

DE FACTO STATES AND
ETHNIC CONFLICTS

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Editorial

The 1990s and 2000s witnessed an upsurge in the emergence of de facto states, from the Caucasus, to the Western Balkans, to the Middle East, to the Horn of Africa. These peculiar political entities, although they could not be more different in their socio-economic composition – from high tech Taiwan to nomadic-pastoralist Somaliland – they share a lack of external recognition as a defining criterion, i.e. despite controlling most of the territory they claim, having fought the 'home state' from which they wish to secede into a stalemate, and to varying degrees featuring a democratically legitimised political order, administration, and public services, their sovereignty is being denied by the international community. They often are the result of ethnonationalist conflicts, in which, as the normative narrative goes, politics of ethnic division have undermined and ultimately vitiated peaceful co-existence in a multinational state. As a consequence they are largely viewed as anomalies if not pariahs in the international system, not only considered illegitimate but also frequently ostracised. Yet a closer look at the role of de facto states in ethnic conflicts reveals that such normative views and the rigidity of the international recognition regime are not tenable, either theoretically or empirically. Neither are they the product of 'ethno-anarchism' (Tamás 1996) that only destroys without creating anew, nor, when strategically opportune, are they prevented from engaging with the international community – in a few cases of ethnic conflicts they even turn out to be a creation of the international community. As a matter of fact, evidence suggests that some de facto states are getting along all right with their current status, they fare considerably well with the temporality of non-recognition. Ultimately, the proliferation of de facto states may prompt us to ask whether sovereignty itself is not

merely a socio-political construct (c.f. Biersteker and Weber 1996). These theoretical deliberations on the role of de facto states in ethnic conflicts are further elaborated in the P@x Theory section of this issue. For our book review Nina Caspersen's *Unrecognised States* is an obvious choice. Nina is arguably the leading expert on de facto states in Europe, and we are thrilled to have her for our interactive book review. In the P@x Studies section we feature a uniquely wide array of contributions (a reflection of the topicality of our issue), commencing with L. Simão discussing the so called 'intra-group dimension' of ethnic conflicts by analysing the triangular and often ambiguous relations between a de facto state, its home state, and the diaspora by way of the case study of Nagorno Karabakh via Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. This focus on the inner workings of a de facto state is taken on further by D. Ó Beacháin and K. Stefańczak who examine the process of democratisation in Abkhazia. As in the case of relations between Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia their analysis shows that relations between a de facto state and its patron state – here Abkhazia and Russia – are not as straightforward as the traditional literature suggests. F. Owtram takes a constructivist approach to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq when discussing the ruling elites as a form of 'dynastic republicanism' that try to withstand demands for reform in the wake of the Arab Spring by playing the ethnic card in Iraq's sectarian conflicts. This cycle on the inner workings of de facto states concludes with A. S. Meertens exploring the downfall of Tamil Eelam brought about by internal

factionalism. The notion that de facto states are seen as the pariahs of the international system, largely opposed by the international community, is countered by the cases of Kosovo, discussed by P. Pereira, and in a postcolonial critique of Fayyadism in the Palestinian Territories by V. Araj. In both cases the international community played midwife to the creation of a de facto state; in the latter case to the lasting detriment of the Palestinian people. In conclusion, and a call to study sovereignty rather as a process than a factor present or not, T. M. Ebiede reminds us how the legacy of Biafra and its brutal suppression still haunts the cohesion of the Nigerian state today.

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DECONSTRUCTING MYTHS OF THE ROLE OF *DE FACTO* STATES IN ETHNICISED CONFLICTS

Many historic and contemporary de facto states are the product of ethnicised conflicts [1]. Most analysts argue they constitute a transitory moment in the *Staatswerdungsprozess* (process of becoming a state) in which a secessionist movement has wrested from the 'home state' control of most of the territory it claims. There the movement exercises sovereignty, as defined in the *Montevideo Convention*, in all but one criteria for statehood: 'the capacity to enter into relations with other states', i.e. to be recognised by the international community of states as a peer. And as the history of de facto states attests, recognition remains the exception. For they are the product of an at present rigidly and normatively constructed international system designed in theory and practice to uphold the status quo (Cox 1981), i.e. to advance states' interests and maintain the neo-imperialist exclusivity of membership in the international community [2], rendering them system-immanent aberrations, forced to temporarily exist in the legal no man's land of non-recognition until they acquiesce into pursuing their quest for self-determination within the existing channels condoned by the international community. As such aberrations de facto states are collectively delegitimised, vilified and treated with hostility. They routinely are maligned as 'ethnic fiefdoms of warlords', 'anarchic badlands' (cf. Caspersen 2012), as outlaw states and pariahs of the international system spawned by 'ethno-anarchism' that only 'destroys states (...) and fails to replace them with anything' (Tamás 1996: 172, 181), which leads many analysts to conclude that 'the de facto state is illegitimate no matter how effective it is' (Pegg 1998: 1) and conceptually locate them close to 'failed states' (Kolstø 2006). Yet it is precisely their effectiveness, their functioning internal sovereignty that sets them apart from so called 'failed states'. Nina Caspersen (2012) – and in this P@x volume Donnacha Ó Beacháin – have convincingly demonstrated that some de facto states exceed many recognised states in democratic legitimacy, good governance and effectiveness of public services. What is more, those critics

conveniently ignore that the international community itself is increasingly playing midwife to the creation of de facto states as 'solutions' to seemingly intractable ethnicised conflicts, subsumed under the doctrine of 'ethnic partition', of which Chaim Kaufman (1996, 1998) is a major proponent. In Kosovo, Pascoal Pereira reminds us in this issue, the international community has actively fostered the establishment of a de facto state with the 'standards before status' principle [3]. The same principle, it could be argued, applies with Fayyadism to the Palestinian Authority – discussed here by Victoria Araj – where the international community tries to square its accommodation of Israel's Apartheid regime with the commitments made to the Palestinian people at Oslo. In February this year at the London Conference for Somalia, the UK and USA considered de facto states in all but name as viable 'solutions' to the intractable conflicts in Somalia. And when strategically or economically opportune the international community proves extremely creative in unofficial ways of engaging with these entities in bilateral relations, as testified by the dozens of 'economic and cultural representation offices' of Taiwan but also of the representations of the Kurdistan Regional Government around the globe. These examples not only expose the arbitrariness and neo-imperialist bias prevalent in the international recognition regime but also illustrate that, when corresponding with the geo-strategic interests of great powers, the international community acknowledges the difficulties of unconditional compliance with its constitutive principles and acts economical with the precepts it claims to uphold. Another myth about de facto states is their bad reputation as ethnonationalist troublemakers, either as puppets of revanchist 'patron states' or 'kin states' of ethnonationalist insurgencies in neighbouring states. This myth can be traced to what Rogers Brubaker (2004) calls 'groupism', i.e. the presumption of ethnic groups as organic, static, substantive, distinct, homogeneous and bounded units and of admitting ethnicity

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pre-eminent explanatory power. The logic of 'groupism' dictates that members of what is presupposed to be the same ethnic group, even if separated by international borders, will collaborate based on shared kinship and that these kinship ties will supersede all other loyalties and allegiances. Consequently, de facto states will submit to the supremacy of a 'patron state' not only out of strategic calculations but first and foremost because it is their 'kin state'; likewise, based on group solidarity, a de facto state may adopt the role of a 'kin state' for an insurgency operating in the near abroad. Both views are gross simplifications based on an essentialist and primordialist understanding of ethnicity, that fail to take into account that ethnonationalist elites propagate the myth of ethnic cohesion and group solidarity to strengthen their claim to leadership – what Gayatri Spivak (1987) terms 'strategic essentialism'. In other words, ethnicity has become a political tool, not the root cause of relations or frictions within or between presupposed ethnic groups. That relations between a de facto state and its 'patron state' of presupposedly the same kin are not that straightforward is illustrated by Licina Simão in this P@x issue with relations between Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia; in my own work (Artens forthcoming) I examine the complex relations between the PKK insurgency and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In fact, I argue that the establishment of the Kurdistan Region has significantly contributed to a de-escalation of regional tensions, since it provides regional players with an interlocutor who, to some, admittedly limited effect, can be held accountable in international fora. A similar argument, with some adaptations, can be made for the KLA and Kosovo and gets us back full circle to why the international community occasionally promotes de facto states as 'solutions' to ethnicised conflicts.

