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Who Gets Recognized? Portugal and Expert Membership in the League of Nations' Organisation for Intellectual Cooperation, 1921–1938

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Abstract

Haas's definition of an epistemic community assumes that experts are recognized, but says little about how recognition is conferred when states differ in standing. Using Portugal as a case, this article asks why the League of Nations' International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) admitted a Portuguese member only in 1934, 12 years after its creation and months after Portugal obtained a Council seat. It sets three institutional conditions, the scarcity of places, the criteria of national and cultural representation, and the standing of the state, against published studies and a reconstruction of the committee's roster. The roster shows that Portugal entered in a wave of 13 states admitted in 1930–1939, while Spain was represented throughout. The article finds that the record cannot yet separate the conditions, specifies the evidence that would, and shows that admission did not bring agreement.

INTRODUCTION

Which experts were recognized as members of a transnational community of experts, and who decided? Peter Haas's definition of an epistemic community lists recognized expertise among its features and then moves quickly to what such communities do with it, which is to shape the policy of states under uncertainty (Haas, 1992: 3). The step before that, the conferral of recognition, is usually left in the background. Yet in the interwar League of Nations, where intellectual cooperation was organized through a small international committee, a Paris institute and national commissions, access to the network was not open to every country's intellectuals on equal terms. This article asks what determined which states' experts were recognized as members of the League's intellectual cooperation network in the first place.

Portugal offers a useful case because it did not fit the usual expectations. It was a founding member of the League and a victor of the First World War, and its elite claimed a long university tradition. Yet it had no representative on the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) until 1934, 12 years after the committee's creation (Grandjean, 2018: 551). An earlier study of the case gave 1933 (Author, 2023a); this article follows the date in Grandjean's roster. In 1933 Portugal obtained the non-permanent seat on the League Council it had sought since 1920, and the regime that had just taken power at home, the Estado Novo, had balanced the national finances (Author, 2023a: 649, 653). The coincidence invites an explanation that treats the standing of the state, its political weight and its financial reliability, as a condition of its experts' recognition. That explanation is the one this article takes most seriously. It is also the one the evidence supports least securely, and the article's first task is to say so.

The article does four things. It defines the question and the case. It sets out three institutional conditions and one domestic condition bearing on Portugal's delayed admission and says what each would lead us to expect. It sets those explanations against the evidence already published in three archival studies of Portugal's relations with the League's intellectual cooperation (Author, 2023a, 2023b, 2024). And it asks what follows for the concept of an epistemic community. Its claim is deliberately limited. The published record is compatible with an account in which state standing mattered, and it makes some alternatives less plausible, but it does not show the mechanism. I specify what records would. I also show that

admission did not produce agreement: once Portugal's president of the National Commission sat on the ICIC, the commission rejected two of the League's main normative initiatives. This suggests that membership and normative alignment should not be merged in the concept.

A word on the state that appears throughout. The Estado Novo ('New State') was the authoritarian, corporatist regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar that replaced a military dictatorship established in 1926, which had itself replaced the First Republic. Its installation in 1933 is the political background to the events discussed here, and its nationalism is part of what the second half of the article examines.

RECOGNITION IN THE CONCEPT OF AN EPISTEMIC COMMUNITY

Haas (1992: 3) defined an epistemic community as a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within it. Its members share normative beliefs, causal beliefs, notions of validity and a common policy enterprise. I treat these as four questions put to a case: whether the participants shared a causal belief, shared criteria for validating knowledge, shared a normative agenda, and were recognized as a network. This is the use made of the concept in the historiography of interwar internationalism, where it has been applied to the League's labour and economic bodies (Van Daele, 2005; Kott, 2008; Clavin and Wessels, 2005).

The fourth question deserves more attention than the others, because recognition is something conferred by others and not something experts possess. Davis Cross (2013) makes the point in general terms: the authority of an epistemic community depends on its cohesion and on whether those it seeks to advise accept it. If recognition is conferred, then it can be conferred selectively, and the question of who confers it and on what grounds becomes a question about the setting in which the community operates. In the League, that setting included a body whose members were chosen by the Council and whose seats were few.

Two sociological vocabularies help to frame the question without replacing Haas's. Bourdieu (1986) distinguished economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, and treated symbolic capital as the form that economic and other capital takes when it is recognized as legitimate. On that view recognition is itself a resource, and it is acquired partly by converting others. Dezalay and Garth (1996) extended this vocabulary to transnational professional fields. Gieryn (1983: 781, 791–792) describes boundary-work as the rhetorical practice by which scientists distinguish their activity from non-science in order to expand their authority and resources, to exclude rivals as outsiders, and to protect their autonomy from outside interference. It fits the League's own efforts to present intellectual cooperation as technical and non-political, which can be read as boundary-work directed at autonomy, and it suggests that who counts as inside a body of experts is partly the outcome of such work. His cases concern scientists defining science and not an international body distributing seats, so the concept is used here as a sensitizing one and is not tested. I do not test Bourdieu's theory of capital, I do not claim that 'political' and 'financial' capital are Bourdieusian categories with measurable volumes, and I do not argue that a threshold of capital exists. What I borrow is the narrower idea that recognition may depend on

something other than the recognized person's competence, and I treat that as a hypothesis to be examined.

