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Somaliland and Puntland offer rare opportunities to examine what state building in Africa looks like without international recognition and its related guarantees.

State Building in De Facto States: Somaliland and Puntland Compared

Martha C. Johnson and Meg Smaker

Since the collapse of the Somali state, regional governments in Somaliland and Puntland have engaged in local state building. Studies often compare Somaliland and southern Somalia, but the comparison of Somaliland and Puntland receives less attention. We help fill this gap by comparing the state-building impact of Somaliland's pursuit of internationally recognized statehood with that of Puntland's decision to pursue a federalist Somalia. Engaging literature on de facto and unrecognized states, we argue that Somaliland and Puntland share key similarities with regard to security imperatives, revenue scarcity, and democratic challenges, but the quest for international statehood has unified the population and business community behind the Somaliland state and created incentives for its leaders to democratize; in Puntland, by contrast, the government's continuing relationship with Somalia has complicated local state building.

After the collapse of Somalia in 1991, embryonic governments emerged: in the northwest, the Republic of Somaliland seeks international recognition as a sovereign state; in the northeast, the Puntland State of Somalia seeks semi-autonomous status in a federal Somalia. Neither government receives the international protection, large-scale aid, and loans available to governments in other postcollapse contexts; instead, as a growing literature demonstrates, state building has been a bottom-up process, relying on clan elders and the financial support of business and diaspora communities (Ahmed and Green 1999; Bradbury 2008; Bradbury, Akobor, and Yusuf 2003; Doornbos 2002; Eubank 2012; Hagmann and Hoehne 2009; Hammond et al. 2011; Hesse 2010; Leonard and Samantar 2011; Menkhaus 2007). This article adds to the literature on state building by examining how Somaliland's decision to pursue independence and Puntland's decision to rejoin a federalist Somalia have influenced their respective paths. Only Dill (2010) has addressed this question in depth. Our article builds on her findings by engaging with existing literature on de facto, quasi, and unrecognized states (Caspersen 2012; Kingston and Spears 2004; Kolstø 2006; Lynch 2004; Natali 2010; Pegg 2008).

We argue that Somaliland and Puntland share key traits with other de facto states that exist “in empirical terms but have not been recognized by the international community” (Lynch 2004:145).¹ These include serious challenges securing revenue, an emphasis on security, and tensions between democratization and security agendas. However, we argue that Puntland’s decision not to seek independence sets it apart in key ways from Somaliland and other de facto states. Using existing literature and information collected in sixty-nine formal and twenty informal interviews with businessmen, government officials, clan elders, and aid officials in Somaliland and Puntland during the summer of 2011, we demonstrate that Puntland’s continued participation in successive efforts to form a government of Somalia has complicated its local state-building endeavor by limiting support in the business community and creating incentives not to democratize. In contrast, we argue that Somaliland’s independence agenda has had a unifying effect, which encourages support in the business community and creates pressures to democratize. The discussion of Puntland is more preliminary, as literature on the region is scarce, and fieldwork was cut short when fighting broke out in Garowe.

From our perspective, neither international recognition nor reincorporation into a federalist Somalia is inherently preferable; arguments for both spark considerable debate (for a summary of various groups’ positions, see Ahere 2013). We simply argue that, *in the short run*, the decision to pursue recognition as a sovereign state has helped unify people behind the nascent state of Somaliland and created pressures for democratization; by contrast, the decision to maintain ties with Somalia has complicated Puntland’s efforts to build a strong, democratic provincial state. This is not to say that *in the long run*, international recognition will solve all Somaliland’s challenges, or that Somaliland could not someday reunite with Somalia, though the idea remains anathema to many; nor is it to say that Puntland will not become a more democratic province in a unified Somalia or potentially pursue its own independence.

State Building in Postcollapse and De Facto States

Political scientists generally conceive of the state as a set of centralized institutions with the power to make binding decisions for the population of a given territory through its monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Building such an entity has historically entailed four main processes: expanding and consolidating exclusive control over a territory and its population, maintaining domestic order and policing, extracting resources, and eventually democratizing state institutions (Ayoob 1995:22, 30). Most states promote economic development as a means of increasing state revenue over time (Rotberg 2004; Young 1994; Zartman 1995). Building on these definitions, we employ the term *state building* to refer primarily to the creation of centralized institutions that secure revenue and provide security, order, and

basic public goods. Though democratizing the state while it is being built is exceptionally challenging (Ayoob 1995; Rotberg 2004; Zartman 1995), we include democratization in our discussion of state building because it has become “the principal means to legitimate . . . institutional structures” after state collapse (Lyons 2004:270). Earlier leaders had the luxury of building states without elections and popular involvement, but this is no longer internationally or domestically acceptable (Ayoob 1995; Caspersen 2012:70).

