

9

Statebuilding and the Politics of
Non-Recognition*Rebecca Richards and Robert Smith*

Recognition of sovereign statehood is the final obstacle facing those political entities in the international system that want to be states. For unrecognized states – those political entities existent within the international system that are states in everything but legal standing – recognition of sovereign statehood is the ultimate goal. The very act of granting recognition imparts a drastic change in the juridical legality and placement of the political entity under question, even though empirical change is unlikely in what are already developed political systems. Vague and inconsistent legal and quantifiable standards and precedents surround how much recognition, and by whom, equates to the granting of sovereignty. Still, those entities aspiring to statehood continue to hold it up as the goal to be reached. For most, it is the Holy Grail, a mythical achievement that will exist only as an aspiration. Regardless, the quest for recognition, and existence within the space of non-recognition, carries powerful political agency within these unrecognized states.

Lack of sovereign recognition carries with it significant detriments. Despite increasing international attention, the connotation of danger and deviance still remains attached to these 'breakaway' entities (e.g. Kingston and Spears, 2004; Pegg and Berg, 2014). Because of their placement both within and outside the confines of a recognized state, many of these entities exist within the condition of unresolved conflict (Lynch, 2004). Further, even if peaceful, not being 'a state' means being excluded from international legal frameworks; limits to travel, business opportunities and security considerations for the government and the people; and less tangible factors such as identity and cohesion that can suffer if long-awaited and often long promised recognition does not come (Caspersen, 2012; Caspersen and Stansfield, 2011; Pegg, 1998). As Caspersen (2012, p. 50) notes, unrecognized states 'all find themselves in a position of

limbo', striving to maintain a state-like political entity without the benefits of a place within the international system of states. Further, this state of suspended animation places limitations and boundaries on the socio-political development and evolution of a state, its institutions, its practices, and its identity. Political pressures and demands from both outside and within are intense, yet chances for recognition are remote (Caspersen and Stansfield, 2011, p. 6). In addition, normative demands for statehood dictate that aspiring states must present themselves as liberal, democratic, and peaceful; the 'state' cannot be characterized by strong-arm tactics and authoritarian rule. Because of this, unrecognized statehood demands a high level of domestic legitimacy and support (Caspersen, 2012; Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2011; Richards, 2014). The existence of unrecognized states may be challenging to the international system, but surviving as an unrecognized state is difficult and demanding.

In the language of recognition is the language of acceptance. In the language of recognition of statehood is the language of acceptableness and worthiness. Empirically and normatively, 'acceptable statehood' revolves around liberal understandings and frameworks, ideas such as good governance, democratization, human security, and that which is 'known' and familiar to the West. It is what Rotberg (2004) identifies as necessary political goods and what Jackson (1990) discusses in terms of empirical statehood. However, the key component of the equation is not recognition: recognition does not make a state 'acceptable' in terms of normative demands or expectations of statehood, just as non-recognition does not make a state deviant or dangerous. What recognition is is acceptance: it is acceptance into the club of statehood and all that goes with it.

Even in the most basic definitions and criteria for unrecognized states there is a demand for state-like existence during a period of non-recognition. In their criteria, Caspersen and Stansfield (2011) stipulate what appears to be an arbitrary two years of existence as a state-like entity for the territory to be considered an unrecognized state. The time frame, however, is less important than what it indicates; it is in this period that secessionist movements are separated from unrecognized states and that warlords or rebels turn into statebuilders (Kolstø, 2006). Although recognition is the ultimate goal for these state-like entities, and it can certainly act as a stabilizing factor (Kolstø, 2006), the period of non-recognition offers a period of relative autonomy, allowing for necessary internal processes to take place with minimal direct external involvement. It is a period when liberation movements can use isolation to

establish the narrative, the identity, and the structure of the state. It is this period that provides the foundations for external interaction, whether that is the quest for full or for partial recognition. It is in this period that the state is born. Based in understandings of statebuilding, this chapter examines a side to recognition that is often overlooked: the politics and benefits of non-recognition. This chapter explores the space of non-recognition surrounding unrecognized states. Through the lens of statebuilding and utilizing examples from the cases of Somaliland and Kurdistan, the chapter considers the role of non-recognition in the development of society-state relations in the new 'states' in terms of flexibility of state, identity, and ultimately resilience.¹