Two literatures bear on the question. The first is the Bourdieu-inspired work in international relations, which this article engages through one text. Bigo (2013) argues that transnational groups of professionals form fields that bring together agents of different nationalities and are not a higher level distinct from national fields, and that they can accumulate a specific symbolic capital, which in his case concerns risk and threat (Bigo, 2013: 63). He reports Dezalay and Garth's finding that no dominant state agent can limit competition and impose itself as the sole source of legitimate universalization, and that the competition between the spokespersons and experts of different states creates resources of its own (Bigo, 2013: 64). He adds that agents who circulate expert knowledge internationally have authority in that circulation only thanks to their national resources as experts in their own states and their capacity to link local interests with those of the exporters of their strategies, which he says may hold for professions that depend heavily on the symbolic power of the state while others develop a hidden discourse of resistance to it (Bigo, 2013: 69). Adler-Nissen's (2012: 4) introduction to a volume on Bourdieu in international relations makes a related general point: where neo-realism sees anarchy, a Bourdieusian approach sees hierarchy and holds that processes of exclusion are intrinsic to international society, so that the marginalization of some states cannot be explained by social interaction and role ascription alone, but by changing patterns of cultural and symbolic domination and the competition for power and prestige. She adds that 'states come with a history' (Adler-Nissen, 2012: 4). I use this only as a framing for the question asked here, namely whether the position of a state affected the recognition of its experts, and not as a test of Bourdieu's concepts. The relevance for this article is limited and specific. It supports treating the domestic base of an expert as part of what is recognized abroad, which is the logic of the fourth condition, and it supports looking at the allocation of places as a process in which experts also stand for national positions. It does not test either point, and the wider practice-theory literature in international relations is not engaged. The second literature is the sociology of expertise, which is engaged through one text. Eyal (2013: 869–870) distinguishes experts, the actors who claim jurisdiction over a task by professing their skill and credibility, from expertise, the capacity to accomplish the task better and faster, and argues that the sociology of professions has been a sociology of experts that treated expertise as an attribution, a quality possessed by virtue of recognition granted by significant others. He also argues that a purely substantive account of expertise, which would have the analyst decide who is truly expert, ends by treating expertise as a claim and an attribution as well (Eyal, 2013: 870–871), and he proposes that jurisdictional analysis be complemented by tracing the arrangements that make expert performance possible (Eyal, 2013: 872–873). This article takes from Eyal two limited points. First, what it examines is the recognition of experts, in his sense, and not the capacity of Portuguese expertise, about which the sources say nothing. Second, in his account recognition is conferred by significant others and depends on institutional arrangements, which is the premise of the three institutional conditions below. The article does not apply his network approach, and I do not claim that the ICIC case tests it. In what follows, 'expertise' is not treated as an objective quality that precedes recognition. It is treated as something the sources themselves present as a claim.

Taken together, Eyal and Gieryn suggest where to look in the ICIC. Eyal places the source of recognition outside the expert, in the attribution of significant others, and Gieryn describes the work by which a group of experts defines who is inside and who is outside, with autonomy from outside interference as one of its aims. The committee's own account of itself had both features. Its secretariat explained in 1924 that members were appointed 'not as representatives of their respective countries but on account of their personal achievements', and in the same letter that the Council had 'endeavoured as far as possible to give representation in the Committee to the big cultural groups in the world' (Nitobe, cited in Grandjean, 2018: 279). The first statement keeps the committee apart from governments, and in Gieryn's terms protects its autonomy. The second states a principle of allocation that is not individual achievement. A state that wished for a place had to address both: it could not ask as a government, and it could not ask as an individual, so it asked as a culture. That is what the Portuguese delegate did in 1923, and what the Portuguese record in the following years shows to have been the only vocabulary available to him. I offer this as a reading of the sources and not as a finding. It generates one expectation that can be checked in a fuller archival study, namely that requests for seats made in the language of individual competence would fail more often than requests made in the language of national culture, and the present article cannot test it.

THE CASE, THE EVIDENCE AND ITS LIMITS

Portugal is chosen because it combines features that would, on a simple view of expertise-based recognition, have favoured early admission: founding membership of the League, victor status, and a university tradition that its representatives invoked in Geneva. I follow Eckstein's (1975) idea of a case that is informative because the expected outcome did not occur, and I do not claim that Portugal is representative. I call a state 'peripheral' in a limited institutional sense: a League member without a permanent Council seat and, in 1922, without a member on the ICIC. This definition does not refer to the state's financial or political standing, which is the factor under examination, and I do not restrict the argument to authoritarian regimes. The regime matters for the second half of the article, which concerns what happened after admission.

The evidence is the one assembled in three earlier studies, based on research in the Historical Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Library of Portugal and the Torre do Tombo, on Portuguese diplomatic reports, correspondence, national commission records and press (Author, 2023a, 2023b, 2024). The composition of the ICIC, its sizes, its nomination practice and the roster of members and attendances are taken from Grandjean's (2018) doctoral thesis, which rests on the committee's minutes and the League's archives. The present article brings no new documents. It re-reads published findings with a question those studies did not ask, and it cites the published work for every fact. Two limits follow and should be stated at the outset. First, the evidence comes mostly from the Portuguese side. The deliberations of the ICIC and its Paris institute are known through Portuguese correspondence and secondary historiography, including the thesis, and not through my own reading of the committee's records. Conclusions about why ICIC members acted as they did regarding Portugal are therefore inferences from outcomes and from Portuguese officials' interpretations of them. Second,

much of the evidence for Portugal's liaison with the Paris institute passes through the reports of one person, the state delegate Virgínia de Castro e Almeida, whose frustration with the National Commission may have coloured her account.

THREE INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS AND ONE DOMESTIC CONDITION

The question is what determined that Portuguese experts were not recognized until 1934. A first, null answer is the one Haas's definition leaves implicit: that recognition followed competence, and that Portuguese expertise was judged insufficient. The record gives no support for this answer, since no assessment of Portuguese candidates is documented and the Portuguese delegation's claim was precisely that the competence was there. I therefore set it aside and distinguish three conditions that bear on how the committee's places were allocated, and a fourth that bears on Portugal's capacity to claim one.