Having said all this, we ultimately, as food for future thought, may want to contemplate whether the current proliferation of de facto states does not force us to rethink our linear understanding of *Staatswerdung*, whether the

sovereign state is necessarily the sought outcome of self-determination struggles or whether these peculiar political entities – apart from existing states yet not recognised independent states – do not demonstrate that societies can exist, persist, and even prosper, as the case of Taiwan demonstrates, without external sovereignty. We may thus ponder whether they have not discovered a viable 'third way' of subsisting – temporarily or permanently – within a hostile international system without formal recognition.

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Notes:

[1] Identity in this article is understood as a 'performatively enacted' (Butler 1999) socio-political construct, and identity conflicts are consequently seen as a result of antagonisms constructed along ideological lines of division, be they ethnic, religious, based on gender, etc.. It is therefore more appropriate to speak of ethnicised rather than ethnic conflicts. See Artens (forthcoming) for such a post-structuralist approach to ethnic conflict in international relations theory.

[2] David Strang (1996) demonstrates how during the age of imperialism external sovereignty was withheld from non-Western political entities on the basis of them lacking the properties to be granted access to the regime of civilized nations. It was often understood as the *mission civilisatrice*, the White Man's burden of colonial powers to 'develop' those societies towards a threshold of possible future self-governance. I argue that this

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neo-imperialist bias and regime of exclusivity, after a short post-colonial period of deviance in the 1950s until 1970s, continues today, as exemplified in the *uti possidetis* principle of declaring existing borders – often drawn by colonial powers – sacrosanct.

[3] How the international community proceeded with Kosovo was *quid pro quo* used by Russia as a justification for its recognition of Abkhazia and South-Ossetia in 2008.

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Book Review



Caspersen, Nina (2012), *Unrecognised States*, Cambridge: Polity.

Inspired by the Royal Anthropological Institute's *Reviewer Meets Reviewed* Program, we have asked Nina Caspersen to write a response to our review of her new monograph, Caspersen, Nina (2012) *Unrecognised States*, Cambridge: Polity

I and the P@x editorial team want to thank Nina for kindly agreeing to this format. Her comments are the italicised paragraphs subsequent to the below text.

With a series of articles and books Nina Caspersen has distinguished herself as, I would argue, the leading authority on those anomalies in the international system commonly referred to as 'unrecognised states' or 'de facto states' – she prefers to put emphasis on what is lacking, while in this P@x volume we have decided to highlight the entities' present properties. For Caspersen, key criteria (p. 11) for what constitutes a de facto state are (1) that the entity in question has achieved de facto independence and controls the majority of the territory it claims, (2) ongoing state institution building accompanied by attempts to increase external and internal legitimacy, (3) a declaration of formal independence or at least clearly demonstrated aspirations for independence, and (4) that it has not been recognised by other states save perhaps its patron state(s) and a few minor players. One may debate these criteria and as a result what cases are seen as de facto states or not. In this P@x issue we argue for example that, although technically a federal region of Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan is a de facto state since its current status and the stalemate between Erbil and Baghdad has been imposed and enforced by an occupying force – with the US withdrawal Iraqi Kurdistan is arguably again incrementally slinking away from federal Iraq. Likewise, we suggest that Israel stalling final status negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, although in principle agreeing to a two-state solution, condemns the latter to the status of a de facto state until its final status has been solved, which is why we include the Palestinian territories as a de facto state in our case studies – all the more since the Palestinian territories otherwise possess most properties of statehood – and certainly all of Caspersen's criteria.

Such subtleties of definition aside, Caspersen's *Unrecognized States* can be considered the standard work on de facto states because she combines a focus on their external relations from previous treatments of the subject with the unique insights gained from her earlier inquiries into ethnic group and national cohesion as well as the so called 'intra group dimension of ethnic conflicts'. This concentration on the internal dynamics within a de facto state allow her to do away with various misconceptions, misrepresentations, and simplifications. She counters perceptions of de facto states as permanent sources of regional instability by convincingly arguing that de facto states usually have no interest in a renewal of hostilities – after all they benefit from the current stalemate with the 'parent state'; neither should we dismiss them as mere puppets of a power-mongering 'patron state'. 'External dependence is often a two-way street', best illustrated in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, where 'Karabakh uses the Armenian currency, its inhabitants use Armenian passports, (...) Armenia provides the main market for products from Nagorno Krabakh and constitutes its only link with the outside world', yet when Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan appeared weak in his defence of Karabakh, he was toppled 'and the former president of Nagorno Karabakh, Robert Kocharian, took his place – the periphery had taken over the centre' (pp. 56, 58).

Caspersen's greatest empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of de facto states is her examination of the internal dynamics within unrecognised states. Often dismissed as 'anarchical badlands' and 'ethnic fiefdoms of warlords', she illustrates with ample examples that - contra the prevailing literature - political reforms, a degree of democratisation, and even a limited political pluralism are in the best interest of de facto states' leaders.

'Strategies for gaining recognition are continuously being refined and renegotiated in view of changes in the international norms and practice of recognition, and over the last decade we have seen a gradual change (...) to claims of having created effective, democratic almost-states. Through these claims the leaders of unrecognised states are attempting to move away from associations with external puppeteers, shadow economies, and ethnic cleansing' (pp. 68-9).

Yet attempts at reform, good governance, and sustainable state building are not only geared towards the international community, they also have a strong domestic component. The political instability inherent to non-recognition makes de facto states extremely vulnerable to not only external pressure but also internal competition and often a mass exodus of the population. Recognising that ‘the demographic facts in some of these entities require [the leaders] to try to build broader alliances if they are to be able to demonstrate majority support for their cause’ (p. 96), those leaders try to control and channel this emerging pluralism into quasi-free elections or public referenda or by buying off popular support with generous public services, state pensions, etc.. ‘We have consequently seen a process of gradual transition away from rule by authoritarian war heroes toward some form of proto-democracy’ (p. 86).

This allows us to first conclude that maintaining internal legitimacy is as important as gaining external legitimacy for a de facto state’s survival – after all, ‘they are claiming (...) that they have all the necessary attributes of statehood *except* international recognition’ (p. 83) via the international community but also their own constituency – but secondly also begs interesting questions about statehood and sovereignty in general. Questions such as whether democratisation can actually take place without internationally recognised sovereignty. Democratisation literature generally views it as a prerequisite, yet Caspersen’s study proves that ‘nonrecognition does (...) not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to democratisation – democracy does not need sovereignty – but the process differs in important ways from that generally observed in recognised states’ (p. 99). She concludes, ‘unrecognised states are torn between providing a strong state and an effective state, and between promoting unity, plurality, and diversity. The entities oscillate between these different identities and the cross-pressures may lead them to merely imitate recognised statehood’ (p. 89). Such a version of statehood, though, ‘certainly challenges the more simplified notions of sovereignty, and the dichotomy that equals sovereignty with order and lack of sovereignty with disorder’ (p. 119).