Statebuilding, statehood, and demands

In today's increasingly interconnected world, states cannot function in isolation. Even those states or entities not in direct contact with international institutions or developmental organizations are still subject to being externally influenced by normative standards and policy precedents. In the realm of statebuilding and political development, international norms of what it means to be an acceptable or successful state impact upon both external action and domestic policy within developing states and, in particular, unrecognized states. For the latter, conforming to acceptable standards of statehood is perceived to be vital to attracting and maximizing investment and developmental assistance that can only be obtained following recognition of sovereignty. For some, therefore, the style and functions of the state become a tool for economic and political survival (Richards, 2014).

In statebuilding, the frameworks of good governance are seen as 'a "silver bullet" capable of assisting states in coping with the problems of our complex globalised world' (Chandler, 2010, p. 1). Rooted in the belief that liberal democracy is inevitable given the chance, the approach to externally led statebuilding is one dominated by building institutions as the means through which to bring stability, security, development, peace, and provision (Chesterman et al., 2005; Ghani and Lockhart, 2005; 2008). It is highly political and may include some deference to local considerations, but the project itself best reflects external demands, agendas, and requirements – a checklist of sorts (Richards, 2014). The expectation is that after a short period of time, a stable political entity will stay standing and will be handed over to local leaders, at which point local ownership is supposed to take place and the population will support it (Call, 2008). However, when looking at unrecognized states,

as Kolstø (2006) notes, the process is reversed and local ownership and domestic support precede and exist in tandem with the building of the state. In unrecognized states, especially those in which a strong patron state does not exist, a different form of statebuilding can be seen, one that exhibits flexibility and latitude because of non-recognition. Recognition is the odd bedfellow of non-recognition, though, and in statebuilding in unrecognized states it is a vital and powerful component of the process, the strategies, and the identities created. However, in statebuilding in unrecognized states, non-recognition and the space around it provide for an alternative, and more stable, form of statebuilding.

Non-recognition and flexibility

Unrecognized states look and act like states that comply with the norms of acceptable statehood; doing so is perceived to be necessary for bringing the greatest chance of recognition. Generally, they play by the rules and posit themselves as 'good' states and exhibit 'acceptable' statehood in order to 'prove' their statehood. Further, the ongoing process of statebuilding in an unrecognized state is underpinned and dictated by the mutually constitutive relationship between the quest for recognition and the need for continued stability and existence as a 'state'. In the language of acceptable liberal statehood, the expected outcomes for unrecognized states and those being rebuilt, developed, or strengthened through external intervention are the same. However, without direct involvement and intervention in the project and the process, statebuilding in unrecognized states takes place with a degree of latitude and flexibility that is not available in interventionist projects in recognized states. This flexibility is possible because of, not in spite of, non-recognition (Richards, 2012; 2014).

All interventionist projects are shaped by conditionality, whether it is direct action or indirect intervention through structural or normative pressure or expectations. Unrecognized states are not immune from this even within the condition of non-recognition. In externally led statebuilding, reform, and development projects, conditionality is attached to the process. Conditionality comes not only from expectations for the functions or shape of the state and its institutions but also from demands of external actors involved in the process. In externally led statebuilding, because of this conditionality sovereignty is exercised from the outside rather than from within (Richards, 2014). Domestically led statebuilding, on the other hand, benefits from not being directly subjected to this complex and often damaging 'external factor'. Although

exclusion from direct international intervention can create difficulties, and although some unrecognized states do not meet this condition due to the existence of a strong patron state, removing the complexities of an agenda-driven international actor operating under set guidelines or expectations can prove highly beneficial for an emerging or rebuilding state. In statebuilding in unrecognized states, conditionality is attached to the outcome rather than the process, allowing for more flexibility in the process itself.

