize their own legal systems, political interests, or interpretations of international norms. Furthermore, the lack of a centralized enforcement mechanism means that compliance with international rulings often depends on diplomatic pressure and mutual interest, which can undermine the authority of these organizations.

sometimes vague or contradicts itself, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions. Consider Taiwan who considers itself sovereign and properly referred to as ‘The Republic of China’ [4]. The Geopolitical Entities, Names, and Codes Standard (GENC) implies Taiwan independence by not recording Taiwan as part of any other geopolitical entity. Yet, GENC also denies Taiwan its constitutionally self-given full name referring to it simply as ‘Taiwan’ [5]. The effect is to merely imply that Taiwan is independent but without endorsing Taiwan’s self-made claims about the nature of this independence; thus, implying independence without necessarily implying Taiwan’s sovereignty. Furthermore, consider conflicting claims made by China and Paraguay; China explicitly denies, while Paraguay explicitly endorses, Taiwan’s sovereignty [6]. If we assume that these claims are intended to be truthful assertions about Taiwan, then modeling the implications of these claims results in three incompatible realities about Taiwan.<sup>3</sup> 1) Taiwan is sovereign, 2) Taiwan is not sovereign, and 3) it is unknown whether Taiwan is sovereign. If we intend to capture the above in a logically coherent structured format, then these realities must be reconciled. Unfortunately, unlike the size or population of a country, we cannot easily (if at all) empirically measure sovereignty to add clarity or establish the veracity of claims. Another solution is required.

Despite this complexity, entities such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom exhibit stable, internationally recognized sovereignty, while other entities, such as Taiwan, face contested or incomplete recognition of their sovereignty. This is not merely a theoretical issue but is indeed a practical one, as sovereignty underpins critical aspects of the global order, such as entering treaties, resolving conflicts, engaging in trade, and maintaining diplomatic relations. Sovereignty plays a crucial role in shaping geopolitical affairs, influencing how states interact with one another. It is thus important that we have a robust understanding of the phenomenon. Two initial observations are in order. First, while one state may endorse some state’s sovereignty while another state denies it, these competing claims about a state’s sovereignty vary in significance. Not all claims on state sovereignty are equal. Second, while whether some state is sovereign may be contested, the claims themselves are not. For example, it is universally acknowledged that Taiwan claims sovereignty and China denies it; what is at issue is which of these claims is veridical. Preserving data about who is making specific claims on state sovereignty and when they are made is a strategy for tracking debates and motivations within this area. Furthermore, modeling who makes a sovereignty claim is the first step in modeling the practical significance of a sovereignty claim, both of which plausibly proceed modeling the veracity of a sovereignty claim.

### 3. Sources of State Sovereignty

The importance of state sovereignty is recognized in membership to the United Nations (UN) [7]. Alongside requiring unanimous approval by the Security Council and a two-thirds majority vote in favor, UN membership also requires agreeing to the UN Charter and its principle of sovereign equality among all [7]. Achieving international recognition as a sovereign state is not always straightforward, as it is often influenced by power dynamics and the prevailing international political climate. Once a territory is considered a sovereign state by the UN, the UN argues that no outside actor has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal or external affairs of a sovereign state [8].

We take care to distinguish between the normative ideals that justify claims to sovereignty — such as the right to self-determination — and the institutional mechanisms that validate sovereignty, such as UN membership and formal recognition. State sovereignty serves as the cornerstone of UN membership because the UN accepts the right to self-determination, roughly, the right to determine, to some extent, their own destiny. For example, the UN International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights 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.” [9] Similarly, the right to self-determination is further enshrined in the UN Charter: “the principle of equal rights and

---

<sup>3</sup>The inference pattern driving the implication being: assertion that  $p$ , therefore  $p$ .

self-determination of peoples.” [7] Moreover, self-determination is widely considered by legal scholars as the basis for justifying state sovereignty [10][11][12][13].

The right to self-determination is closely tied to sovereign statehood because state sovereignty is a means by which self-determination can be exercised. State sovereignty protects the right to self-determination and fosters an environment conducive to its exercise, enabling groups to exercise rights to determine their political, economic, and social future. Furthermore, the public and explicit recognition of sovereignty by some sufficiently powerful international community – like the UN – is essential for the realization of self-determination, as it grants the legal and political framework within which a people can shape their own destiny.<sup>4</sup> If, for example, a state were constantly subject to outside intervention, it would be unclear how self-determination could be achieved. UN recognition of sovereignty is a means by which such intervention is deterred. Self-determination requires the freedom to make decisions regarding a state’s political, economic, and social affairs without external coercion or influence. Continuous outside interference undermines this autonomy.