It is with such questions that Caspersen raises our expectations for a thorough ‘rethinking of sovereignty and statehood’ (chapter 5). This is precisely the endeavour those among us with a critical theory or post-structuralist orientation have been waiting for, since, as I argue in my own work on the subject, de facto states are examples par excellence to expose sovereignty as a socio-political construct and to deconstruct the arbitrariness of the global recognition regime as a function of the neo-imperialist bias in the international system. Yet such iconoclasm is not Caspersen’s thing, her radicalism does not extend beyond Stephen Krasner’s differentiated view of sovereignty and his trust in the adaptability of the international system to accommodate deviators. I suspect from her writing she genuinely sees IR as a ‘problem solving theory’ – not with a Cox’ian tongue in cheek – which is why she wants her study understood as a ‘starting point’ to initiate discussions on a rethinking of ‘the rigid conception of sovereignty and territorial integrity [that] is not producing results’ (p. 155), because she wants the system to work better, and not because she would go so far as to suggest that the system is constituted and can only work by maintaining the dichotomies she has identified. In best conflict resolution fashion, she pleads for a wider international engagement with unrecognised states and to overcome the stalemate between ‘breakaway state’ and ‘parent state’ beyond mere power-sharing or autonomy solutions by ‘fudging sovereignty’ or offering ‘a form of semi-sovereignty’ a la, for example, ‘the one country, two systems’ model envisioned by China for reintegrating Taiwan, i.e. ‘one state, but with two (or more) sovereignties’ (p. 140).

However, a precondition for any engagement with these peculiar entities called unrecognised or de facto states is a better understanding of their complex nature, their genesis, their internal dynamics, and to redress the pejorative simplifications of dismissing them out of hand as ‘anarchical badlands’ and ‘ethnic fiefdoms of warlords’. While not carrying these insights to their, some may say logical others may say too radical, conclusion, having gained them in the first place are the distinct merits of Caspersen’s cutting-edge analysis.

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First of all, thank you for choosing my book for this interesting format and for giving me a chance to respond to these very positive but also challenging comments.

The book was essentially born out of curiosity: how do these anomalous territories that are not recognised as independent states - yet often look like and act like states - actually function? Are they states in all but name or are they the anarchical badlands of popular imagination? I therefore set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of unrecognized states, which crucially included an in-depth analysis of their internal dynamics. My initial reasoning was that such an analysis, and the accompanying rejection of common misconceptions, is crucial if we are to find solutions to the continuing conflicts over these contested territories. But the analysis of unrecognized statehood – which I find is both constrained and enabled by non-recognition - also reveals something important about the functioning of the international system of sovereign states and the way in which it reproduces itself.

The choice of the term 'unrecognized states' reflects, as Hannes suggests, a focus on what is lacking. But this does not translate into an absence of interest in the present properties of these entities. On the contrary, it is my argument that the lack of recognition, the lack of external sovereignty, constitutes a defining characteristic of these entities. It does not render their (de facto) statehood impossible, but it does mean that it takes a specific form. Lack of recognition is not merely an inconvenience; it is an existential question for unrecognized states and it fundamentally shapes their development.

Regardless of which term, or which definition, is chosen there will be borderline cases. One could say that this is in the nature of the beast: unrecognized states are transitional phenomena, in almost constant flux, and what is an unrecognized state today may not be one tomorrow. Yet I freely admit that lack of detailed knowledge may have led me to omit cases that should rightfully have been included, such as possibly South Sudan prior to its independence. Other cases were, however, consciously omitted since I assessed that they did not meet my definitional criteria and therefore did not fully exemplify attempts to build states without recognition. This includes the Palestinian territories (due to their territorial control still ultimately depending on Israeli 'good-will') and Iraqi Kurdistan (due to the federal agreement with the centre, even if this may not be lasting). These assessments can of course always be debated and whether or not specific cases are included depends to a considerable extent on emphasis: is the emphasis, for example, on the de facto statehood of these territories or on their aspirations for recognition - or for securing a place in the international system of sovereign states? Analysis of such borderline cases is in any case valuable as it will add to our knowledge of the multifaceted ways in which statehood and sovereignty function in practice.

Although my book aims to rethink sovereignty and statehood, its 'radicalism' is limited. It is a diagnosis of the problem more than a prescription of remedies, and I will leave it to others to expose the 'neo-imperialist bias in the international system'. Hannes is right in identifying my background as being in conflict studies rather than (critical) international relations theory and the prescriptive part of the book is focused on possible ways of addressing the frozen conflicts associated with unrecognized states. Through its analysis of the costs associated with non-recognition and the ways in the international system of sovereign states reproduces itself, the book presents a sceptical view of the emerging argument that we are seeing a new system of blurred sovereignties, but more research on these questions is undoubtedly needed and I very much hope that my book will act as a catalyst for this.

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ETHNIC KINSHIP AND DE FACTO STATEHOOD: THE CASE OF ARMENIANS FROM NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Kinship relations and survival

The ability of non-recognized *de facto* states to establish relations with communities sharing an ethnic kinship is fundamental for the advancement of their national and international agenda of survival and recognition. This article addresses the ambiguities in the relations between the Armenian communities in Nagorno-Karabakh and its ethnically related diasporas, both in Armenia and outside.

In cases such as Kosovo/Albania, Armenia/Karabakh, or South-/North-Ossetia, where the fragmentation of multi-ethnic political entities has been followed by a regrouping under more primordial directives, including ethnic affinities (Grant 1997; Brubaker 1994), the so-called politics of non-recognition, undertaken by the international community in the post-Cold War period, were compensated by the image of kinship solidarity and the active deployment of many forms of assistance. These processes included the development of a common narrative of nation-building, reinforcing popular support for the titular nation. They also included support for state-building, strengthening territorial control and institutional consolidation (Flikke 2011: 43-50), although, as noted by Caspersen (2008), the international community has had a central role in this process, having promoted a clear policy of 'standards before status' in the case of Kosovo (cf. Richter and Halbach 2009).

Kinship through links to patron states is important for the survival of these entities on a daily basis, but it does not help to define the outcome of their struggle. Effectively, Blakkisrud and Kolstø (2012) argue that the resilience of these entities is less explained by, 'whether the ultimate goal [of] independent statehood or status is seen only as a springboard for unification with ethnic kin' and more by the everyday support for their existence. This is clearly illustrated by the Armenian case since, despite the clear limitations of the Armenian economy, Armenian

leaders have preferred to financially and economically sustain Nagorno-Karabakh rather than advance political recognition. Kinship relations can therefore be simultaneously a sustaining element and an additional pressure, as the analysis of the triangulation of relations between Armenians, the Diaspora and Karabakh further illustrates.

Triangulation of relations: Armenia, Diasporas and Karabakh

Armenian identity has been shaped by a long history of survival in what is perceived as a hostile regional context. A Christian country surrounded by Muslim neighbours, landlocked Armenia used to be wedged between ancient empires with expansionist appetites. Political alliances were always perceived as a way to assure military protection, as was the case of the alliance with Russia, seen as a way to protect Armenia from the Ottoman Empire. Armenians' self-perception as a persecuted people and nation, faced with extermination, has created a strong bond among Armenian communities worldwide. Thus, Armenian diasporas represent a crucial dimension of Armenia's regional and international politics (cf. Suny 1993).