Condition	What it says	What we would expect to find
Scarcity of places	The committee was small and its size changed, so most countries had no member at any given time	Many other states also unrepresented; Portugal's admission explained by a vacancy or an enlargement
Criteria of representation	Places were allocated by a conception of national, geographical or cultural representation that could group countries together	Evidence that Iberian or Ibero-American countries were treated as one unit; evidence of how Portugal was classified
State standing	The political and financial standing of the state conditioned recognition	Admission following a rise in standing; links between Portuguese state action and committee decisions
Domestic capacity (condition on claiming)	Portuguese intellectuals and authorities did not seek or sustain participation	Evidence of absence and neglect on the Portuguese side, before and after admission

The fourth row is different in kind. Domestic disengagement does not allocate places. It affects how well a country can ask for one and use it, and so it interacts with the other three: a state that neglects its national commission has less to bring to a dispute about seats, whatever the criteria are. The point of separating the conditions is to see which parts of the record bear on which.

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Disengagement before the ICIC

The earliest episode concerns the International University, funded by the League from 1920 as a forerunner of intellectual cooperation work. Portugal was invited to its second session in Brussels in

September 1921 and sent no university professors. Its representative in Brussels, Alves de Veiga, regretted in a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the absence of Portuguese speakers in the programme and contrasted it with the participation of academics from countries as distant as Japan, the United States, Russia and India (Author, 2023b: 755). The episode supports the domestic disengagement explanation for the earliest stage, and it shows that Portugal's later absence from the ICIC cannot be explained by exclusion alone. It does not tell us why Portuguese academics stayed away, or how the invitation was made and followed up in Portugal in comparison with other countries, and those are exactly the questions on which the explanation depends.

The protest of 1923 and the question of seats

The ICIC was proposed in the League Assembly in September 1921 and approved by the Council in January 1922 as a committee of intellectuals whose members were not government representatives. Grandjean's (2018) doctoral thesis, which draws on the minutes of its 21 sessions, allows its size to be stated more securely than the earlier literature did. It began with 12 members (Riondet, 2020: 144), had 14 by the summer of 1924, 15 from December 1926, 17 from May 1930, 18 from 17 January, 1934 and 19 from 1937, and 51 people sat on it over its existence (Grandjean, 2018: 283–284, 286). Most League members therefore had no member at any given time, and the absence of a Portuguese member needs no special explanation by itself. What has to be explained is why an additional place went to Portugal when it did, and why the protest of 1923 had no effect. Two further points bear on scarcity. First, the thesis shows that places were not allocated by competition among individuals. When a member resigned or his term ended, he was normally replaced by a national of the same or of a neighbouring country, and the Spanish ambassador pressed in 1926 that the successor to Torres Quevedo should reflect 'Spanish intellectuality' (Grandjean, 2018: 283). Spain, Portugal's neighbour, therefore held a seat from the beginning, through Leonardo Torres Quevedo, and then through Julio Casares and José Castillejo (Grandjean, 2018: 287, 548, 550). Second, the League's secretariat explained in 1924 that the Council 'endeavoured as far as possible to give representation in the Committee to the big cultural groups in the world', so that each member 'may be said to represent a certain culture', although none sat as the official representative of a country (Nitobe, cited in Grandjean, 2018: 279). Grandjean's (2020) study of Ibero-American networks in the committee reports that the notion of national culture allowed speakers of Spanish and Portuguese to be treated together. These elements suggest a hypothesis the published studies on Portugal do not consider: that the Spanish seat may have been taken to cover the Iberian peninsula, and that Portugal was refused a place of its own for that reason. I have not seen a document that says so, and the hypothesis remains untested. It is also possible that no document says so because such counting was never written down. Pouliot (2008: 258) argues that much of what people do in world politics comes from 'inarticulate, practical knowledge that makes what is to be done appear "self-evident" or commonsensical', and an allocation of places by cultural groups may have worked in that way. This is a reason for caution in reading silence in the records, and it is not evidence of the mechanism. A Brazilian member, Aloysio de Castro, sat from 1922 to 1931 (Grandjean, 2018: 546), so

that the Portuguese language was not wholly without a seat either, which complicates any claim that Portuguese culture was unrepresented.

In 1923 João Chagas, who led the Portuguese delegation to the League, protested before the Assembly. He argued that the committee had been founded on the principle that its members would be chosen not only for their diversity of intellectual approach but also to cover the range of national cultures, and that Portugal's absence therefore breached that principle. He invoked the university tradition of Coimbra and compared it favourably with that of Salamanca (Author, 2023b: 756–757). The Assembly record, as Grandjean (2018: 280–281) reports it, adds context: the debate was prompted by demands from the Romanian, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak delegates, the Spanish-speaking American delegates, the Asian delegates and others, and Chagas said he was 'a little surprised' that the question of whether a state had a culture entitling it to sit on an intellectual committee should depend on the Council's more or less benevolent judgement. The rapporteur, Bardoux, answered that the committee should be a 'faceted mirror' in which the different intellectual methods and the different national cultures were reflected, and Elena Văcărescu spoke for several countries, Portugal among them. The Assembly asked the Council only to examine the possibility of increasing the number of members and of introducing rotation, and the Council did not enlarge the committee. It created corresponding members instead, who were not paid by the committee, as a cheaper way of reaching countries without a seat (Grandjean, 2018: 281–282). Portugal's protest was therefore one of several by smaller states, and the committee's response to them was limited by cost as well as by principle. A related reading of the protest, as the claim that a committee supposedly independent of governments was in practice distributing places by nationality, appears in the study of Portugal's reply to the League's declaration on history teaching (Author, 2023a: 647). The protest is the natural starting point for the second condition. Chagas did not only ask for a Portuguese expert. He invoked the coverage of national cultures as a principle of composition, and so put the criteria of representation, and not Portuguese competence, at the centre of the dispute. That is the opposite of the vocabulary of professional recognition. It is not evidence that the committee accepted the principle, and it is not evidence about how the committee replied, because the sources used here do not record that reply. How the ICIC justified itself in 1923 is the first record I would look for.