Few states in sub-Saharan Africa have accomplished all these state-building processes. Many face problems of autonomy and legitimacy. Their efforts to secure revenue, provide security, and facilitate accumulation often depend on external assistance (Herbst 2000; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Reno 1997). Furthermore, many postcollapse African states lack the exclusive power to create and enforce collectively binding decisions (Lund 2006). Government bureaucracies, militaries, and police exist, but many powers remain in the hands of private actors, including traditional authorities, international nongovernmental organizations, and religious organizations (Hagmann and Péclard 2010; Titeca and de Herdt 2011). State institutions are mediated and negotiated with these actors, rather than hegemonic. Central governments may try to monopolize power, but they are rarely the primary purveyor of public services, local policing, and adjudication.

Somaliland and Puntland typify this mediated form of state building and illustrate the state-building challenges that *de facto* states face. Because such states are generally born of secessionist conflicts, maintaining autonomy from the former parent state through military might and diplomacy is a foremost concern. Without the international system’s “protective norm of nonintervention” (Caspersen 2012:77), *de facto* states must prioritize security, working to build a military and police force capable of addressing external threats while providing public safety. Funding these efforts is a challenge. *De facto* states do not have access to major international grants and loans, their domestic tax apparatus is weak, and their local economies are often devastated, informal, or illicit (Caspersen 2012; Kolstø 2006; Lynch 2004; Pegg 1998). Patron states can offer protection and assistance, for example, Russia in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria (Caspersen 2012:55), and the United States in Kurdistan (Natali 2010), but when patron states are unavailable, *de facto* states raise funds from diaspora communities and taxes on trade (Caspersen 2012:63). Despite efforts in all these areas, the “modal tendency” among them is a “weak economy and weak state structures” (Kolstø 2006:723).

To compensate for these weaknesses, *de facto* states cultivate legitimacy by developing “a national identity among the population through symbols, propaganda, history, writing, and the cultivation and ‘invention’ of traditions and national customs” (Kolstø 2006:730). They use the memory of civil war and the presence of a common external enemy—in the form of the parent state seeking reunification—to generate popular support (Caspersen 2012:93). They seek international and domestic legitimacy through democratization. By the mid-1990s, leaders of *de facto* states

realized that international actors were resistant to historic and persecution-based arguments for recognition. As a result, these leaders embarked “on a new strategy, . . . emphasizing their alleged success in state building and democratization”; they now attempt to demonstrate that they deserve recognition because “they share hegemonic international values,” like democracy, and “do not constitute a security threat” (Caspersen 2012:69–70). Despite this incentive to democratize, however, *de facto* states struggle with the process. Electoral issues like delays, voting irregularities, and periodic violence are common, as is corruption (Lynch 2004:66), and *de facto* states must balance democracy’s demands with security imperatives, overdevelopment of the security apparatus, and a need for unity (Caspersen 2012; Kolstø 2006).

The term *de facto state* is usually applied to states that lack, but are seeking, international recognition, like Somaliland. States like Puntland, which accept the principle of federalist reunification, are often excluded. However, federalist-aspirant states, like Puntland, share key similarities with other *de facto* states: they are often the only government exercising power in their region, they face serious security challenges (which they cannot rely on international assistance to address), and they, too, seek legitimacy from their populations. As a result, they may turn to strategies like those of independence-seeking *de facto* states; however, our Puntland case study suggests that these strategies may not be as successful in regions that continue to participate in efforts to revive a parent state.