Because of the goal of recognition, unrecognized states are still operating within the normative frameworks of the international system, but at the same time, because of their non-recognized standing, they exist and operate outside of the institutional frameworks. If we think of these as spheres, where the normative and the institutional overlay and exist in tandem, we can identify conditionality. This is the space in which most recognized states exist. However, where the normative extends beyond the institutional – the space of non-recognition – we find flexibility. The space of non-recognition allows unrecognized states to exhibit a degree of flexibility not seen in external projects, flexibility that, in combination with other powerful factors such as the quest for recognition, allows for the potentially ‘ill-suited’ foreign model of statehood and practice not to be discounted, but rather to be negotiated with local necessities, local institutions, and local mechanisms of governance. Indeed, within self-led statebuilding projects, a balance must be reached between external expectations and internal necessities, a balance that is possible because of non-intervention found within the space of non-recognition, and a balance that provides stability to the ongoing socio-political process of statebuilding. The flexibility that non-recognition allows can be seen in the political settlement in Somaliland. The incorporation of clan governance structures into central government sits outside of established practice for externally led statebuilding projects. However, the utilization of clan governance served as a mechanism for stability and legitimization, and therefore was central to statebuilding in Somaliland, including the introduction of democracy and ‘modern’ governance (Renders, 2012; Richards, 2012; 2014). The flexibility afforded to Somaliland in the establishment of its institutions and practices allowed Somaliland to respond to what was necessary domestically rather than what was externally preferred.

Statebuilding encompasses a political struggle among political actors over political power and the distribution of that power. This struggle takes place for the power to govern, not only between domestic actors but also ‘between international preferences and local preferences’ (Woodward,

2011, p. 107). In maintaining a technocratic and institutional approach, externally led statebuilding fails to recognize and accommodate these power struggles, thus creating obstacles for legitimizing the state and for sustaining stability. Domestically led statebuilding projects are not immune from these struggles, and in many ways are more susceptible to destabilization because of them. This is particularly the case for those entities without a patron state and therefore lacking in external accountability. However, this fragility is counter-balanced by the flexibility that the state of non-recognition brings.

Non-recognition and identity

While non-recognition provides the possibility of flexibility within domestically led statebuilding projects, it is not a panacea. Difficult questions remain, not least, why should the state exist? Successful states foster a sense of identity and attachment among their populations. The state is not only institutions; it is also what Buzan (1993) considers the idea of the state. In this, the state is an abstract that reflects and embodies the political culture of a territory and its population. Physically, the state can be identified by its foundations of territory and population, yet as Buzan (1993, p. 38) notes, it is more a 'metaphysical entity, an idea held in common by a group of people, than it is a physical organism'. Similar to Anderson's (1991) imagined communities, this idea of the state binds together a population, cyclically determined by and determining the population's expectations of the political entity encompassing it. The basis of this attachment is not a definitive science and can be the result of multiple sources, whether linked to ethnicity, ideology, collective history, or cultural values. The resulting narrative and identity, therefore, reflect the needs, desires, and expectations of the population. Successful states use their institutions to both reflect and also reinforce the identity, whether it is through the practice of government, the history that is taught in schools, or the composition of their armed forces. States that create stability and foster a shared identity among their people can be identified; however, the path toward this achievement is not uniform.

As will be discussed further in the next section, unrecognized states depend upon societal support and domestic legitimacy for their continuation. Within this, identity, narratives, and nation-building are cornerstones of societal ownership of the state. The identities that emerge for both Somaliland and Kurdistan are an implicit rejection of Somalia and Iraq; however, to build support for a new autonomy requires more than a rejection of Mogadishu or Baghdad. The identities that have emerged

in both territories are the result of a myriad of factors, including shared histories that are invoked as a point of cohesion. These identities have also emerged out of internal debates about how the state should be organized and an external projection to the international community of the values of the new territory. These processes are a form of non-ethnic nation-building that serves to not only unite the population but also to define them.