Money and recognition: the subsidy of 1927

In 1927 Portugal made a voluntary financial contribution to the Paris institute. It was set at 3,103.45 gold francs, calculated at the institute's suggestion on the basis of the subsidy given by Czechoslovakia and according to the number of units allocated to Portugal in the League budget, six units at 517.24 francs each (Author, 2023b: 758). Virgínia de Castro e Almeida supported it because, as she put it, Portugal had done nothing for the League while always being first to seek advantage from it, and the subsidy would be an excellent opportunity to show its interest and goodwill (Author, 2023b: 758).

It is tempting to read this as an attempt by the state to convert money into standing. The evidence allows a narrower reading. The amount was fixed by a formula proposed by the institute, so it was not a strategic gift of the state's own devising. The reasoning that links the payment to goodwill is the

delegate's. It shows that an informed Portuguese participant believed that contributions affected how a country was regarded, and that belief is itself a fact about the setting. It does not show that the payment bought recognition, and it is not evidence that Portugal's financial capacity had by then risen to a point that mattered. The 1927 subsidy supports the state-standing explanation only to the extent that the delegate's belief is shared by those who made the decisions, and that is what we do not know.

1933–1934: a coincidence in time

The central piece of evidence for the third condition, state standing, is the timing, and the thesis makes it more precise and more suggestive. Júlio Dantas, who had presided over the National Commission since its creation in 1926, is listed as a member from 1934 to 1939 (Grandjean, 2018: 551), and the Council raised the committee from 17 to 18 members on 17 January, 1934 (Grandjean, 2018: 284). The earlier studies (Author, 2023a: 649, 653; Author, 2023b: 762) placed his joining in 1933, the year Portugal obtained the non-permanent Council seat it had sought since 1920, and this article follows the roster's date. A biography of Dantas, cited in one of them, reports that Marie Curie told him he was likely to be elected to fill one of the coming vacancies and that he was elected in 1933 for a five-year term, re-elected in 1938 (Author, 2023b: 762). If that account is right, the election of 1933 and the mandate of 1934 in the roster can both be correct, and the place may have been a vacancy and not a new seat. The sources I use do not allow me to decide between these readings. On either date the ICIC place followed the Council seat by months, not years. The earlier study connects these events with the installation of the Estado Novo, which it says brought a financial and economic balance viewed favourably from abroad, whose stabilization 'was rewarded' by the seat (Author, 2023a: 649). It also links Portugal's earlier failure to secure the seat with the instability of the First Republic, including economic crisis, brief governments and street strikes, and with the absence of support from Britain, its ally, whose position influenced the votes of the Assembly (Author, 2023a: 644–646).

The thesis adds two kinds of evidence about how the Council treated the committee. The first concerns the founding. Explaining the first list of 1922, Nitobe wrote that practically all the nationalities composing the Council were represented in the committee, except Japan and China, for each of which he gave a practical reason, and Brazil, which held a non-permanent Council seat in 1922, also had a member (Grandjean, 2018: 279). The second concerns later appointments. Until 1930 the Council designated members 'in a rather arbitrary way', according to a contemporary commentator, and the reform of 1930 tried to subject nominations to the committee's president in order to limit their politicization (Grandjean, 2018: 284). Even after it, Gilbert Murray complained in 1934 that Poland and Romania kept a representative 'by mere diplomatic pressure', and in 1939 that the Council considered 'its own diplomatic convenience' in appointments more than the committee's intellectual effectiveness (Grandjean, 2018: 284–285). These statements show that officials inside the committee understood diplomatic standing as one force acting on its composition. The wider historiography says the same in general terms. Laqua (2011: 224), in a study of intellectual cooperation and the problem of order, observes that 'national considerations evidently affected the selection of CICI members and IICI staff', and he reads the committee's composition as broadening gradually beyond the West (Laqua, 2011: 228). Both statements

agree with the roster below, and neither examines why a particular state obtained a place when it did. Saikawa's (2014) dissertation on the founding of the committee, based on the League's archives and the Murray papers, adds three points about the first list. First, in late 1921 Nitobe planned a small committee and insisted, in letters to Murray, on nominating a 'Hindu' as one of the Asian members 'from the point of view of different national and cultural backgrounds', and the Secretariat agreed that nominations had to be made from nine countries, with one or two more places possible among Spain, Czechoslovakia and Austria (Saikawa, 2014: 66). Portugal was not among the countries named. Second, Portugal was not absent from the candidates considered. A list of 58 names suggested for the committee and circulated on 16 March 1922 included one Portuguese, A. da Costa, alongside three Spaniards and two Brazilians (Saikawa, 2014: 69, n. 164). The sources I use do not say who suggested him or why he was not chosen, so this shows only that a Portuguese name was before the Secretariat, which fits the view that the question was how places were counted by nationality and not whether a Portuguese candidate existed. Third, the Council postponed the appointments in January 1922 and made them in May after a report by Léon Bourgeois, and Nitobe suspected that the French government had an interest in more French members (Saikawa, 2014: 67–69). These details come from a study of Japan and China in the committee and not of Portugal, and they show that the composition of the first list was negotiated between the Secretariat and Council members.