Somaliland: State Building for Independence

As literature on state building and *de facto* states would suggest (Ayoob 1995; Caspersen 2012; Kolstø 2006; Tilly 1992), Somaliland’s early state building has been largely focused on the intertwined processes of providing security and securing revenue. After its formation in 1991, violence threatened to tear it apart: “Following the collapse of the Barre regime[,] most public assets fell into private hands. . . . [These included] revenue-generating assets such as ports, roads, airports, land, water resources, and government property, as well as the organization of trade and distribution of relief commodities” (Bradbury 2008:89). When the Somaliland government tried to gain control over these assets, it met stiff resistance from clan militias and entrepreneurs who controlled them. Furthermore, some clan groups fought the new state, in which they felt underrepresented. As a result, Somaliland’s first seven years were ones of war. When fighting reached a stalemate, however, clan elders, under pressure from a war-weary population, helped negotiate power-sharing agreements that broadened the government’s clan makeup and facilitated disarmament. Businesspeople and traders helped secure the peace by financing the state’s efforts to disarm, recruit, and demobilize fighters (Bradbury 2008; Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf 2003). Eventually, in 1998, domestic peace was achieved with a mixed security system, which entailed local-level

adjudication by clan authorities and statewide policing and protection by a national police and army. Since 1998, the government has continued to focus on the state's coercive capacity as a means of strengthening state sovereignty (Kibble and Walls 2009:11).

As in other de facto states, Somaliland's security apparatus accounts for the majority of state expenditures (65 percent, according to the vice-minister of finance),² leaving few funds for other purposes. Despite Somaliland's relative stability and the absence of an external threat from an aggressive parent state, it faces meaningful security threats. On its eastern border, it competes with Puntland for control over the Sool and Sanaag regions, where fighting has periodically broken out. Domestically, it faces a legitimate terrorist threat, as it learned with the murder of four aid workers in 2003 by individuals associated with an al-Qaeda network recruiting in Somaliland itself (Bradbury 2008:197) and again in October 2008, when bombs killed thirty people. As Edna Adan Ismael (2011) told us and Saad Shire (2011) echoed, Somaliland operates in a challenging context, with the "collapsed Yemeni state [to the east], Al Shabab in the south, and pirates in Puntland." Externally induced insecurity is always a possibility.

Not surprisingly, the terrorist threat in Somaliland and its geographic position have attracted international attention. The threat of instability is central to its leaders' call for international recognition. They emphasize how difficult it is to address potentially destabilizing terrorist threats without international assistance (Bradbury 2008:197; Huliaras 2002:173). A statement by Saad Nur, Somaliland's former representative to Washington, illustrates this well: Nur argues, if Somaliland collapses,

clearly the forces of darkness will gleefully celebrate the eclipse of the only secular democracy in the Somali-speaking region of the Horn and feverishly try to fill the vacuum by establishing a Taliban-like regime. . . . The crescendo will come to a thunderous roar if the coveted southern shores of the Gulf of Aden . . . fall under the control of an organisation [*sic*] like the one that blew up the USS Cole. (Huliaras 2002:173)

Though Nur's statement borders on hyperbole, the possibility that terrorists will take advantage of Somaliland's weaknesses is real. As an international development worker we interviewed commented, the international community's unwillingness to grant legal recognition has generated among Somaliland youth a great deal of animosity, which could turn into extremism. Similarly, without sufficient support, the Somaliland government cannot provide affordable public education—which results in students attending free religious schools, where extremist religious views spread (Nur 2011). The threat of terrorism has prompted international assistance from organizations like the United Nations Development Program, which paid to train a special protection unit designed to protect aid workers and supports the local police and prison system.

Despite growing international assistance for development, security, and humanitarian projects, the government of Somaliland still cannot access large international loans—which limits its fiscal sustainability, though there is talk of future direct budgetary support from the European Union (Walls and Kibble 2011). The government survives primarily through a mixture of taxes on trade at ports and other trading hubs and periodic loans from the local and diaspora business communities (Bradbury 2008; Eubank 2012). Our interviewees in business reported making loans for infrastructure projects, government salaries, and the printing of Somaliland's own currency (Ahmed 2011; Elmi 2011; Esse 2011). The Ministry of Finance is increasing attempts to collect taxes directly, through a process of on-site negotiation with business leaders, but this yields modest revenue (Abdi 2011). Diaspora funds, the largest source of capital inflow in Somaliland, almost entirely bypass the state, going directly to families or private development projects, including the Edna Aden Maternity Hospital, public bridges, and two new universities (Hammond 2010). Because limited government revenue is directed almost exclusively toward recurring security, salary, and basic administrative expenses, diaspora and international development organizations, like UNDP, provide almost all investments in public infrastructure and services. Somaliland, in relying on these groups, offers a good example of the mediated or network state described above.