While the ultimate goal for unrecognized states is international recognition, this process begins with building internal support for separation. As the process continues, identity and narrative become both a benefit and a necessity stemming from the condition of non-recognition. A narrative therefore develops to suggest possible answers to the question, why should a state exist? The case for a new state can begin through a shared and evolving history. This is the basis for Anderson's and Buzan's characterizations of ideational and imagined states. Writing about ethnic conflict, Brown highlights the role of shared histories in shaping identity (2010, p. 98) and separateness. This is certainly a starting point, however a shared history is not enough to sustain an unrecognized state. In the unrecognized states we consider, the population's attachment to a new state is the result of a combination of factors. At its core there is a belief that the new territory will be better at representing the interests of its population, either because the parent government is dysfunctional or because the people are excluded from power on discriminatory grounds. Building from this, the narrative of the state and the identity it underpins serve to legitimize the process and the existence of the entity. For Somaliland, societal investment in the state-building process started with shared pain stemming from Siad Barre's brutal campaigns during the civil war. Today, though, it has evolved to centre on the idea of 'this is necessary to achieve what we want, and we're all in it together' (SADP/WSP, 2003, p. 4). The 'want' here is a separate state, but it is not necessarily a state that conforms to the external liberal model. Instead, it is recognition of sovereignty that will bring tangible benefits such as increased trade and travel. This is perhaps best epitomized by a market trader in Hargeisa who, when asked what he wanted the state to be, stated that it should provide him with a passport. Underpinned by narratives about democracy and liberal statehood, the Somaliland identity also involves a strong expectation of recognition. It is this expectation that facilitates societal investment in political action deemed necessary to fulfilling the goal. At the same time, however, the inability to fulfil the almost arrogant expectation is a potential point of fragility not only in the Somaliland identity but also in unrecognized Somaliland itself.

Kurdistan demonstrates the evolution of narratives from a primordial nationalism to being the region that proved 'Iraqis could be democratic and peace loving, given half a chance' (Anderson and Stansfield, 2004, p. 162). As such the identity that is attached to the state here is upgraded from being a simple recitation of ethnic demands to a set of values that can spread beyond its original core community. The example of Kurdistan also highlights the role that a shared history and brutality play in developing identity and legitimacy. The dream of a nation-state for the Kurdish people gained significant leverage with the *Anfal* campaign, a campaign of genocide launched against Iraqi Kurds by Saddam Hussein in the late 1980s. For Somaliland, similar brutality at the hands of Siad Barre underpinned the initial identity of an independent state. The survival of brutality creates strong narratives for separation, 'for people who have known genocide there is only one thing that will do: a nation state of their own' (Ignatieff, 1993, p. 151). The historical narrative centred on these events remind people of the suffering previous generations endured, thus creating a sense of security and protection under the new government. Carefully retold and maintained, these stories are interwoven into identities and narratives. In Kurdistan, the memory of the *Anfal* is invoked through anniversaries, conferences, and public history (KRG, 2012). For Somaliland, the genocidal campaign is part of the 'story' of Somaliland told to outsiders, and a constant memory is maintained in public monuments in the major cities. Indeed, at the top of a Google images search for 'Hargeisa' are pictures of one of Barre's airplanes that was shot down over Hargeisa during the civil war; it is now a public monument. It is a constant reminder of the violence, the sacrifice, and the fight to be Somaliland.

While it would be possible to see historical narratives as purely a tool of political rhetoric – a story that is told to justify a policy that is already agreed – this underplays their ability to shape identity. The development of Kurdistan after self-government was bestowed on it in 1991 was not an unalloyed success, as the region was plagued by political conflicts and corruption. Yet, as Iraq emerged from dictatorship, Kurdistan appeared as the most free, prosperous, and peaceful region. Even though troubled, the period of isolation that followed 1991 had allowed for the development of a separate and sustainable identity,² an identity that is reflected in the relationship between state and society today. In unrecognized states, the creation and evolution of identity in this way is a form of nation-building. Because of the constant reiteration of a narrative, it creates and sustains a separate identity; it is a self-perpetuating and evolutionary process. For Somaliland, the rhetorical link between good

governance, democracy, and recognition has become a reality, thereby changing societal expectations and demands of what the state is or must be. Invoking the 'we've been disadvantaged, harmed, hard done by or screwed' is a starting point, but the 'this is who we are and what we want to be' reinforces the link between society and the process. As a reminder, it acts as a point of stability and support necessary to sustain existence in a state of non-recognition.