This is the strongest basis for asking whether state standing mattered, and it still supports a limited conclusion. Portugal's political and financial situation changed between 1923 and 1933, the Council seat was linked in contemporary and later accounts to that change, the committee's officials described its composition as following the Council's, and the ICIC place came within months. What the evidence does not establish is a causal connection between the two appointments. The Council seat was decided by the Assembly. The ICIC place was decided by the Council on other grounds, and no published study cites a document that links the two decisions. Rival readings remain. The enlargement of January 1934 may have created a place for which Dantas, a prominent figure with ministerial experience, was an obvious candidate. The League's attention to Portugal may have changed with the Council seat for reasons unrelated to finance. Or the Portuguese government may have pressed for the post more effectively once the regime was stable. Each reading fits the dates. The decisive questions are who proposed Dantas, for which place, and with what reasons, and only the Council and committee records can answer them. Dantas also attended four of the six sessions held between 1934 and 1939 (sessions 16 to 18 and 21; Grandjean, 2018: 557), which shows that membership was not matched by constant participation.

I also cannot say how large the change in standing was, or how it compares with that of other states. The article that first described these events does so in qualitative terms, and a reader who wants to know how much the Portuguese position improved, on what measure, and what the equivalent improvement was in states that were admitted earlier or later, will not find it in the published studies. The historiography of Portuguese public finance and diplomacy in the 1920s and early 1930s would be the place to look, and this article does not attempt to supply it.

Portugal in a wave of admissions

The roster in the annex of Grandjean's (2018: 545–553) thesis allows a comparison that the published studies of Portugal have not made. It lists the 51 people who held a seat on the committee, with the country given in the League's own biographical notes and the year in which each mandate began. Table 2 groups the states by the year in which they first had a member.

Table 2
States by year of first member on the ICIC.

Source: compiled from Grandjean (2018: 545–553). The year is the start of the mandate given in the annex. Einstein is counted under Switzerland, the country listed for him in the first list, although the Council later described him as sitting as representative of German science (Grandjean, 2018: 278); Germany is counted from the appointment of Hugo Krüss in 1932. Several 1939 entries are noted in the annex as not yet presented to the committee on their arrival.

Period	States with their first member	Number
1922 (first list)	Belgium, Brazil, France, India, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States	10
1923–1929	Netherlands (1923), Argentina (1924), Japan (1926), Czechoslovakia (1928), Peru (1929)	5
1930–1933	Romania and China (1930), Colombia, Sweden and Austria (1931), Germany (1932)	6
1934–1939	Portugal (1934), Poland, Soviet Union and Hungary (1935), Denmark (1936), Latvia and Egypt (1939)	7

Three observations follow, each limited to what the table shows. First, the committee was never closed to new states. The 12 members of the first list came from 10 states, and 18 more states entered over the following 17 years, so that 28 states had been represented by 1939. A reading in which Portugal was kept out by a fixed, small circle does not fit this record. Second, Portugal's admission belongs to a wave. 13 of the 28 states, including Portugal, entered between 1930 and 1939, and Portugal was the seventh of them. This agrees with the thesis's own account of the period, in which turnover accelerated after the reform of 1930 and each session brought two to seven new members against one or two before (Grandjean, 2018: 288). Admission in 1934 therefore looks less like an exceptional reward than like one outcome of a rotation that opened places to many states at once. Third, the record is consistent with the practice of replacing a member by a national of the same or a neighbouring country (Grandjean, 2018: 283). Spain was represented without interruption from 1922 to 1939 by Torres Quevedo, Casares and Castillejo, and Portugal, which shares the peninsula, entered only after the committee had grown from 12 to 18 members. The first list contained a Brazilian member, who sat until 1931, and Brazil is not listed again until 1939 (Grandjean, 2018: 546, 553), having ceased to be a member of the League in 1926 (Author, 2023b: 757). This is the strongest support the roster gives to the second condition, and it remains indirect.

What the table does not show is why these states and not others. The 28 include the great powers and small states with and without seats on the League Council, and the comparison that would bear on the third condition requires the composition of the Council year by year, which I have not established. It is therefore possible that the states admitted in the 1930s were disproportionately those with weight in the Council, and it is equally possible that they were not. The roster also cannot say how many places a state requested, since refusals do not appear in it. What it does establish is the baseline against which the Portuguese case has to be read: a committee that expanded in stages, admitted a large group of new states after 1930, and kept the Iberian peninsula represented throughout. Against that baseline the question about Portugal changes. It is no longer why a state with a claim to a seat waited 12 years, and becomes why it was not among the states admitted before 1930, and why it was among those admitted in 1934.

The roster also allows a specific look at the Ibero-American world, to which Grandjean's (2020) study of the committee is devoted and which bears on the second condition. Four Latin American states had members before 1939: Brazil, with Aloysio de Castro from 1922 to 1931 and a second appointment in 1939; Argentina, with Leopoldo Lugones from 1924 to 1931 and a second appointment in 1939; Peru, with Cornejo from 1929 to 1931 and García Calderón from 1936 to 1939; and Colombia, with Sanín Cano from 1931 to 1936 (Grandjean, 2018: 545–553). With Spain, that makes five states in which Spanish or Portuguese is the national language, and Portugal was the sixth to enter, in 1934. Two things follow. The suggestion that the committee grouped Iberian and Ibero-American cultures does not imply that they were few: in the first list the group was represented by Spain and Brazil, and it grew through the 1920s and 1930s. And Portugal's absence in the first list was not an absence of the Portuguese language, since a Brazilian sat from the start. Whether the Council saw a Brazilian as covering Portuguese culture, as it may have seen a Spaniard as covering the peninsula, is exactly what the record cannot say. The question can only be put as a hypothesis and the roster gives it a precise form: if a language group was counted as one cultural unit, Portugal should have entered when no member of that group remained, and Brazil's absence between 1931 and 1939 should have made a Portuguese appointment more likely. Portugal entered in 1934, which is consistent with that reading, and the evidence is one case.