That the state of Somaliland has attracted clan and business leaders' support, as well as diaspora groups' cooperation, in part reflects its legitimacy, which, as in other de facto states, comes largely from a strong commitment to independence, uniting many people behind the state. Popular support for secession³ grew out of the region's experience of repression and violence in the 1980s, when fighting with Siad Barre's government killed between 50,000 and 100,000 people (Ahmed and Green 1999; Bradbury 2008:77). "The war against Barre, the common experience of persecution by the regime[,] and life as refugees . . . forge[d] a political identity among the Isaaq people" (Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf 2003:457), the core of Somaliland's population, but the experience of repression was not limited to them: because most northern clans suffered, collective Somaliland identity could "transcend clan divisions" (Hesse 2010:73).

Popular commitment to independence did not originate with elites. Initially, leaders of Somaliland's Somali National Movement (SNM) wanted to establish a federalist Somalia; however, when they met with leaders from the Isaaq and other northern clans, in February and March 1991, it became clear that clan elders, under pressure from the larger population, wanted independence: "The pressure for secession came from below. It was a genuine, popular, grassroots feeling, articulated very clearly and strongly by the Isaaq elders, and indeed by representatives from other clans" (Gilkes 2003:179). A Dhulbahante elder said:

While we were in Burco [the site of discussions with the SNM],
big demonstrations happened in the large towns of Hargeysa,

Burco, and Berbera. There was no other choice than to say: "Yes, we accept." At this moment we were not convinced about secession, but no one could say "no." (Garaad Cabdiqani quoted in Hoehne 2009)

Despite this general sentiment, the population of Somaliland has never been fully unified behind the goal of independence. During the government's early years, "the Warsangeli and Dulbahante people in eastern Sanaag and Sool regions" and "the Gadabuursi and Ciise in Awdal region in the west" were ambiguous about, even hostile toward, Somaliland independence (Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf 2003:457). Today, the Gadabuursi have changed their position (Somaliland's second and longest-serving president, Dahir Riyale Kahin, was Gadabuursi), but other groups remain doubtful. Their concerns notwithstanding, most scholars report notable commitment to independence among the dominant clan groups (Ahmed and Green 1999; Bradbury 2008; Eubank 2012; Hammond 2013; Hesse 2010). We hypothesize that this commitment has helped Somaliland's state building.

The link is particularly apparent with regard to the business community, whose commitment to independence in our interviews was striking, though many business leaders asked that we guard their anonymity because of business concerns in other parts of Somalia. Because they desire stability and international recognition, they were willing and even eager to help finance the Somaliland government. Ali H. Ibrahim Esse, the owner of an import-export business in the region, makes loans for what he calls the national interest, because a stronger government brings greater stability, peace, and the possibility of international recognition—all of which are good for business, in his estimation. There is an economic cost to nonrecognition, and businesspeople like Esse see this clearly (Pegg 1998:43). Unofficial statehood limits their ability to use international banks and secure loans, complicates the process of insuring a business, and raises the costs of doing business, all because companies must have headquarters in neighboring countries with postal systems and legitimate banking sectors (Reno 2003). Some businessmen contend that the lack of international recognition limits investment and believe that international recognition would spur more Somalis to return from the diaspora, increasing capital and expanding their consumer base. Even businessmen who do not openly espouse Somaliland's quest for international sovereignty believe international recognition will facilitate their economic success (Businessman One 2011; Businessman Two 2011; Importer 2011). Helping finance state building is one means of pursuing this goal.

Of course, support for independence need not necessarily translate into support for the current state and its government. As in many other *de facto* states, the government has had to supplement its emphasis on independence with efforts toward democratization. Successive Somaliland governments have created democratic and power-sharing institutions to increase the legitimacy of the state. In the 1990s, under the *beel* system,

the legislature—with an upper house of elders and a lower house of representatives, indirectly elected by clan leaders—carefully balanced seats as a means of incorporating Somaliland's main clans into the nascent state. In 1997, the interim constitution continued the practice of indirect elections for the legislature and presidency, but, to appease previously excluded groups, made provisions for including more minority clans and eventually developing multiparty politics. By 2001, direct elections for the presidency and the lower house were introduced; they partially shifted politics from the clan to the individual, though in many cases voting behavior continues to map onto clan identity (Bradbury 2008; Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf 2003).

Democratic competition and successive turnovers in presidential and legislative control certainly helped consolidate state legitimacy in the 2000s. As already noted, Riyale's presidency made the state more acceptable to the Gadabuursi, as did increasing Gadabuursi representation in the legislature, but in the 2005 parliamentary elections, overall representation of the Isaaq clan grew, while that of minority clans, including the Dhulbahante and Warsengeli people of the Sool and Sanaag regions, decreased, possibly intensifying a sense of marginalization on the minorities' part and reinforcing the idea that Somaliland is governed by the Isaaq, rather than the entire population (Hansen and Bradbury 2007:471). As a result, though support for the state is widespread among a significant portion of the population, important groups remain ambiguous on the question of independent statehood.