Historical narratives and justification for statehood that rely solely on community security will only take the case for statehood so far, though. Unrecognized states also contain an implicit narrative for different, often better, governance. Both Kurdistan and Somaliland emerged as state entities at points in their parent state's history when the centre was weak, and both see the opportunities that self-government can bring. Narratives are not solely directed inward, however. External narratives reinforce justifications for recognition: good governance, compliance, and readiness to meet international norms. Because of quests for recognition, external narratives also become part of the overall narrative and identity of the unrecognized state. Thus, non-recognition results in the creation of an identity that not only reflects a shared history but also envisions a shared future.

Local ownership, resilience, and strength

Interaction with unrecognized states does take place in the international system, although most of it falls under the guise of interaction or engagement with the parent state. For example, the UN presence in Somaliland is a component of the wider UN mission to Somalia, and the UK Department for International Development offers security advice to the 'regional' government of Somaliland as a development mechanism aimed at stabilizing Somalia rather than recognition of a separate political entity (Stabilisation Unit, 2014). Although political leadership may be recognized as political actors, hesitance, or even refusal to engage with unrecognized states as separate entities characterizes much of the international interaction (Pegg and Berg, 2014). As Stefan Oeter has begun to unpack in his contribution to this volume, there are a myriad of complex reasons for this. Fear of setting a precedent, a desire to maintain the status of the international order, regional security considerations, deference to regional organizations or powerful actors, and aspirations for political rebuilding in parent states are just some of the considerations surrounding non-recognition. What is important to remember, though, is that unrecognized states predominantly emerge

out of conflict or territorial breakup, and that their lasting existence proves that they have built institutional and ideational 'states' in conditions in which recognized states have failed to remain intact (Caspersen and Stansfield, 2011, p. 6). They tend to be long-standing stable entities. In most instances, unrecognized states are more stable and peaceful than the states from which they emerged. They and their state-building processes are remarkably resilient; this resilience and strength stems from the space of non-recognition. Indeed, stability in these entities exists not in spite of, but because of, their existence within the realm of non-recognition.

When external actors are dictating the empowerment of institutions, processes, and individuals, this excludes society and the processes of nation-building and state formation. In the literature analysing statebuilding, particularly in the more critical literature, this is often discussed in the language of legitimacy and is identified as the 'operational challenge' of local ownership (Paris and Sisk, 2008). Because of the liberal assumptions underpinning the practice, in externally led statebuilding the state is being built according to plan. External legitimacy is a primary concern, but the assumption is that domestic legitimacy will follow. However, local ownership has been an elusive or distant desire, even though it is necessary for the success of these projects and is seen by many as the ultimate goal to be achieved (Donais, 2009; Paris and Sisk, 2008). This is also an area of focus because it is a question that cannot be answered simply: at what point does a state belong to the population? However, when the process of creating a state is an internal process rather than an external imposition, prospects for strong local ownership are increased. For statebuilding in unrecognized states, the space created by non-recognition allows for – indeed demands – the problem of legitimacy to be flipped (Kolstø, 2006; Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2008).

Unrecognized states have adopted a unique form of state formation that can be viewed as survival strategies (Herbst, 2000) characterized by statebuilding through self-reliance (Caspersen, 2012, p. 53). This must be viewed in two ways. On one side is the external strategy, accommodating external structures and empirical demands in order to meet the expectations and preferences of external actors so as to best further the goals of recognition. As Caspersen (2012, p. 50) notes, however, there is no single model of unrecognized state. The condition of non-recognition 'does not fully determine the kind of entity that is likely to evolve', and among unrecognized states there are variations not only in levels of recognition but also in outcomes in terms of governance style, levels of democratization, levels of monopolization of force, and levels