Relatedly, sovereign statehood thus described requires only sufficient authority and sufficient independence, as opposed to absolute authority and absolute independence. The absolutist view of state sovereignty holds that states are sovereign when they have absolute authority over domestic affairs and absolute independence from external actors. The unchecked power granted by the absolutist view may facilitate the oppression of its populace with impunity, thereby halting any ongoing self-determination in the territory, and thus conflicting with what seems to be the international community’s understanding of the referent of ‘state sovereignty’. For example, under the absolutist view, the unbridled power bestowed upon the sovereign state allows it to disregard international norms of jus cogens, a peremptory norm accepted and recognized by the international community from which no derogation is allowed and which can only be modified by a subsequent norm of international law having the same character [14]. There are norms of jus cogens against slavery, human trafficking, genocide, waging wars of aggression, and crimes against humanity. A state exhibiting absolute state sovereignty would possess the unchecked power to traffic or enslave its citizens, directly impeding self-determination. In short, state sovereignty understood in terms of the absolutism is not a means by which self-determination can be exercised; it is a means by which self-determination can be undermined.

More limited views of state sovereignty can, in contrast, be justified insofar as they promote self-determination [15]. Such a view of state sovereignty acknowledges constraints on a state’s authority and independence, such as arising from international treaties, supranational organizations, or agreements with other states that restrict certain aspects of the state’s autonomy. Limited sovereignty implies that a state’s freedom of action is circumscribed by external factors, imposing restrictions on its ability to govern and interact with other states autonomously. It is this more limited notion of state sovereignty that the UN has in mind, and the notion that will occupy us here.

## 4. Features of State Sovereignty

Crucial features of state sovereignty that emerge from both the legal text discussed above, as well as philosophical legal theory discussed below, include that a state exhibiting sovereignty:

1. exhibits sufficient internal authority over its territories;
2. exhibits sufficient independence from the international community; and
3. is recognized as sovereign.

Regarding the first two features, state sovereignty has two main aspects: an internal and an external component. These components are not distinct types of state sovereignty but are rather complementary, coexisting aspects [15]. Internal components of sovereignty are a state’s sufficient authority and control over its domestic affairs within its territorial boundaries. This includes, among other things, the ability to enact and enforce laws, maintain order, provide public services, and govern its population without

---

<sup>4</sup>This is not to imply that the recognizer somehow defines ‘state sovereignty’. Rather this is to acknowledge that there are practical realities to claiming to be sovereign without the means to defend this claim, like having a powerful ally.

external interference. It encompasses features such as the establishment of government institutions, the administration of justice, and the regulation of economic activities within the state. Importantly, this internal component is normative. Sovereign states should be legitimate governing authorities, although they may not be. Legitimate authority might be contrasted with coercive power. A state may exhibit coercive power to command and control without it being a legitimate governing power, as evidenced by the coherence of the statement “I obey your command out of fear for my life, but I do not acknowledge your claim to authority.” Of course, it may be that sovereignty cannot be had without some power, as Philpott recognizes when writing “If sovereignty is not mere power, neither is it mere legitimacy” [15].

Regarding the second feature, external components of sovereignty concern the normative expectation, grounded in international law and diplomatic conventions, that other actors will respect a state’s independence and self-governance. It involves the state’s recognition as a legal and political entity by other states and its entitlement to establish and maintain foreign relationships, enter into treaties and agreements, and represent its interests on the global stage.<sup>5</sup> External components of sovereignty promote an environment conducive to exercising self-determination. It also entails the protection of territorial integrity and defense against external threats or aggression. Independence is also normative. Outsider actors in the international community should not interfere in the affairs of sovereign states. This allows the sovereign state to exercise its authority within its territorial boundaries. However, the normative nature of independence makes sovereign independence distinct from the mere ability to act independently. For example, Ukraine is recognized as a sovereign state, meaning that outside actors should respect its autonomy and refrain from interference in its internal affairs. However, despite its normative sovereignty, Ukraine’s practical ability to act independently within its territory is deeply constrained by Russia’s interference [16].

The upshot of this is that state sovereignty concerns what should be the case not necessarily what is the case. This means that while state sovereignty is meant to promote or protect a people’s right to self-determination, this does not imply that the peoples of a sovereign state are in fact able to be self-determined.<sup>6</sup> In fact, a state in duress may still be a sovereign state. For example, even though in 2024 Haiti is in duress, it still has the recognition needed by the UN to be considered a sovereign state.<sup>7</sup> In this way state sovereignty is analogous to a right to self-defense; a right to self-defense is meant to promote and protect self-determination at an individual level, and yet one can have a right to self-defense without the capability to exercise that right.