The challenges facing Somaliland's democracy further limit its ability to legitimate the state. Elections for president and the lower house have repeatedly been delayed for logistical and political reasons. The upper house and president delayed the second direct presidential election for two years because of political party infighting before allowing it to occur in 2010 (Walls and Kibble 2011), and the second parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for 2010, have been put off until 2015. In addition, the presidential and first parliamentary elections, while generally judged free and fair, were marred by vote buying and other irregularities (Kibble and Walls 2011).

As literature on de facto states would predict, overdevelopment of the security apparatus and the government's willingness to use it against the media and protesters have been barriers to democratization (Walls and Kibble 2011). On March 26, 2012, for example, the *Somaliland Sun* reported that counterterrorism police units had been used to disperse peaceful protesters.⁴ More generally, the government has not accepted the role of the media, opposition parties, and civil society groups in tracking its performance, and it has not been "open to policy dialogue," especially on the question of independence (Walls and Kibble 2011:3).

Despite these challenges, Somaliland's progress toward democratic governance is notable. That President Riyale, who had strongly resisted holding elections, allowed them to be held in 2010 and accepted defeat, provided evidence that democracy continued to progress. Events like the presidential turnover helped Somaliland earn international accolades. Such accolades are central to Somaliland's strategy for earning international recognition.

Its historic claim to independence has not gained much traction with the international community (Doornbos 2002; Eggers 2007; Huliaras 2002). Instead, the government has turned, like governments of other de facto states, to demonstrated democratic statehood as a means of seeking recognition (Doornbos 2002:96). As early as 1999, Somaliland President “Egal linked the transition to multiparty democracy with Somaliland’s desire to gain international recognition, arguing that the international community would not recognize Somaliland’s independent status unless it adopted such a system” (Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf 2003:462–463).

The Somaliland government and diaspora advocacy groups spread the message that Somaliland is stable and democratic. According to Politico.com, for example, the government signed a contract with international lobbying group Glover Park in March 2013 for \$22,500 a month,⁵ and nongovernmental organizations like UK-based Somaliland International Recognition Action Group and Los Angeles-based Somaliland Policy and Reconstruction Institute regularly lobby and disseminate press releases, academic papers, and petitions touting Somaliland’s success. Playing on international norms regarding good governance and foreign states’ security concerns, the government and diaspora advocacy groups try to persuade foreign states that Somaliland deserves and needs recognition to remain a bulwark against chaos in the region.

Our interviewees suggest that the perceived link between democracy and international recognition creates pressure on political leaders to accept democratic institutions. As Rashid Nur (2011) told us, perhaps exaggerating, “if anyone does anything that makes Somaliland look bad or hinders the quest for recognition, it is not tolerated, and they are usually voted out of power.” A February 2012 letter to Somaliland’s Minister of Information from Cecelia Milesi of Somaliland Focus further illustrates link. She writes,

Actions against media were a regrettable hallmark of past Somaliland administrations and we are extremely disappointed to see this government continuing to employ such practices. Events such as these reflect poorly on Somaliland and *make our task difficult in arguing that Somaliland is a democratising [sic] state.*⁶

Our interviewees highlighted this relationship when explaining the results of Somaliland’s 2003 presidential election, in which the opposition leader, Ahmed Silanyo, accepted a Supreme Court ruling that affirmed his defeat. They argue that he accepted the ruling largely because clan elders warned that a fight over presidential power would destabilize nascent democratic institutions and put Somaliland’s quest for international recognition at risk (Elder One 2011; Elder Two 2011; Ismael 2011; Journalist 2011). In the end, concerns with stability and international recognition overrode his presidential ambitions and prevented a political crisis. Later, in 2008, when Riyale, the incumbent president, postponed the presidential election, he, too,

allowed the election to be held only after concerted pressure from internal and external actors, who feared that Somaliland's stability and international reputation were at stake. Following the election, which resulted in Silanyo's victory, hopes were high that international recognition would be forthcoming (IRIN 2010). It has not, but international engagement has continued to grow.