of development. This comparative hierarchical analysis of the empirical does nothing more than give an indication of how well the entity complies with external expectations of its target audiences, though. Stability is not entirely dependent on this, although recognition might be. What is significant here is that unrecognized states comply with the normative rules of statehood expected by their target audience. If seeking recognition from a single patron state, an unrecognized state can be expected to reflect the expectations of that state. If seeking broad international recognition of sovereign statehood, most posit themselves as 'good' states and exhibit 'acceptable' liberal statehood. The two unrecognized states chosen here both exist within what are considered failed parent states and both lack patron states. For Somaliland, the primary audience is the international community, primarily the United States and Western Europe. Kurdistan also pitches to a global audience, but this is not limited to Western countries, and it includes states with interests in oil and gas development. However, many Eastern European unrecognized states exist within non-failed states and have a very strong patron in Russia. Therefore, when considering South Ossetia, external expectations must take into account Russian expectations, whereas for Somaliland the primary target audience is the international community dominated by liberal norms. For this side of the survival strategies, non-recognition dictates that survival rests with the aspiration of recognition and meeting the demands of that.

The second side is meeting internal demands and expectations in order to maintain the domestic support and investment needed to sustain the process and the state. It is a simple equation, but one that is often overlooked: non-recognition is attached to the conditions of statehood, meaning that if the state goes away, prospects for recognition also go away. Because of the lack of external support or minimal external support, and because external expectations discount the use of violence as a mechanism of compliance, the survival of the state-building processes in unrecognized states depends on societal investment and support. Therefore, recognition strategies and state-building processes must also target the domestic audience. The survival strategy surrounding this involves the creation of an identity and a narrative – nation-building – but it also involves ensuring the population continues to support the ongoing process of socio-political change. Because of the flexibility granted by non-recognition, there is significant latitude in the exercising of sovereignty within unrecognized states, allowing for a deviation from the 'blueprint' model of statehood and for a responsive and reciprocal relationship between the institutions of state and society.

Within this, the state must be invested in society in order for society to remain invested in the state, fostering local ownership and creating a lasting point of stability in the state.

While there are similarities in the detailed recognition strategies employed regardless of geographic region (Caspersen, 2006; 2008; King, 2001), the outcomes noted by Caspersen vary because the identities, narratives, expectations, and demands of the entities vary, meaning the institutional components of the states reflect and respond to different conditions and demands. It is here that non-recognition grants the space for latitude and flexibility in not only creating an identity and a nation but also in creating and establishing institutions and practices that both conform to the demands of external legitimacy and work to meet the demands of domestic legitimacy. Within these entities a balance must be reached between external expectations and internal necessities. In doing so, a duality of legitimacy is created: external legitimacy as an acceptable state, and internal legitimacy that, because of state of non-recognition, is vital for sustaining the processes of statebuilding and unrecognized statehood. Balancing external legitimacy with internal legitimacy is a prerequisite for success, and the importance of popular trust and investment in the process of socio-political change that statebuilding brings is vital in creating lasting stability. In domestically led statebuilding the process must be sustained from within, but at the same time, the process and the leaders would not have the rhetorical power needed to build the state if it were not for the need to 'comply to be recognized'; indeed, external recognition as a goal can maintain the domestic political and social cohesion needed to continue the existence of the state. External demands can, and must, come together with internal necessities as a mechanism of stability.

In many ways, unrecognized states conform to what Ghani and Lockhart (2005; 2008; Ghani et al., 2006) have identified as the 'way of the future' in statebuilding: states that fulfil their obligations of the right of sovereignty both externally and internally. In this, strategies are 'inherently about "coproduction" because internal and external actors have to agree on rules, a division of labour and a sequence of activities' (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008, p. 8). . In unrecognized states, though, local considerations are not a superficial inclusion, as within these entities there is a much greater pull on the necessity of domestic legitimacy. In projects characterized by direct engagement with the international community or external international actors, it is expected that the demands or desires of those external actors will be reflected in both the state-building project itself as well as in the resulting state (Call, 2008;

Paris and Sisk, 2008; Sisk, 2013). In the space of non-recognition, though, there is something else at play. Without the exercising of external sovereignty, and with the flexibility and need to address and accommodate local concerns, demands, and political culture, statebuilding within the space on non-recognition is characterized by the state's being propped up from within from the start. Ironically, the result more closely reflects the normative expectations of statehood than those projects led from the outside. Arguably, statebuilding in the condition of non-recognition results in a more acceptable or desirable 'state' than statebuilding that takes places within recognized states.