While even states in duress can be sovereign, when a state does not have enough authority and/or independence, questions about the state’s sovereignty may emerge. This implies that there may be circumstances in which the justification for state sovereignty can be overridden. To help motivate when justifications for state sovereignty may be overridden, compare state sovereignty with parental authority. Just as there are good reasons for parental authority, there are good reasons for sovereign states. Justifications for parental authority stem in part from parents providing care for children when they are unable to care for themselves by providing food, shelter, health, education, and safety, as well as the acknowledgment that parents are in a privileged position to know the needs of their children. Importantly, these justifications for parental authority can surely be overridden and thus the parental authority undermined. Parental authority can be overridden when, for example, the child is placed in imminent danger (such as violence or physical safety) and/or the child is not receiving adequate basic care in the form of, for example, food, shelter, health, and education. Similarly, justifications for state sovereignty include its instrumental value of protecting self-determination as discussed above; but this

---

<sup>5</sup>An anonymous reviewer pointed out that states can theoretically maintain sovereignty by self-isolation. Consider an island where people have lived independently from the rest of humankind for thousands of years. This group of people has established a democratic government through which they promote self-determination, etc. Their independence is guaranteed by their isolation, yet no other state has recognized its sovereignty or existence. In response we maintain that: if the isolated state has recognized itself as sovereign, then it may satisfy the recognition constraint defended in this proposal, assuming it promotes self-determination among its citizens as well.

<sup>6</sup>Whether sovereignty comes in degrees is not addressed in this paper, though this could be modeled by grading the realization of a sovereignty role.

<sup>7</sup>Haiti is still listed as a member of the UN as of 12 DEC 2024: See, United Nations. “Member States.” <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states>.

can be overridden when a state does not protect this right on a widespread scale; and, thus, there are violations of human rights on a widespread scale. At this point, the state is no longer serving its citizens by protecting their right to self-determination; and, thus, state sovereignty is no longer justified.

The third feature of state sovereignty is that it requires an act of recognition, that is, state sovereignty must be recognized to exist. Recognition can be categorized into reflexive recognition (self-recognition), bilateral recognition (recognition by individual states), and multilateral recognition (recognition by international bodies like the UN), each carrying distinct ontological weight and inferential significance. On our proposal, recognition must be at least reflexive – a state exhibiting sovereignty must recognize itself as sovereign - but may also be bilateral or multilateral. For example, while Taiwan has reflexive recognition and is thus sovereign according to itself – it is missing key external recognition from the international community to be sovereign in the predictable and defensible way that comes from being sovereign, according to powerful members of the international community. The importance of this broader recognition is evident. Without bilateral or multilateral recognition of state sovereignty by powerful members of the external community, there are greater risks of external influence in that state, which in turn may result in greater risks of internal control. A state unduly influenced by members of the international community to the extent that it is unable to protect and promote self-determination among its citizens, may find itself with only reflexive recognition of state sovereignty. As the recognition of Taiwan demonstrates, as well as the recognition of state sovereignty present in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not all recognitions of sovereignty carry the same weight (that is, predictable effect and defensibility). For example, a mere reflexive recognition is less valuable than recognition by members of the UN. In our present socio-political climate, recognition that the international community most cares about is the recognition of the UN.

## 5. The Formal Structure of State Sovereignty

We provide here steps toward a formal characterization of how state sovereignty relates to acts of recognition:

**SOV** If a state  $S$  bears a *Sovereign Role*, then some state  $S_1$  recognizes the sovereignty of  $S$ .

**REC** If state  $S_1$  recognizes the sovereignty of state  $S$ , then  $S_1$  publicly documents and declares recognition of the sovereignty of  $S$ .

With respect to **SOV**, a *Sovereign Role* is to be understood, roughly, as a feature borne by a state that grounds powers the bearer would not have without it, for example, the power to promote self-determination among its populace. With respect to **REC**, by logically pinning the Sovereign Role to recognition relations based on documented acts of communication, we can model conflicting claims about state sovereignty and track which claims carry greater or lesser weight.

Consider again the example of Taiwan. Instead of immediately entertaining an implied contradiction about the sovereignty of Taiwan, we can exploit **SOV** and **REC** by beginning with claims about the sovereignty of Taiwan. For example:

1. Taiwan claims that: “Taiwan is sovereign.” [4]
2. China claims that: “Taiwan is not sovereign.” [17]

From these claims a user can then assert recognition relations between geopolitical entities:

3. Taiwan recognizes the sovereignty of Taiwan
4. China denies the sovereignty of Taiwan

Finally, the user then can decide based on these claims whether the sovereignty of Taiwan should be asserted in their data. In the case where sovereignty is asserted, some associated recognition relation and claim would be logically entailed (from **SOV** and **REC**). Hence, the user would relate the sovereignty of

Taiwan to the relevant recognition of that sovereignty, like from (3), and the instances of communication, like from (1), where that geopolitical entity expressed recognition of said sovereignty.