In sum, Somaliland typifies many of the challenges facing de facto states and offers a relatively positive example of a de facto state providing security, stability, and some degree of democratic consensus. Commitment to independent statehood by the political leaders and a large portion of Somaliland's population, including the business community, has helped the state secure financial support and has created pressure on political leaders to provide stability and democratic institutions as a means of securing recognition. At the same time, an emphasis on unity and security has its own risks for democracy, including intolerance of media criticism and dissent on the question of independence. Coupled with the continued postponement of parliamentary elections, these pose major challenges to Somaliland's reputation. It remains to be seen whether pressure to adhere to international norms will suffice to stop such antidemocratic behaviors.

It bears mention that international recognition may not be the panacea that Somaliland's population expects. The region faces many economic, social, and political issues that will not disappear with recognition, which may bring its own challenges. If Somaliland secures recognition, the people may no longer be mobilized by a shared goal, allowing internal divisions to reemerge. International recognition would no longer serve as a carrot encouraging politicians to moderate their behavior, and it would give the government greater access to foreign loans—which could weaken the long-standing relationship between the government and business community (Bradbury 2008; Eubank 2012). Up to this point, businesses like Dahabshiil and SomTel have been major players in politics and the economy; however, with recognition, the arrival of banking, money transfer, and cellular telephone companies from other regions might reduce their political and economic influence. Finally, access to bilateral aid and loans from international financial institutions could bring greater conditionality regarding democratic institutions. Part of Somaliland's survival is no doubt tied to the uniquely clan-based system of representation that has gradually emerged over the past two decades (Bradbury 2008; Leonard and Samantar 2011; Walls and Kibble 2010). Some groups, including women, would benefit from a more liberal, less clan-based democracy, but that in turn could undermine Somaliland's stability. None of these eventualities means Somaliland should not be recognized, but they do suggest that recognition may have unintended consequences.

Puntland: State Building for Federalism

Puntland differs significantly from Somaliland on the question of independence, but it shares key similarities. Without access to large international grants and loans, it faces serious revenue shortages. The central government relies almost exclusively on port revenue (80 percent) and directs approximately 90 percent of its revenue toward the army, police, and recurrent administrative expenses (Terre Solidali 2010). Disproportionate investment in the security apparatus has not helped Puntland's democratic prospects; in its early years, it facilitated the concentration of power in the hands of Abdoullahi Yusuf, Puntland's first president and the main military leader of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). Puntland's government under Yusuf was particularly militaristic (Farah 1999).

Studies of other *de facto* states suggest that such militarism is to be expected in nascent states that lack international recognition. Puntland has not faced threats from a parent state seeking reintegration, but the absence of a parent state in the region has created its own threats, which motivate military, clan, and civilian leaders to build the Puntland State of Somalia. The decision to revitalize the SSDF as a political organization in 1991 reflected fears that the United Somali Congress (USC), located in south-central Somalia, would invade the region and frustrations with widespread local looting and harassment by "armed gangs of youths" (Interpeace and PRDC 2008:13–14). The SSDF did attempt to build a full-fledged state, but as an "unofficial political umbrella" (Doornbos 2002), it eased cooperation among local leaders, addressed disorder, demobilized armed groups, and provided protection from external threats.

During the 1990s, security threats posed in northern Puntland by the USC and al-Itihaad al-Islami, the armed militant Islamist movement, prompted greater interest in creating an actual state administration. Somaliland's attempts to claim control over the Sool and Sanaag regions suggested the need for a strong Puntland state government and army, as did efforts to create clan-based states in other regions (ICG 2009). After the 1997 Cairo Conference failed to reconcile competing Somali factions and begin Somalia's reconstruction, Puntland leaders were particularly concerned with the necessity of a local Puntland administration to provide stability, order, and protection from armed incursions. Even before the conference, clan, political, and military leaders had accepted the creation of an emergency committee to direct the SSDF and had authorized the committee to "manage the Bosaaso port revenue and seize properties and assets in order to counter the frequent attacks of the USC in north Mudug" (Interpeace and PRDC 2008:18). Then, in 1998, they officially formed the Puntland state government.

Since 1998, the government has invested most of its resources in the security apparatus. Nevertheless, the police presence in most communities is limited, and conflict resolution is often managed through clan structures, rather than the state (Interpeace and PDRC 2010). Only 10 percent of government revenue is used for "development and basic service delivery" (Terre

Solidali 2010:25). What development and investment has occurred has been largely financed by money from the diaspora, channeled through nonstate organizations, or through projects managed directly by international agencies (Terre Solidali 2010). As with Somaliland, state building, particularly beyond areas of external security, is very much a mediated process.