Military parade in Stepanakert celebrating 20th anniversary of victorious battle in Nagorno Karabakh War, May 2012' Source: Office of the President of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh

This is also the case *vis-à-vis* the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. They have been active players in the pursuit of Karabakh autonomy from Azerbaijan, from the very beginning (de Waal 2003: 206). Much like Armenia proper, Armenians from the diasporas fought against Azerbaijani forces during the separatist war in the early 1990s. The Armenian diasporas have also actively funded the economic and social development of Karabakh. Diaspora organizations have paid fully for the road linking Karabakh to Armenia, through the Lachin corridor, a fundamental life-line for Karabakh. They are also concluding the construction of a small airport in Stepanakert, to ease access to the region.

But relations between the diasporas and Armenia proper on Karabakh are more nuanced. The diasporas have opposed a policy of concessions by Armenian leaders on this issue and have used its political and financial power over the Armenian state structures to that end. They even allied with Karabakh leaders against Armenian decisions to accommodate some of Azerbaijan's claims on the conflict and to respond to pressure from the international community. In 1998, the Karabakh agenda imposed on Armenian presidential elections, and was instrumental in toppling president Ter-Petrossian, who was regarded as too accommodating towards Azerbaijan (Kolstø 2006). The so-called Karabakh clan, led by Robert Kocharian, Karabakh's first president, took over in order to ensure Karabakh interests in Armenian politics; a trend continuing until today.

Thus, one would expect Armenian politics to be fully in line with Karabakh's. There are, nevertheless, signs of fatigue and new challenges ahead that might put additional stress on these relations. First, Armenia has endured economic and political hardships imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey, as a result of the war, especially through the closing of their borders. This has enhanced Yerevan's dependence on Georgia and Iran for trade routes, increasing the prices of its exports and imports. There are visible signs that a new generation of Armenians, who were not involved in the war, might consider the costs of

supporting Karabakh too high a price to pay and push for a strategy of de-linkage. This could also be enhanced by perceptions among the Armenian opposition that many of the perks of power have been effectively controlled by the Karabakh elites in Armenia. However, as Novikova (2012: 566) argues, 'the [Armenian] society demonstrated cohesion in any speculation on the issue of alleged surrender of Karabakh,' suggesting that the Karabakh issue might, for the time being, be out of reach as a campaign dispute.

Nagorno-Karabakh authorities have never explicitly stated what the final outcome of their struggle for secession might be. When asked, they often make the argument that it might actually be advantageous for Karabakh to take on full sovereignty, like Kosovo, creating two ethnic Armenian states with votes in international multilateral forums. Although this is a long-term project and unification with Armenia might be the most feasible option as an alternative to autonomy within Azerbaijan, it denotes a growing sense of grievance between Armenians and Karabakh regarding the future. After ten years of rule by the Karabakh clan, led first by Robert Kocharian and now by the current president, Serzh Sargsyan, Armenians might be pushing for alternatives in power that are not linked to Karabakh, creating additional pressures. How the diasporas will play this game remains to be seen.

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POLITICS IN AN UNRECOGNISED STATE: THE CASE OF ABKHAZIA

Presidential government has often been considered inappropriate for new multi-ethnic states but Abkhazia has bucked the post-Soviet and regional trend by instituting a competitive multi-party system in which presidential terms are respected and incumbents lose to opposition candidates. Post-Soviet presidential systems have almost always had no meaningful separation of powers that might encourage limited government and thereby protect liberty, but rather are hyper-centralized with all important initiatives depending on presidential approval. Moreover, because only one person or faction can win the top position, the presidential form of government, as practiced in the post-Soviet space, has frequently encouraged a zero-sum, all-or-nothing, form of politics. It is now well-established that presidential democracies are more likely to collapse than are parliamentary democracies (Cheibub 2002). Of the nine internationally recognised post-Soviet states that have adopted a presidential form of government, none have had a peaceful transition of power from government to opposition and has respected term limits. By conducting genuinely competitive and unpredictable elections that have facilitated peaceful transfers of power from government to opposition Abkhazia, a de facto state recognized by only six UN member states, is an outlier that merits further examination.

The 2004 Presidential Election: Abkhazia's moment of democratic consolidation

After successfully prosecuting a war of independence against Georgian forces in September 1993, the first decade of Abkhazia's political life was dominated by Vladimir Ardzinba, a prominent leader during the fight for freedom, who was elected president by acclamation in 1994 and again in 1999. As he approached the end of his constitutionally permitted two terms in office he chose a successor who would preserve the interests of Ardzinba's inner circle. His favourite was Raul Khadjimba, a 46 year old former KGB agent who had served as deputy prime minister, deputy defence minister and head of Abkhazia's security services before his appointment as prime minister in April 2003. Yet, the Abkhaz electorate, already weary of Ardzinba's authoritarianism,

were ready for change and Khadjimba's position as heir apparent may have been something of a liability. Despite, or more likely because of, ostentatious support from Russia and clear signals that Khadjimba was the favourite of fellow former KGB operative, Vladimir Putin, Sergei Bagapsh won a slim majority of votes in the first round while Khadjimba with 35% came a distant second. Encouraged by his supports, Khadjimba claimed fraud and for months a stand-off ensued that risked turning violent. The Kremlin at this point sought to further influence the outcome by threatening to suspend assistance to Abkhazia should Bagapsh be elevated to the presidency.

Yet, this external pressure proved counter-productive, and the Abkhaz did not buckle. Many voters were appalled by the transparent attempt by Moscow to hand-pick Abkhazia's president. A resolution was eventually hammered out that promised a new election with Bagapsh and Khadjimba running on a joint ticket for President and Vice President. The result demonstrated the limits of the Kremlin's ability to direct politics in Abkhazia and it is noteworthy that the Russian Government has stayed aloof from subsequent presidential contests in 2009 and 2011, professing itself willing to cooperate with whomever is chosen by the Abkhazian electorate. The inability of the Kremlin to dictate the presidential choice in Abkhazia is all the more surprising when one considers the extensive leverage Russia exerts. Most Abkhazians, for example, have accepted Russian citizenship as a means to break-out of international isolation and to benefit from subsidies like pensions. The outcome of the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia has provided the Abkhazian authorities with additional security guarantees with the result that the possibility of renewed military conflict has been largely eliminated from the political discourse in Abkhazia.

The December 2009 presidential election then, coming as it did just sixteen months after Russian recognition of Abkhazia (joined by

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Nicaragua in September 2008 and Venezuela in September 2009) resulted in an easy victory for Bagapsh. His unexpected death in May 2011, however, left a political vacuum with no obvious successor.

The 2011 presidential and 2012 parliamentary elections

Three candidates presented themselves to the electorate to succeed Bagapsh. The vice president, Alexander Ankvab, the prime minister, Sergei Shamba, and election veteran Raul Khadjimba who hoped it would be third time lucky.



'Abkhazia, presidential election billboard, August 2011'
Source: Author's Collection

Each candidate received an equal share of airtime on television, and they publicly agreed on eschewing negative campaigning. When Sergei Shamba broke this accord, his smear tactics backfired and the election result a week later gave Ankvab a slender majority (54.86%) with the remainder of the vote almost equally divided between Shamba (21.04%) and Khadjimba (19.83%).

The most recent elections to the 35 seat national assembly (March 2012) have confirmed and reinforced trends witnessed during previous parliamentary contests. The election was very competitive with four or more candidates contesting most constituencies, and in the end most incumbents being voted out of office.

Ethnic under-representation remains a key character of domestic politics within Abkhazia. Parliamentary seats are overwhelmingly dominated by ethnic Abkhaz, although they only constitute 50.7% (according to the 2011 census) of the citizenry of Abkhazia. The president must not only be a fluent speaker of the Abkhaz language but must also be of Abkhaz nationality. Fear of Russification and

demographic uncertainties will ensure that the political dominance of the Abkhaz remains a sensitive issue.