Conclusions

Of course, not everything is ideal within the realm of non-recognition, and it would be remiss to leave that impression. One key concern is within the relationship between state and society. This relationship is mutually beneficial, yet it is also a potential point of fragility in the unrecognized state. The state requires societal support and compliance with the process in order to maintain internal stability and a continuation of the state-building process, and society expects the state to return on its promises for recognition and the benefits of statehood. The criteria for an entity to be considered an unrecognized state involve a minimum period of existence as a 'state', yet one of the great unknowns is how long that existence can, or will, continue. This is different for every entity, yet it is a complication of the period of non-recognition. A big question remains, then: what happens if the promise of recognition is not fulfilled?

This is not the only big question left lingering. With non-recognition playing such a vital role in propelling and stabilizing the state-building process and the resultant state, what happens if recognition *does* come? The quest for recognition provides strong motivations for maintaining stability and 'acceptableness,' providing room to weather the storm and address obstacles, problems, or crises in a way that allows for a continuation of the state. Here, the space of recognition allows for political development and consolidation through an invocation of the common goal. However, if recognition is no longer a point of unification and a rallying cry, and if maintaining peace, stability, and a working political system is no longer necessary, what happens to the state?

These dichotomous questions begin to point to the complexity of the politics of recognition and non-recognition within the realm of statebuilding. Recognition is simply a legal technicality in that it does not

determine 'statehood'. However, it does determine interaction between political entities in the international system. Those determinations carry not only significant political considerations and complications, but at the same time, and especially in the ongoing processes of statebuilding and political development, significant benefits. Ironically, some of these benefits exist solely within the space of non-recognition.

In the world of computer programming, engineers have developed areas within their systems that are known as 'sandboxes'. The sandbox exists as an environment in which software can be tested before it is installed in live systems, allowing for variables to be tweaked and code to be rewritten without impacting on the ecosystem that surrounds it. The sandbox acts as a testing ground for future software projects; some will never see the light of day, while others will be released to become useful and sometimes vital additions to the computing environment. Sadly, no similar environment exists within politics. Changes take place in a real-time environment in which actions create reactions and the possibility of isolating events is limited. The last decade has seen a series of state-building trials that have attempted to rebuild and reorganize states. Unlike the computing 'sandbox', though, states cannot be cut off from their surrounding environment or the processes of politics.

However, what we have argued in this chapter is that the period of non-recognition can act as a sandbox. It provides the space and flexibility for states to develop institutions and nations, identities, and capabilities, before being surrounded by the complications and responsibilities of recognized statehood. It allows for a small degree of agency over how the state is composed and functions, and when and where the state interacts with the international community. This agency should not be overstated, but isolation does force a degree of self-reliance before external engagement is undertaken, creating a possibility of a more resilient state emerging if recognition is granted.

Notes

1. No two unrecognized states look alike, and many exhibit much higher levels of recognition than others. The premise here is not to homogenize them in our generalizations. Our discussion centers on the space of non-recognition rather than specific entities, and within this there is a base assumption for a low level of recognition. The two case studies used here, Somaliland and Kurdistan, were chosen because they both exist within weak parent states and they both lack patron states. Because of this, they exist more in the realm of non-recognition than those unrecognized states with external patron support.

2. In 1991, a de facto independent state for Iraqi Kurdistan began to take form. The state was a result of internal rebellion led by the two principal Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and external assistance received when UN forces intervened to establish 'safe havens' to protect the Kurdish people from the retaliatory actions of Baghdad. The Iraqi Kurdistan that emerged in the period between 1991 and 2003 was beset by difficulties and division. A civil war between the KDP and the PUK over land and taxes raised through smuggling resulted in a partition of the region from 1994 onward. However, despite these setbacks, by 2003 Iraqi Kurdistan enjoyed greater economic prosperity and political freedoms than the rest of Iraq and had become a model for the future of the country after Saddam Hussein.