Despite Puntland's similarities with Somaliland and other *de facto* states, state building in Puntland has always differed because it serves two purposes: local security and development and the protection of clan interests in a federalist Somalia. Concerns over the eventual status of the Majerten and their Harti clan cousins, the Warsangeli and Dhulbahante, in a future Somali state played a major role in the creation of the Puntland state. When the 1997 Cairo Conference was moved from Bosaaso (in northern Puntland) to Cairo, politicians from Puntland saw the move as "a humiliation for the northeast regions," an attempt to minimize "the influence of the northeast in Somali national affairs" (Interpeace and PDRC 2008:25). Puntland's leaders, keen to prevent such neglect in the future, believed that a strong local administration would ensure that Majerten politicians would be taken seriously in future negotiations and well represented in the future Somali state: "They . . . knew that territorial control would be a powerful bargaining chip in any negotiation to recreate a central national authority" (ICG 2009:2). The decision to declare the Puntland State of Somalia in 1998 was therefore driven as much by concerns with clan status and political power in a future Somalia as it was with providing stability and security via regional institutions (Dill 2010). Puntland leaders have necessarily been tied into two simultaneous efforts ever since, one to resuscitate a federalist state of Somalia and one to build a viable Puntland government.

The decision to pursue federalism reflects at least two factors. First, unlike in Somaliland, Puntland's leaders do not face strong popular pressure to prioritize secession and international recognition. Existing literature and our fieldwork suggest that Puntland's people have neither a strong sense of Puntlander identity nor a widespread commitment to independent statehood, though the most recent constitution does reference the region's right to self-determination. Puntlanders conceive of their political identity primarily in terms of clan. When asked, most people in Puntland respond that they are Haarti, rather than Puntlander (Hoehne 2009). As one interviewee reported, in Puntland "clan comes first, religion second, and everything else third" (Government official 2011). The lack of a unifying national identity in Puntland may be traced in part to the region's relative peace in the 1980s. Although the region's clans faced persecution by the Barre government, which helped drive the creation of the Puntland state, its rebel movement was weak by the 1980s—which meant the region avoided the extensive government bombings and other attacks that united people in Somaliland. Second, and perhaps more importantly, whereas Somaliland's clans are almost exclusively based in the northwest part of Somalia, many Mijerteyn from Puntland have migrated to "the port and surrounding territory of Kismayu in the far south of Somalia" (Lewis 2008:101). Any secessionist agenda

in Puntland would be greatly complicated by the question of how to deal with clan ties in the rest of Somalia. Rather than serving the population by securing independence, the Puntland state promises to do so by providing short-term security and long-term representation in federalist Somalia.

To some extent, these processes are complementary. A stable, prosperous Puntland improves politicians' bargaining position in negotiations throughout Somalia (ICG 2009:2). Puntland leaders, careful to protect their regional interests, have periodically prioritized local state building over the interests of a new Somali state. For example, they engaged directly in bilateral negotiations with Yemen over illegal fishing and human trafficking and signed contracts with international security companies as though Puntland were a sovereign state (Kinsey, Hansen, and Franklin 2009; Lewis 2008). In addition, the government successfully resisted transitional federal governmental (TFG) control over oil prospecting in the northeast, claiming that right for Puntland (Walls 2012). However, Puntland's leaders must balance investments in local state building with their commitment to a federalist Somalia; they cannot focus uniquely on improving Puntland's position. If they are perceived as undermining internationally sponsored efforts to rebuild Somalia, they risk weakening their bargaining position in later negotiations (Dill 2010).

At times, this creates challenges for Puntland's nascent state. For example, at critical moments in Puntland's political development, "key civilian politicians [have been] preoccupied in Mogadishu" and have failed to prioritize local development (Interpeace and PRDC 2008:16). Abdoullahi Yusuf, Puntland's first president, had "his eyes more on Mogadishu and the leadership of Somalia as a whole, rather than just Puntland from the time he came to power" (Gilkes 1999:572). When presented with the opportunity to compete for the TFG presidency in 2004, Yusuf began to neglect Puntland's political development, and upon receiving the presidency, he transferred scarce resources and security forces from Puntland to the south (Hagmann and Hoehne 2009). "As a result, Puntland suffered from severe internal weaknesses. . . . Financially, it teetered for years on the edge of bankruptcy, and salaries to administrative and military staff [were] paid only irregularly" (Hoehne 2009:269).⁷ More recently, the government's revenue has stabilized, but it remains low and dependent on port taxes.