A note on method. The table counts a state from the first mandate in the annex that lists its name, and it uses the country label that the League's own notes gave to each member, which is not always the same as the member's nationality or residence. The first Indian member, for example, lived in Germany, and the Council explained his choice by the practical consideration of his residence in Europe (Grandjean, 2018: 279–280). Counting by label reproduces the way the Council presented the committee to the outside world, which is what matters for a study of recognition, but it would give different totals if nationality or residence were used. The conclusions drawn above rest on the pattern of waves and not on any individual classification.

After admission: participation and agreement

The remaining episodes concern what happened to Portugal's participation once its place was secured, and they bear on a different question: whether recognition produced alignment.

Portugal's engagement with the Paris institute from 1926 passed through its state delegate, Virgínia de Castro e Almeida, who held the post until 1939 with an interruption. Her reports describe a single person doing the work of a network. She recommended that Portugal copy the French commission's mixed composition of a painter, a writer, a sculptor, a poet, a journalist and a professor, and within a year was calling the Portuguese commission a feeble body without funds, organization or faith (Author, 2023b: 760). She campaigned in the newspaper *O Século* for the value of internationalism (Author, 2024: 180). Her tenure was interrupted over her remuneration: she was promised by decree a monthly allowance of £20 and was paid £15, and she paid for correspondence with the institute herself. She was reinstated in 1929 with an allowance of £20 after the mediation of Augusto Vasconcelos (Author, 2024: 182; Author, 2023b: 761). In 1931, when the ICIC sought to limit the powers of the state delegates at the Paris institute, she expressed her disagreement in a confidential report (Author, 2023b: 762; Author, 2024: 183).

This material shows the second explanation at work in a different way. The obstacles she describes lay in Portugal: in the commission's lack of resources and interest. They are not evidence about recognition by the League, because she had by her own account been accepted at the institute. They suggest, however, that even a recognized participant could not sustain her role without domestic backing, and so that recognition of an individual and the capacity of a state to support participation are separate matters. The caution about a single source applies here with particular force.

The textbook and broadcasting initiatives complete the picture. The Spanish delegate Julio Casares's resolution of 1925 recommended that textbooks avoid passages detrimental to good international understanding, and it was taken up by the Paris institute from 1930. Some national commissions acted on it, notably the Italian commission, which revised more than 14 Spanish textbooks, and French and German historians who worked together until the rise of Nazism ended the initiative (Author, 2023a: 649–650). Portugal's National Commission, presided over by Dantas, who by then sat on the ICIC (Author, 2023a: 653), declined the commitments of the 1937 declaration on the teaching of history and later the convention on the revision of textbooks, and the earlier study of the case explains the rejection of both this and the broadcasting project by the Commission's view that they could contravene the autonomy and sovereignty of the Portuguese state (Author, 2023b: 763). Its reply to the declaration said that commissions cooperating with one another could affect the independence and freedom that the government had to preserve in order to guide education, and that the government had authority to give historical facts the interpretation best suited to national interests (Author, 2023a: 651). Dantas wrote that historical truth is not susceptible to change according to good or bad diplomatic relations, and that history serves neither the cause of war nor the cause of peace, but only scientific truth (Author, 2023a: 651–652). The Commission also said that Portuguese programmes already gave the history of other nations the maximum development compatible with the time available (Author, 2023a: 651). On broadcasting, the Ministry of War, through the Defence Staff, judged favourably the use of radio in the

interests of peace, which the earlier study explains by Portugal's concern about the Soviet Union's entry into the League in 1934, but it objected to the last part of the fifth article of the draft on the ground that it might weaken the spirit or the autonomy of the military institutions (Author, 2023a: 655). Portugal took part in the adoption of the broadcasting convention but decided not to ratify its accession before the convention entered into force in April 1938 (Author, 2023a: 655–656).

Three points follow. First, the Commission described the textbook project as 'very sympathetic' and accepted its aims in principle, and rejected the mechanism (Author, 2023a: 651), which suggests that the friction lay less in a rejection of the causal belief that mutual knowledge reduces conflict than in resistance to binding procedures and, more deeply, to what Portuguese authorities took to be a loss of control over national interpretation. Second, the argument in Dantas's reply reverses the premise of the textbook movement, which held that history teaching affects relations between peoples, and so can be judged by its effects on them. Third, a representative of Portugal sat on the ICIC while its commission rejected the League's initiatives. The two facts do not conflict, but they show that admission to the network and agreement with its programme are different things. The wider development of the committee's principles gives this reading some context. Saikawa (2018: 69), in a study written in Japanese, reports that by the committee's twentieth session in 1938 Gonzague de Reynold summed up its principles in four points, the second of which was that the organization 'rests on a solid national base', and that the 1938 International Act on Intellectual Cooperation gave the national committees the main role in the field, with the Paris institute to be directed by government representatives (Saikawa, 2018: 69). Saikawa describes this as a shift of weight from independent intellectuals to national cultures and governments, while stressing that the committee never abandoned universality (Saikawa, 2018: 69–70). I draw on this only as background, because Saikawa's subject is China and Japan and not Portugal. It does show that the idea of national commissions as the primary actors was becoming official policy just when the Portuguese Commission was refusing the League's commitments in the name of the state's autonomy. This is a parallel and not a causal link, and it suggests that the Commission's stance was less at odds with the committee's direction than its reply implies.