Conclusion

Despite relatively inhospitable conditions – in terms of political neighbourhood, lack of international recognition of the state, a legacy of war and, until recently, threat of military attack - the polity that has evolved in contemporary Abkhazia has proven remarkably resilient and competitive. Presidential but also legislative elections are hotly contested and there is a high turnover of deputies to the National Assembly.

There have been suggestions that some elites in unrecognised de facto states try to facilitate international legitimacy through democratization, hoping to 'earn sovereignty' for good behaviour and for adopting internationally accepted norms, but a desire to "impress the west" does not appear to be uppermost in Abkhaz priorities. This combined with the existence of genuine rivals and electoral rules that facilitate partisan observers at polling booths has inhibited the type of electoral fraud that is commonplace in many other parts of the former Soviet Union.

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THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ: ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE SURVIVAL OF DYNASTIC REPUBLICANISM IN A DE FACTO STATE

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The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) presents political science and international relations a case that has in its trajectory over time continually generated conceptualization and yet still eluded entirely satisfactory classification. For example, the KRI has been classed as an semi-state (Chorev 2007), 'state within a state' (Kingston and Spears 2004), a quasi-state (Natali 2010) and even a 'recognized unrecognized state' (Harvey and Stansfield 2011). In examining the foreign policies of 'unrecognized states' I myself excluded the KRI from that category and assigned it to the paradiplomacy of federal regions (Owtram 2011). Rather than trying to resolve this classificatory issue and accepting for argument's sake that the KRI may be classed as a de facto state presently held within the framework of Iraqi federalism, this contribution, informed by five years' experience of living and working in the KRI, applies the conceptual lens of 'dynastic republicanism' to it. Furthermore, the article deploys the argument that conflicts over ethnic identity may be used by dynastic elites to buttress their position when it is threatened. This is illustrated by examining the events in Sulaimaniyah and Kirkuk in February and March 2011.

Iraqi Kurdistan: dynastic republicanism, *wasta*, and corruption institutionalised

Writing before the 'Middle Eastern spring' Larbi Sadiki (2009) provided the valuable analytical framework of 'dynastic republicanism'. Referring to the states of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, he noted how these putative republics were ruled by families who seemed intent on grooming their sons or close relatives to succeed them by offering them as candidates at the ballot box in elections. In much of the Middle East the state is a superficial construct imposed by Western powers and loyalty and trust are given to the family, tribe and sect primarily. State structures are an arena for competition which competing networks of patronage seek to capture.

While in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya the dynasties of Ben Ali, Mubarak and Ghaddafi have been swept away by protest, in the KRI we can still observe dynastic republicanism unbound. The son of

the current President of the KRI, Masoud Barzani, Masrur is head of the Kurdistan security service. Masud Barzani's nephew, Nechervan Barzani, is the deputy head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and was Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2006 and again in 2012. The son of the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and current President of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, Qubad is the KRG representative to the United States. His brother, Pavel is head of the security service in the Sulaimaniyah region.



'Student-led anti-government protests in Sulimaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan, February 2011'
Source: The New York Times

To appreciate how dynastic republicanism operates in Iraqi Kurdistan, one has to understand what has been termed the 'hidden force' of Middle Eastern society (Cunningham and Sarayah 1993): the concept of *wasta*. To have *wasta* means to be well connected and to be able to use those connections to achieve access to useful resources. In Iraq, one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International 2012), while there may be official regulations and procedures, the unofficial law of *wasta*, cuts across all this and in nearly all cases trumps qualifications and ability. The KDP and PUK, whilst they in origin could be distinguished by some difference in ideological perspective, can now be regarded as competing networks of patronage with the Barzani and Talabani families at their apex. A key refrain emanating from the KDP and PUK is that the Kurds should remain united in order to best progress Kurdistan's interests in federal Iraq, a unity that fractured as the shockwaves of the Arab Spring rippled into the Kurdistan region.

Dynastic Republicanism in Iraqi Kurdistan Challenged

In February 2011 demonstrations broke out in Sulaimaniah in the Kurdish case of the Middle Eastern spring, reflecting demonstrations also taking place in Baghdad, Basra and other parts of Iraq. In some sense Iraq had a form of democracy that was delivering free and fair elections at the ballot box. What these demonstrators were demanding was that their elected representatives delivered improvements in their quality of life in the form of basic services of electricity and water supply, rather than lining their pockets with the trappings of office. In Sulaimaniah, the disgruntled population vented its ire on the office of the KDP. Rock throwing and an attempt to storm the building was met with live ammunition fire from the guards and the deaths of a number of youths (see Artens 2011). In Erbil the KDP was determined not to allow anything similar to happen and a lock-down of the city was instigated. These demonstrations were fuelled by the perception that a corrupt, entrenched elite was benefiting greatly from the trappings of office whilst basic services such as electricity and reliable water supplies were not delivered to the population who are excluded from obtaining such benefits by their lack of the right connections.

The response of the KRG was much like other governments in the Middle East: to promise reform whilst clamping down on dissent. It is also contended (Artens 2011) that the decision of Barzani to move Kurdish militia, the *peshmerga*, into the contested city of Kirkuk in the early part of March 2011 was an instance of diversionary conflict: to bolster the position of Barzani and the KDP by a move which would garner them nationalist acclaim. Although the tensions over Kirkuk are longstanding (see Anderson 2010) the claim that there is a connection between the unrest in Sulaimaniah and the deployment of Kurdish forces into Kirkuk has much plausibility.

Conclusion

This article has applied the concept of dynastic republicanism to the KRI. It has examined a case study that illustrates that in their bid to maintain themselves in power such dynastic republics may arguably use markers of ethnic identity in

conflicts. It remains to be seen whether the de facto state that is now the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will remain a form of dynastic republic(s) or whether it will go the way of Tunisia and Egypt, and Libya.

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EELAM DISMEMBERED: TMVP AND THE TWILIGHT OF THE TAMIL HOMELAND IN SRI LANKA

The journey towards an independent Tamil state (Eelam) in Northeastern Sri Lanka started with the Vaddukkodai resolution of 1976. The aspired homeland was imagined in that text as a free, sovereign, secular, socialist state and thus provided the ideological contours of the armed struggle fought by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The subsequently achieved territorial control by the insurgency gave progressive geographical expression to the abstract idea of Eelam, aided by the tacit support of Tamil Nadu in neighbouring India and the lobby and funds of the Tamil Diaspora across the world. The LTTE were nonetheless militarily defeated in 2009 leading to the collapse of their statebuilding project, mainly due to the 2004 defection of their military commander and the formation of the paramilitary cum political party *Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP)*. In spite of high levels of institutionalisation, typifying the political space contituted between the Vaddukkodai resolution and LTTE's defeat as a *de facto* state is not clear-cut.

While it is true that at the peak of LTTE's power they had their own revenue collection, police and judiciary as well as public services and economic development initiatives (Stokke, 2006); this was not the case throughout the entire period used (1986-2009) to catalogue Tamil Eelam as an unrecognised state (Caspersen 2012). In fact the first experiments in institution-building such as the establishment of a police force and the enactment of the Tamil Eelam penal and civil codes (Stokke, 2006) did not start before the early 1990s; efforts which were only progressively extended along with LTTE's territorial expansion till 2003. The erroneous timeframe doesn't refute the fact that state-like structures were being built; but it does point to necessary adjustments in the argument. Likewise, it can be disputed whether the LTTE ever controlled the two thirds of claimed territory Caspersen deems a criterium for a *de facto* state. Estimates presented by Sarvananthan (2006) calculated LTTE territory at its peak to be actually only 44% of the total

physical area of the North and East provinces (claimed territory). Yet, although when and for how long certain levels of control are achieved is important, perhaps more so is to acknowledge that *claims about how much is controlled are themselves fields of contestation*. Moreover, commentaries dealing with the formation of Tamil Eelam attempt to either validate LTTE's achievements or undermine them based on evaluations of the basic functions attributed to the state (i.e. security, welfare, representation). This reveals that besides territorial control, also executive capacity and internal legitimacy are contested.