References

- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities*, rev. edn (London: Verso).
- Anderson, L. and G. Stansfield (2004) *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division?* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Brown, M. (2010) 'Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict', in M. Guibernau and J. Rex (eds), *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press), 93–109.
- Buzan, B. (1993) *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd edn (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester).
- Call, C. (ed.) (2008) *Building States to Build Peace* (London: Lynne Rienner).
- Caspersen, N. (2006) *Unrecognised States: Shadow Economies, Democratisation and Hopes for Independence* (Lancaster: Lancaster University Seminar Series).
- Caspersen, N. (2008) *Self-Determination vs. Democracy? Democratization in De Facto States*, 49th Annual International Studies Association Convention, San Francisco, United States.
- Caspersen, N. and G. Stansfield (eds) (2011) *Unrecognised States in the International System* (London: Routledge).
- Caspersen, N. (2012) *Unrecognised States: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Modern International System* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press).
- Chandler, D. (2010) *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance* (London: Routledge).
- Chesterman, S., M. Ignatieff, and R. Thakur (eds) (2005) *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press).
- Donais, T. (2009) 'Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes', *Peace and Change*, 34:1, 3–26.
- Ghani, A. and C. Lockhart (2005) *Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State-Building* (London: Overseas Development Institute Report).
- Ghani, A. and C. Lockhart (2008) *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Ghani, A., C. Lockhart, and M. Carnahan (2006) 'An Agenda for State-Building in the Twenty-First Century', *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 30:1, 101–23.
- Herbst, J. (2000) *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

- Ignatieff, M. (1993) *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: BBC Books).
- Jackson, R. (1990) *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- King, C. (2001) 'The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States', *World Politics*, 53:4, 524–52.
- Kingston, P. and I. Spears (eds) (2004) *States-Within-States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Kolstø, P. (2006) 'The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognised Quasi-States', *Journal of Peace Research*, 43:6, 723–40.
- Kolstø, P. and H. Blakkisrud (2008) 'Living with Non-Recognition: State- and Nation-Building in the South Caucasian Quasi-States', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:3, 483–509.
- Kolstø, P. and H. Blakkisrud (2011) 'From Secessionist Conflict Toward a Functioning State: Processes of State- and Nation-Building in Transnistria', *Post Soviet Affairs*, 27:2, 178–210.
- Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) (2012) '730 Anfal Victims Returned and Laid to Rest in Slemani' (2 June), <http://www.krg.org/a/d.aspx?a=44164&l=12&r=223&s=010000>, date accessed 1 September 2014.
- Lynch, D. (2004) *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States: Unresolved Conflicts and De Facto States* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press).
- Paris, R. and T. Sisk (eds) (2008) *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions in Postwar Peace Operations* (London: Routledge).
- Pegg, S. (1998) *International Society and the De Facto State* (Aldershot: Ashgate).
- Pegg, S. and E. Berg (2014) 'Lost and Found: The Wikileaks of De Facto State-Great Power Relations', *International Studies Perspectives*, First View Article (29 May).
- Renders, M. (2012) *Consider Somaliland: State-Building with Traditional Leaders and Institutions* (Leiden: Brill).
- Richards, R. (2012) 'The Road Less Traveled: Self-Led Statebuilding and Non-Intervention in Somaliland', in B. Bliesemann de Guevara (ed.), *Statebuilding and State Formation: The Political Sociology of Intervention* (London: Routledge), 149–64.
- Richards, R. (2014) *Understanding Statebuilding: Traditional Governance and the Modern State in Somaliland* (Farnham: Ashgate).
- Rotberg, R. (2004) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Sisk, T. (2013) *Statebuilding* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Somaliland Academy for Peace and Development (SADP) and Interpeace/WSP-International (2003) *Facilitating Somaliland's Democratic Transition. Dialogue for Peace Somali Programme Report*, Nairobi/Hargeisa.
- United Kingdom Stabilisation Unit (2014) 'Somalia Documents', available through www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk, date accessed 1 September 2014.
- Woodward, S. (2011) 'State-Building and Peace-Building: What Theory and Whose Role?', in R. Kozul-Wright and P. Fortunato (eds), *Securing Peace: State-Building and Economic Development in Post-Conflict Countries* (London: Bloomsbury).