DISCUSSION

What the evidence supports

Against the three conditions and the domestic one, the record can be read as follows. The scarcity of places is now documented: the committee had 12 to 19 members, so the absence of a Portuguese member before 1934 is unremarkable in itself, and the question shifts to why a place was found when it was. The criteria of representation are the least documented condition for Portugal. There was a Spanish member from 1922, a practice of replacing departing members by nationals of the same or a neighbouring country, an official statement that members stood for 'cultures', and a general finding that speakers of Spanish and Portuguese were grouped under notions of national culture, but nothing in the sources I use shows that this reasoning was applied to Portugal. State standing rests on the timing of 1933 and 1934, on one participant's belief about the effect of contributions, and now on statements by

committee officials that its composition followed the Council's and was subject to diplomatic pressure, which is suggestive and not conclusive. Domestic capacity has direct support for the early period and for the period after admission, and none for the years in between.

What the record supports is therefore an account in which several things acted at once, and the article cannot say how much weight each had. Domestic neglect lowered the pressure Portugal could bring. The committee's small size and its way of counting national cultures may have made places scarce for Portugal. And a change in the state's situation in the early 1930s coincided with admission. The article does not claim that state standing worked as a precondition of admission, or that it operated as a threshold.

Haas's four questions applied to the Portuguese record

The first half of the case concerns whether Portuguese experts were recognized by the committee. The second concerns whether recognition, once given, corresponded to the other features that Haas (1992: 3) attributes to an epistemic community. Putting the four questions in turn to the evidence presented above shows where Portugal fitted and where it did not.

On the question of recognition as a network, the answer depends on the level. Individuals were recognized. Dantas sat on the committee from 1934 and attended four of its six sessions up to 1939 (Grandjean, 2018: 551, 557), and Virgínia de Castro e Almeida was accepted as Portugal's delegate at the Paris institute, as her own reports indicate. At the level of the national body that was supposed to sustain participation, the picture is different. Her description of the National Commission as a feeble body without funds, organization or faith (Author, 2023b: 760) and the interruption of her tenure over a small difference in allowance (Author, 2024: 182–183) show a network of one person, and the record gives no reason to say that Portugal had a recognized network of experts of its own.

On the question of shared causal belief, the Portuguese Commission accepted in principle the aim of the League's textbook and broadcasting initiatives and rejected the procedures proposed to achieve it. The causal belief behind those initiatives was that the content of history teaching affects relations between peoples and can therefore be improved by agreement. Dantas's statement that history serves neither the cause of war nor the cause of peace, but only scientific truth (Author, 2023a: 651–652), denies the causal link on which the initiatives rested. It would be too strong to say that Portuguese authorities rejected the belief that mutual knowledge reduces conflict, since the Commission also said that programmes already gave the history of other nations the maximum development compatible with the time available (Author, 2023a: 651). What the record shows is a refusal to accept that the content of history teaching is an instrument of international policy.

On the question of shared notions of validity, the contrast is sharper. The textbook movement judged historical writing by its effects on relations between peoples. Dantas judged it by its fidelity to scientific truth, independently of those relations. The two positions are not logically incompatible, but they give different answers to the question of who may decide whether a textbook is acceptable, and the

Commission's answer was that the state keeps that decision. This is why the reply was framed in terms of the independence and freedom of the government to guide education (Author, 2023a: 651).

On the question of a shared normative agenda, the evidence points in two directions. The delegate campaigned in the Portuguese press for the value of internationalism (Author, 2024: 180), and in 1931 defended the function of state delegates when the committee sought to limit their powers (Author, 2023b: 762; Author, 2024: 183). These are signs of normative alignment with the League's programme in one person. The Commission presided over by a member of the committee, however, defended the government's freedom to guide education against the programme, and the Ministry of War, although favourable to the broadcasting project, explained its position by concern about the Soviet Union's entry into the League in 1934 and defended the autonomy of the military institutions (Author, 2023a: 651, 655).

The result is a pattern in which Portugal met the first question late and for individuals, and met the other three only in part and only in the person of the delegate. This does not make the Portuguese case a failure of an epistemic community, because there was no Portuguese epistemic community whose failure could be assessed. It suggests instead that Haas's four questions, which are usually asked of a group, can be satisfied by individuals who belong to a national body that does not satisfy them. That distinction supports the claim made below that membership, participation and agreement must be kept apart.

What would discriminate between them

The explanations differ in what they predict about records that exist and have not been used in this study. Four are worth naming. The ICIC's minutes and correspondence for 1923 would show how the committee replied to Chagas and what grounds it gave. The Council minutes and the committee's records for late 1933 and January 1934 would show how Dantas was proposed and by whom. The thesis supplies the roster and its sizes, and the next step is to compare Portugal with the other states admitted in the enlargements of 1924, 1926, 1930, 1934 and 1937, asking which of them held Council seats at the time. And the financial and diplomatic history of Portugal in the 1920s and 1930s, in the secondary literature or in the diplomatic records, would allow a statement of what changed between 1923 and 1933 and by how much. These are the records the present study lacks, and the article is best read as a statement of what they would need to show.

Recognition as a set of separable dimensions

The second half of the case suggests a conceptual point that does not depend on settling the first. Three things were present or absent at different times in the Portuguese record: membership of the committee, effective participation in the network's work, and agreement with its normative programme. Portugal lacked the first until 1934 and had the second only through one overstretched delegate, and it had the first without the third once Dantas sat on the ICIC while the commission rejected the League's initiatives. These are not types of state, since the same state moved between them, and I do not propose a typology. They are three dimensions along which recognition and its limits can be described, and the Portuguese case shows that they can vary independently. For Haas's concept, the implication is that the

recognized network of experts and the shared normative agenda are separate features, and that a state's experts can be inside the first and outside the second.