Caspersen rightly argues that a lack of international recognition results in a different kind of statehood. In fact the specific case of Tamil Eelam ought to be considered as distinct from the modernist project aiming at individual civic and political rights. Instead it should be understood as a "revivalist project seeking to establish pre-colonial social conditions" (Fuglerud 2009: 202), complicated further by the fact that in an insurgency-led statebuilding process the distinctions between state, government, judiciary and military are largely inapplicable.

Conventional accounts highlight the overwhelming military operations of the Sri Lankan army as the decisive factor in leading to the end of the island's civil war. I argue however that it was not the military battles that obliterated LTTE's state-building project, but Karuna's defection and the subsequent formation of the TMVP. Indeed, in March 2004 the then military commander of the LTTE, Col. Karuna Amman, publicly announced his defection, taking with him thousands of cadres under his command. From one day to the next the LTTE lost four key elements in the sustainability of a *de facto* state: the monopoly of violence; 40% of their manpower; nearly half the territory under their control; and their grip over information, as Karuna's defection became the largest intelligence leak in the history of the insurgency.

Building upon socio-historical differences between Tamils from the north and east, Karuna argued that LTTE's northern leaders monopolized the higher positions within the outfit, neglected the Eastern province and retained most of the wealth; while eastern fighters made the biggest sacrifices. This astute discursive intervention equating internal dynamics of the armed group with external features of the society around it, allowed Karuna to challenge the political and cultural unity of the expected citizenry of Tamil Eelam; simultaneously questioning LTTE's authority, the anticipated governing body. With Karuna's subsequent formation of the TMVP the initial critique on LTTE practices was then taken to the next level offering a political alternative claiming to represent the interests of the eastern Tamil community.

In a similarly sequenced fashion, the idea of Tamil Eelam was slowly dismantled. Initially the concept was fractured by introducing the new notion of *South Eelam* (corresponding to the eastern Province), producing a geographical correspondence with the political and cultural distinctions. As Karuna's defection and formation of TMVP were no longer compatible with a struggle for a separate homeland, emphasis shifted from the erased E of Eelam (initially the movement's acronym was TEMVP) to the M of Makkal (people), de-territorializing the Tamil struggle and in fact debunking its teleology, the idea of a homeland itself. In that sense TMVP tipped the balance towards the government's statebuilding project of a united Sri Lanka.

In sum, speaking of a de facto state in the formerly LTTE controlled territories only makes sense provided such construct is conceived as an unfinished, contested and fluid political space. Having said that, a critique of that notion should not lead to imagining such spaces as "ungoverned territories", void of authority and thus - as commonly assumed - havens for criminal activities. On the contrary, in the case of Tamil Eelam subjects were in a way governed twice, allowing less room for dissent and disorder.

With Karuna's defection and TMVP's formation, Tamil Eelam was literally dismembered when enforcers of the state-in-the-making and a large portion of potential citizens renounced membership to that project. It was geographically dismembered by breaking the territory into two; and it was conceptually dismembered as the imagined identity was torn apart and the envisioned leadership discredited.

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THE VIOLABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL BORDERS: A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE IN THE BALKANS?

P@X Studies

Although the final political status of Kosovo is mainly dependent on the will of Serbia and Kosovo, the international community will have a key role on any final outcome. On the one hand, Kosovo's independence is not completed for it has not been recognized by the whole international community. On the other hand, this independence is strongly supported by significant international actors usually adverse to territorial secession of *de facto* states. The aim of this article is to provide a brief overview of the current international status of Kosovo with an emphasis on the existing obstacles on a final outcome and on how the insistence on principles such as the inviolability of international borders can freeze a conflict and inhibit viable alternatives.

Kosovar claims for a new political status within the Yugoslav federation since the beginning of the 1980s was dealt a blow with the withdrawal of much of its autonomy in 1989. A long-term strategy of non-violent resistance towards Belgrade by the Kosovar political elite may have helped to avoid a major violent outbreak of war at first (Mertus, 2009); at the same time, though, new parallel institutions were established in the region, turning Kosovo into a *de facto* state in which Belgrade, the *de jure* ruler, had few, if any, effective presence. However an escalation of violence between Albanian and Serbian Kosovars in the late 1990s led to a massive retaliation of the Yugoslav army against the local Albanian population and to the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia in 1999, after failed attempts of the international community to bring peace to the region.

The international intervention and the following establishment of a UN-mandated international administration over Kosovo constituted a major change in the local *status quo*. But it can barely be defined as a turning point towards a definite solution; although reaffirming the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, the international presence actually nurtured the irreversibility of the contenders' polarized

positions (Yannis, 2009): Serbia refused any secession from its territory; Kosovo would not accept less than full independence. Therefore, from a *de facto* state functioning apart from its parent state, Kosovo fell into a sort of trusteeship regime under the rule of the United Nations and its final political status was never explicitly addressed or planned.

The first draft of a roadmap to a final solution for Kosovo (and meant to prepare its political independence) was sketched in the Ahtisaari Plan in 2007. However, in spite of the support from the Western states (Ker-Lindsay, 2011), it was not adopted by the Security Council. This setback eventually pushed Pristina to declare unilaterally its independence in 2008, which has been recognized by 90 UN member-states so far. But this record is not enough for this new state to become a fully sovereign member of the international community (Berg, 2009): Serbia does not recognize this move, which it regards as a violation of its territorial integrity. Meanwhile, the Serbian government has maintained a consistent political support to the Serbian population in Northern Kosovo around Mitrovića, which has successfully resisted the presence of the UN and EU missions, not to mention Kosovar institutions themselves. *World Quarterly* 27 (6): pp. 1021-40



Violent clashes between UN forces and Kosovo Serb protesters, Mitrovica, March 2008
Source: Reuters

New developments in Kosovo may be on their way after two major events in the beginning of 2012. First, Serbia and Kosovo signed an important agreement mediated by the EU, which allows Kosovo to be represented and

fully participate in regional fora under the denomination of “Republic of Kosovo”, attached to an asterisk with the text “This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence”. This “Footnote Agreement” also opens the way to EU accession for Serbia, rewarded for its flexibility on Kosovo, avoiding at the same time the issue of formally recognizing Kosovo’s independence. The second event was the referendum held in Northern Kosovo, in which the local Serbian population rejected massively the Kosovar institutions. Though not recognized by the UN and not even supported by Serbia (Mús, 2012), this popular consultation proved that, in spite of the overall insistence on the territorial integrity of Kosovo, the people’s voice on their own status cannot be ignored.

This rejection of the Kosovar institutions proves that a balance has to be found between two principles: the self-determination of people and the territorial integrity of states. Thereby the whole issue of secession as self-determination may be addressed in two different forms: whether Kosovo as a *territory* is entitled to exercise its self-determination as a whole or the Kosovar *population* is entitled to exercise its self-determination. The insistence on territorial integrity by major international actors (ICG, 2012a) may be a stumbling stone in the way to a fully independent Kosovo and to the expressed will of the population in Northern Kosovo. Despite the broad opposition to redrawing international borders and the insistence on the uniqueness of Kosovo, some flexibility on revising borders might not necessarily be a dangerous precedent, as long as the parties involved agree; actually, popular plebiscites in border areas were quite common in Central Europe after WWI for instance.