Importantly, while this approach allows us to leverage such data without contradiction, it also helps track the weight of various data points (or claims). For example, in this case, while the user may assert in the data that Taiwan is as a matter-of-fact sovereign, the data would reflect that the only associated recognition (in our toy example) of this fact is reflexive, from (3). Were the user to include other data, then Taiwan's sovereignty would be understood in the context of those additional claims, which could be far weightier than the mere reflexive claim in (1).

Clearly, state sovereignty can persist in the face of disagreement. One might ask, what happens when a state's sovereignty is recognized by some but explicitly denied by others? The answer partly depends on who affirms and who dissents. If, for example, the affirming entities are the UN and entire world order, such as is the case for the USA, Canada, and then UK, then such affirmation will have a great impact on the state's ability to have sufficient authority and independence. On the other hand, if the affirming entity comes only from a reflexive recognition, and the UN does not affirm the state's sovereignty, then the state's sovereignty will be of little consequence. Such is the case for Taiwan. As stated above, to be a sovereign state requires recognition as such; however, not all recognitions are created equal. Importantly, just because some state denies the sovereignty of another state does not mean it will act according to that denial; the converse is also true.

## 6. Conclusion

We have outlined first steps towards a formal characterization of state sovereignty, one that is sensitive to UN declarations while also accommodating disagreement and competing claims. The complexities of state sovereignty, as highlighted through examples like Taiwan and Ukraine, demonstrate that the interplay between legal frameworks, international recognition, and political realities, and a full explication of the phenomenon will require careful exploration of each. Much work remains to refine this theory, including full axiomatization of recognition relations, modeling of conflicting claims through formal contradiction patterns, categorization of recognition types by inferential weight, and integration with provenance models to capture claim sources and contexts.

## Declaration on Generative AI

No use of AI was made in the writing of this paper.

## References

- [1] L. F. L. Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise*, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1905. URL: <https://archive.org/details/internationallaw12oppe>.
- [2] United Nations Human Rights Council, *Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem, Technical Report A/HRC/50/21*, United Nations, 2022. URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiopt/2022-10-19/Report-COI-OPT-14Sept2022-EN.pdf>.
- [3] Council on Foreign Relations, *Ukraine: Conflict at the crossroads of europe and russia*, 2024. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>, accessed December 2024.
- [4] Republic of China (Taiwan), *Constitution of the republic of china (taiwan)*, 1947. URL: <https://english.president.gov.tw/Page/94>.
- [5] National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, *Taiwan*, 2024. URL: <https://nsgreg.nga.mil/genc/view?i=1078693>, accessed December 2024.
- [6] Associated Press, *Paraguay kicks out a visiting chinese envoy for urging its law-makers to turn their backs on taiwan*, 2024. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/>

paraguay-china-diplomatic-ties-taiwan-trade-784b083353b331bf9274a4666066beb4, accessed December 2024.

- [7] United Nations, Charter of the united nations, 1945. URL: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>, accessed December 2024.
- [8] United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of states and the protection of their independence and sovereignty, General Assembly Resolution 2131 (XX), 1965. URL: [https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga\\_2131-xx/ga\\_2131-xx.html](https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga_2131-xx/ga_2131-xx.html).
- [9] United Nations, International covenant on civil and political rights, 1966. URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>, accessed December 2024.
- [10] A. Margalit, J. Raz, National self-determination, *The Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990) 439–461.
- [11] W. Kymlicka, Minority rights in political philosophy and international law, in: S. Besson, J. Tasioulas (Eds.), *The Philosophy of International Law*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2010, pp. 377–396.
- [12] J. Waldron, Two conceptions of self-determination, in: S. Besson, J. Tasioulas (Eds.), *The Philosophy of International Law*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2010, pp. 397–413.
- [13] A. Stilz, *Territorial Sovereignty: A Philosophical Exploration*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2019.
- [14] United Nations, Vienna convention on the law of treaties, 1969. URL: [https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1\\_1\\_1969.pdf](https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf).
- [15] D. Philpott, Sovereignty: An introduction and brief history, *Journal of International Affairs* 48 (1995) 353–368. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24357595>.
- [16] U.S. News & World Report, A timeline of the russia–ukraine conflict, 2025. URL: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/slideshows/a-timeline-of-the-russia-ukraine-conflict?slide=27>, accessed December 2024.
- [17] Reuters, China says it takes ‘necessary measures’ to defend sovereignty over taiwan, 2024. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-reports-continued-surge-chinese-military-activity-2024-12-11>, published December 11, 2024.