This does not undermine the concept of an epistemic community, and it does not show that the League's network was incoherent. It suggests that the network's cohesion should be asked about for each dimension, and that a shared vocabulary of internationalism, which the Portuguese Commission also used, is compatible with refusing to be bound.

Implications for the study of expert networks

If state standing was one of the factors, the implication for the history of expert networks is not that expertise is irrelevant. It is that recognition has conditions that are partly external to the expert and that these conditions deserve to be investigated and not assumed away. This point is already familiar in the literatures discussed above. What a historically grounded case can add is detail on how the conditions appeared to participants and what they did about them, as with the delegate's belief in the value of contributions and the Commission's argument from the government's freedom to guide education. Eijking's (2025) study of the Organisation for Intellectual Cooperation from the side of international relations points in the same direction. He notes that the committee had a relatively diverse membership by the standards of its time, that the Paris institute was funded mainly by the French government and headed throughout by French directors, and that Murray declared in 1933 that intellectual cooperation 'must be universal and must, as much as possible, be independent of politics' (Eijking, 2025: 550–551). He also notes, following Laqua, that intellectual cooperation was limited by its attachment to categories such as civilization, race, empire and nationhood (Eijking, 2025: 550). Neither point concerns Portugal, and Eijking's subject is the concept of information and not membership. They are relevant because they show the claim to independence from politics and the dependence on states and national categories side by side in the institution, which is the pairing that this article has followed in the allocation of places. The roster comparison offers a first step beyond the single case, because it shows that Portugal's admission was one among 13 in a decade, but it is a comparison of dates and not of causes. The case also bears on a general question in the study of international institutions: how authority and representation are distributed within bodies that present themselves as independent of governments. The ICIC described its members as chosen for personal achievement, yet its officials spoke of the Council's 'own diplomatic convenience' and of cultural groups to be represented, and its composition changed with the Council's decisions and with the rhythm of renewal. What the Portuguese record suggests is that, in such bodies, recognition of expertise and representation of states cannot be treated as separate processes, because the first is carried out through the second. Whether the Portuguese case generalizes to other small members of the League is a question only a systematic comparison with the other 27 states in the roster can answer, and the present study provides one case and a first outline of that comparison.

CONCLUSION

I asked what determined that a Portuguese expert was not appointed to the League's International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation until 1934. The published record shows a country that claimed a place in 1923 in the vocabulary of national representation, was absent from the committee until January 1934, and was admitted months after it obtained a seat on the League Council, in a committee whose officials described its composition as following that of the Council. It also shows disengagement at home. What it does not show is how each enlargement was decided, how a Spanish member was understood in relation to Portugal, or why Dantas was appointed when he was. The article has therefore not shown that scarcity, the criteria of representation or state standing caused the delay. Its more defensible claim is that the selection of experts took place in a small committee whose composition was shaped by the Council's diplomatic considerations and by a practice of national and cultural balance, and that Portugal's case cannot be read as an instance of expertise failing to be recognized. Whether the standing of the Portuguese state was the decisive factor, as the coincidence of dates and the officials' statements suggest, remains to be shown.

The case has three implications beyond Portugal, each stated at the level the evidence permits. First, a body of experts that presents itself as independent of governments may still allocate its places through the vocabulary of national representation, and the record of the ICIC shows both statements side by side: that members sat for their personal achievements and that the Council tried to represent the great cultural groups of the world (Nitobe, cited in Grandjean, 2018: 279). Studies that ask whether a state's experts were recognized should therefore examine how places were counted before they examine the competence of the people who held them. Second, the roster shows that exclusion from such a body was the normal condition of most states and that admission came in waves. Portugal's entry in 1934 was one of 13 first appointments of states between 1930 and 1939, which makes it a case of a general process of rotation that has to be explained as such, and not an isolated anomaly. Third, the separation of membership, participation and agreement suggests that the national branch of an expert network, such as a commission, can fail to carry the commitments of the person who represents it abroad. A comparison with other commissions would show whether this is a feature of small and peripheral states or a general one.

Three limits should be kept in view. The evidence on Portugal comes mostly from Portuguese sources and from earlier studies (Author, 2023a, 2023b, 2024), which were not designed to answer the present question, and the evidence on the committee comes from a doctoral thesis that I have read for this purpose and have not checked against the League's archives. The roster gives the year in which each mandate began as the thesis records it, and a different dating, such as the one of 1933 given in an earlier study of Portugal, would shift individual cases by a year without changing the pattern of waves. Finally, the article treats Portugal as a single case, and the claims about the conceptual proposal remain a hypothesis for other cases to test.

After admission, the Portuguese National Commission rejected the League's textbook and broadcasting initiatives. This shows that membership, effective participation and agreement with the network's programme can come apart, and that they should be analysed as distinct dimensions of expert

internationalism. This is the article's one conceptual proposal, and it rests on the Portuguese record alone.

The contribution is limited. It is a clear statement of the question, a set of conditions matched to the evidence that bears on each, a list of the records that would allow them to be ranked, and the proposal that recognition in an epistemic community has separable dimensions. The claim that the standing of a state works as a threshold condition for the admission of its experts is not supported by the evidence available, and it is not made here. If the records named above show that the ICIC's decisions followed the standing of states, a stronger claim would be earned. If they show that places were allocated by other criteria, the account offered here would still stand.

Declarations

Author Contribution

J.M.B.R. conceived the study, designed the analysis, compiled and verified the roster and the sources, wrote the manuscript, and approved the final version.

Data Availability

The data analysed are the roster of members of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation published in the annex of Grandjean (2018), and they are reproduced in Table 2 of the manuscript. No new datasets were generated.

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