Ethnic differences do not inherently lead to inter-ethnic conflict. On the contrary, collaboration between Albanians and Serbians has worked in some areas of Kosovo (ICG, 2012b) and proves that multiethnic arrangements are necessary and possible in mixed areas. Nevertheless, the insistence on keeping the Northern Kosovo Serbian population within an independent Kosovo against its own will seems to deny “secession as a remedial solution” which has been at the basis of its main defenders’ argument around the uniqueness of Kosovo. The final status of Kosovo is directly dependent on this issue which might

even be an opportunity for negotiations between these two entrenched parties: since a “win-win” solution between Serbia and Kosovo seems unlikely and since both will have to give in at a certain point, the best perspective for finding a realistic solution for Northern Kosovo could be more pragmatic steps, in the spirit of the “Footnote Agreement”, preparing the ground for future compromise.

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COLLAPSING THE NATION WHILST BUILDING A DE FACTO STATE: THE GLOBALIZATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE

The 2007 appointment of ex-International Monetary Fund economist Salam Fayyad as prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been conceived by some policy-makers and commentators as the marker of a new era in the Palestinian quest for de jure independence. The term “Fayyadism”, coined by journalist Thomas Friedman, describes a new strategy for “establishing a de facto state apparatus within the next two years” (Asali 2009), as outlined in the 2009 PA plan, “Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State”. In essence, the Fayyad cabinet’s approach was to build an administrative basis for a state which would inevitably lead to normalized diplomatic recognition. US President Barak Obama (2009, quoted in Ziadah 2010) endorsed the plan: “Now is the time for Palestinians to focus on what they can build, [the PA should] develop its capacity to govern with institutions that serve the needs of the people.” The core principles were designated to be strong security, good governance, and economic opportunity.

Fayyadism is based on a neo-liberal state-building agenda that has been a priority of policy makers, international donors, and scholars over the past decade since it was deemed that the Washington Consensus alone was not an effective solution to the problems faced by fragile states. The exported core state model is defined by the monopoly over the legitimate use of force, a functioning bureaucracy, the capacity to deliver state services to the population and strong-society relations (Wennmann 2010). Contrary to the more direct interventionist history of state-building, within this endogenous approach donor funds and incentives remain key to the strategy.

However there has also been vast scepticism surrounding this approach. Within the Palestinian context, particular criticisms of state-building have been voiced and characterized as de-developing the Palestinian economy (Roy 2007), ‘viable apartheid’ (Interview Halper in Barat 2012), ‘Bantustanization’ (Farsakh 2005), and decreasing Palestinian holding power (Leech 2012). The PA’s state-building policies have accelerated dependency on donor,

funds, could not withstand Israeli continued colonization, ignore Israeli closure policy, settlement expansion and the Gaza blockade, and was securitized due to Israeli demand (cf. Turner 2011). Leech (2012) also disputes the originality of Fayyadism, and argues that the constraints to the PA have not evolved since the Arafat era. Palestinian agency is based on the same basic determinants as in the 1990s, and Fayyadism has done nothing to challenge this.



Palestinian protest marches against Israeli West Bank separation wall, March 2010’
Source: AFP/Getty Images

When Palestinian state formation is viewed through the framework of decolonization, it is evident that the flaws of Fayyadism are not simply a progression of the 1990s Arafat era as Leech suggests (ibid.). They also contribute to a negative correlation that has characterized state formation since the 1948 All-Palestine government’s (APG) first attempt. Since then, as the Palestinian national movement has aspired towards recognition by sovereign states and international institutions, Palestinian state-formation has increasingly become globalized. This has not led to the self-determination of the Palestinian nation as intended; rather, the focus on external recognition has been at the detriment of internal nation-building. Globalization has abstracted the decolonizing discourse which has been at the heart of the most successful national liberation movements against foreign occupying powers. In part, this is due to state-building continually being framed as a conflict resolution measure by the international community, being driven by a ‘partner for peace’ agenda rather than on Palestinian national rights and international law (cf. Turner 2011).

For Frantz Fanon (1963), reclaiming a denied identity is the first stage of decolonization. If state-formation is to be the intended product of Palestinian self-determination, nation-building must take precedence over the current focus of state-building. Nation-building, as opposed to state-building, forges a common sense of nationhood in order to overcome ethnic, sectarian, or communal divides; countering alternate sources of identity and loyalty (OECD 2008). Such a prioritisation, with the *Nakba* (Palestinian catastrophe) as the cornerstone of a collective memory and identity and its legacy at the centre of a nation-building agenda, could initiate an end to the marginalization of the refugees and the Palestinian citizens of Israel, and also narrow the cross class and political divides which the state-building agenda has widened.

In order to better illustrate this argument, building upon the three stages of state-building described by Falah and Newman (1996), I map in the following table four stages of the Palestinian struggle:

Stages of the Palestinian National Struggle

Stage	Statehood	De Facto reality	External Actor/ Donor	Self-Determination and Nation-building
Post-mandate: 1948-1979	APG operates for 10 years in Gaza, claims jurisdiction over the whole of historical Palestine	UNRWA administers Gaza strip; 1959, APG closed by Egypt; 1967, Israel occupies all historical Palestine	Jordan, Egypt, Arab League	Initial drive
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): 1974-1988	PLO ten point programme calls for one bi-national state	Israeli military occupation; PLO in exile	Isolation, some Arab states	Nationalist
Oslo Process: 1988-1996	PA created; Palestinians exercise some basic rights, e.g. voting	Majority of Palestinians marginalized; West Bank and Gaza still occupied; divided into three areas with minimal PA administrative control	Globalized; Norway, United States, Arab League play key role	National rights compromised
PA: 1996-Present	Heavily funded PA, NGOization	Apartheid, closure, blockade on Gaza, settlement expansion	Competitive, privatized space	Divided and weakened national movement, rise of political Islam

*Data from (Falah and Newman 1996), (Shlaim 1990), (Sayigh 1997), and (Roy 2007)

The table clearly shows a negative correlation between the globalization of Palestinian state discourse and the effectiveness of nation-building. In conclusion, I maintain, in Palestine, self-determination is being traded off for a liberal state-building agenda of bureaucracy, meeting donor targets, and institution building, led by a Washington sympathetic rent-seeking elite. Under Israeli occupation, with virtually no territoriality, the Palestinian non-state has become a globalized privatized entity; a de facto state under the constraints, and the same time sanction of the international community.

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REVISITING BIAFRA: STATE RECOGNITION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND POST-CIVIL WAR APPROPRIATION OF VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

The tensions between the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria and the Federal Military Government (FMG) of General Yakubu Gowon that shook post-independence Nigeria were largely shaped by constructed narratives of fear and domination by ethnic elites in their bid to hold on to power or influence a regime change. What is more, they were coinciding with a period when Nigeria's revenue base was shifting to exploitation, production and export of crude oil. Ross (2003) asserts that "the Igbo effort to secede from Nigeria, which led to the 1967-70 civil war, was deeply rooted in ethnic tensions and Nigeria's colonial past; but the rebellion was encouraged by the presence of oil, and hence the belief that independence would be economically beneficial for the Igbo people". This claim might not be unfounded as the Biafran government made attempts during the war to collect revenues from oil multinationals and often tried to occupy oil production platforms.

The persistence of pogroms against Igbos in the north of the country, and the FMG's efforts to create more federal states to whittle down the powers of the regional governors lead Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the governor of the Eastern Province, to declare the Sovereign State of Biafra on May 30, 1967. The declaration of secession was rejected by the FMG and all major powers refused to officially recognize the sovereignty of Biafra. Although in rhetoric this attempt at secession was informed by the principle of self-determination, the construction of the narrative leading to the Biafra war is elite based. Okonta and Meagher (2009) note that "Biafra was very much a product of elite politics in the 1960s". The politics of who controls state power fueled the fractionalization of the power elites in Nigeria that lead to military *coup d'état* and on to civil war.

State Recognition: Gauging Global Response to Biafra

The war that ensued as a result of Biafra's secession created a platform for international political actors to demonstrate shrewd pursuit of self-interest. Biafra actively sought support and sympathy from major powers. Coggins (2006)

highlights that strategic interactions amongst super powers explain the accordance of recognition to secessionist states. Such strategic interaction is contextual, but often reflect the prevailing global order and alliances of the *de jure* state.

In the Nigerian civil war, major powers such as Britain and the Soviet Union supported the FMG through arms and technical advice in prosecuting the war. France, while advocating for a peaceful resolution provided tacit support for the FMG, while providing proxy support through its former colonies to Biafra.

As the Biafran government was already well versed in governing the region as the federal state of Eastern Nigeria, the attributes of governance such as the provision of public service and distribution of resources was already built into specialized agencies which came under the control of Biafran territory during the war. The Biafran State, had a functioning judiciary, police force, and most important for its cause an army. The educational institutions and health services within its territory were functioning until the war took its toll. Despite having this capacity, international actors did not consider overt support for independence of the Biafran state as an option.

, The one sided response of international state actors meeting the demands of the FMG and neglecting the effects of the war on the civilian population in the eastern region led to a humanitarian crisis with reportedly five hundred thousand lives lost (Bamisaieye 1974). The conflict brought about the emergence of non-state humanitarian agencies such as the Red Cross as active interest groups within the conflict. As scarcity of foreign exchange confronted the Biafran government, it creatively sought to use the participation of non-state humanitarian agencies as means of earning foreign exchange. Ojukwu suggested that these agencies should purchase the Biafran currency with foreign currency and use the Biafran currency to administer aid services in the region. Although these attempts largely failed, they highlight how services of such non state actors could serve as a life line for conflict actors.

Conclusion: The Way a Conflict ends matters

Whether the Biafran case is a failed attempt of transforming a *de facto* state to a *de jure* one by self-serving elites or a case of failed attempt on *self-determination* of an oppressed group remains debatable. However the way and manner a civil war such as the Biafran case is resolved could serve as a precursor to how state power is appropriated in a post-civil war nation. As Biafra collapsed in January, 1970, the immediate issues of the war were resolved in favor of Nigeria, but the implications of these issues persisted, as the causes of the war has been re-appropriated since the 1990s as a symbol of subaltern politics (Nixon 1972; Okonta and Meagher 2009). It would have been more viable for international state actors to provide a platform for the warring parties to arrive at an amicable solution to the crisis, but by pursuing self-interest through the support of the FMG international state actors supported the prevalence of violence which affected mostly poor unarmed civilians in a largely elite based conflict. The fall of Biafra was the triumph of violence, as the Nigerian government through economic and geographic blockades against Biafra managed to limit their resources while obtaining more arms and expertise from her partners abroad to sustain the war effort (Ukoha 2009). The unleashing of these arms on the civilian population of Biafra and the starvation crisis in the region made Biafra to fall back to the hands of federal troops and thus bringing the war to an end.

Thus, it seems that the triumph of violence in the secession bid of Eastern Nigeria through the proclamation of a *de facto* state is a precursor to the ongoing appropriation of violence for whatever cause by different groups whether insurgency (Niger Delta Crisis), or the mixed cocktail of ethnic, political and religious violence in Northern Nigeria. This violence is embedded in the failure of the *de jure state* to serve as platform of reconciling centripetal and centrifugal tensions that characterized ethnically diverse states, but rather serves as a platform of perpetuating self-interest thus creating a vacuum of national leadership that keeps haunting Nigeria until today.

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Licinia Simão is, since September 1st 2012, **Assistant Professor of International Relations**, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.

Licinia Simão presented the communication “**EU perceptions of Russian and Turkish policies in the overlapping neighbourhoods**” (with Vanda Dias) and “**The EU and Conflict Resolution: Changes after the Lisbon Treaty**”, 42th UACES Annual Conference, Passau, Germany, 3-5 September 2012.

Katia Cardoso conducted field work in **Cape Verde**, for her PhD thesis on the role of deportees in youth violence in Cape Verde, August-September 2012.

André Barrinha presented the communication “**Progressive Realism and the EU Ethics of Military Intervention**”, UACES Conference, 42th UACES Annual Conference, Passau, Germany, 3-5 September 2012.

José Manuel Pureza presented the communication “**New regionalism and global constitutionalism: allies, not rivals**”, 5th Biennial Conference of the European Society of International Law, Valencia, Spain, 14 September 2012

Teresa Cravo presented the communication “**Rule of Law in Post-conflict Contexts**”, Workshop Company Law and Tax Law in the Post-Global Financial Crisis Era, Monash University Prato Centre, Prato, 24 September 2012

AUGUST

José Manuel Pureza presented the communication “**Bridging Hearts, Opening Minds and Doing Things Together**”, Conference within the III UNAOC Summer School, organized by the Alliance of Civilizations: “*Cultural violence, tolerance and peace*”, Coimbra, 7 August 2012.

JULY

Fran Espinoza was interviewed on *Bolivia: A propósito del TIPNIS*, Summer School "Mobilizing Ethnicity - Competing Identity Politics in the Americas: Past and Present", 27 June 6 July 2012, University of Bielefeld, Germany. Available at: http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/cias/summerschool/media_praxis.html

Licinia Simão was **Visiting Fellow** at the Centro for European Studies, University of Carleton, Ottawa, Canada, July-August 2012.

Maria Raquel Freire, Paula Duarte Lopes and António Leitão, members of the FCT research project “Peacebuilding and sustainability: UN missions in Timor Leste and the Portuguese contribution”, were **electoral observers in the legislative elections of 7 July 2012 in Timor Leste**, accredited by the Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (STAE), Timor-Leste.

Sofia José Santos presented the communication “**Mulheres, Paz e Segurança: A Resolução 1325 do CSNU em Portugal**”, Conference "Estudos Feministas: o Futuro do Passado", Humanities Faculty, University of Coimbra, 6 July 2012.

Rita Santos presented the communication "**As mulheres e os movimentos pró e anti microdesarmamento: 'notícias de uma guerra particular'**", Conference "Estudos Feministas: o Futuro do Passado", Humanities Faculty, University of Coimbra, 6 July 2012.

Daniela Nascimento presented the communication “**Humanitarianism, development and security: (un)clarifying the links?**”, IPSA’s XXIIInd World Congress of Political Science, Madrid, 8-12 de July 2012.

José Manuel Pureza presented the communication “**Normatividade e poder. O Direito Internacional contemporâneo face aos desafios do pensamento pós-positivista em Relações Internacionais**”, Summer School on International Law and Human Rights, School of Law, University of Coimbra, 11-12 July 2012.

Licínia Simão presented the communication “**European Integration in Post-Soviet Eurasia: A Contribution to Regional Stability?**”, *Brown Bag Lunch*, Centre for European Studies, EU Centre of Excellence, University of Carleton, Ottawa, Canada, 18 July 2012.