Our interviewees suggest that the government's dual commitments to building up the Puntland state and participating in the TFG may have limited its ability to rally businesspeople and professionals around the state-building project. We found less willingness among these groups to support the Puntland government than the Somaliland government. A Puntland expatriate working in Somaliland's health-care sector described Puntland as a place of uncertainty and stagnation, noting that if its government seriously committed itself to building a state, she would gladly return (Aid worker 2011). Similarly, business leaders doubted Puntland leaders' intentions and the government's commitment to building the state and improving the local economy; this made them wary of lending money directly to the

central state (Hotel manager 2011; Bank manager 2011; Telecommunications director 2011). This is in sharp contrast to Somaliland, where business leaders expressed a strong commitment to building a functional state and a clear sense of participating in a larger, unifying project. As Puntland and Somaliland both rely on domestic sources for most of their state revenue, such business community ambivalence in Puntland has likely weakened its financial position.

Engagement with the TFG may have affected Puntland's democratic prospects. Puntland's government, like Somaliland's upper house, is chosen through indirect election by clan leaders. Both are examples of relatively effective communally based representation (Leonard and Samantar 2011), but have been criticized for overrepresenting certain clans at the expense of others and enshrining a relatively undemocratic decision-making process, which disenfranchises women and other groups (Hansen and Bradbury 2007; ICG 2009, 2013; Walls and Kibble 2010). In Somaliland, however, the upper house is part of a government structure that includes directly elected bodies. In Puntland, no part of the government has yet been subject to direct election, though indirect presidential elections are "closely fought, with the hallmarks of a free contest" (ICG 2009:8). The government has long promised direct elections. The formative 1998 charter specified that the government was to lay the groundwork for free and fair elections in a multiparty system, and the 2009 constitution called for direct local elections by 2012 and the formation of a new electoral commission. The electoral commission has been formed, and registration of potential political parties has begun, but direct local elections were canceled in July 2013, and the new parliament and president were chosen again through indirect election in January 2014. Progress "from clan-based representation to directly elected government" has been slow, particularly in comparison to Somaliland (ICG 2013:1).

Continued participation in reconciliation efforts throughout Somalia is partly to blame for Puntland's slow democratization:

Domestic stability has also been affected by Puntland leaders' oscillation between asserting . . . the historic Majerten . . . role in national politics, including bids for the federal presidency, and retreat into the security of their semi-autonomous state. During periods of intense elite engagement in Mogadishu, local state-building was often neglected, including the aspiration to institutionalize a system of democratic representation through competitive party elections. (ICG 2013:3)

Dill (2010) goes further, arguing that participation in the TFG created incentives for Puntland politicians not to focus on democratic institutions.

The TFG was "largely a group of former warlords and their delegates," who used their control over territory to claim a position at the bargaining table (Leonard and Samantar 2011:563). Popular support and democratic

selection played only a small role in determining access, even though membership brought significant advantages. Because the international community focused predominantly on the TFG, TFG positions offered politicians access to foreign aid, global legitimacy, and business and travel opportunities (Dill 2010), and they offered possibilities for personal enrichment through illicit activities. The new federal government of Somalia seems less corrupt, but the TFG and its participants were widely “accused of emptying the coffers as quickly as they were filled” (Hammond 2013). The personal benefits of participating in the TFG were undoubtedly attractive to many of Puntland’s leaders, as they were to some Somaliland leaders; unlike Somaliland leaders, however, Puntland politicians faced little chastisement for participating, as participation was an important means of ensuring Majerten representation in the federal system.

Because participation in the TFG did not depend on democratic elections, Puntland politicians had little incentive to create stronger democratic institutions back home (Dill 2010). Why subject their continued access to the TFG and its resources to democratic elections if they did not have to? The links between Puntland and the TFG effectively raised the stakes of Puntland politics without requiring democracy. The access to the TFG “conferred by holding an office in Puntland . . . [fueled] competition and political rivalry and [diminished] elite interest in good governance at home” (Dill 2010:291).

Though the International Crisis Group is correct in suggesting that democratization in Puntland has been complicated by “the machinations of political elites torn between shoring up a stable regional base and competing for power in Mogadishu” (2013:1), Puntland’s democratic deficits mirror those of many de facto states, regardless of their relations with the parent state. Organizing elections without external resources—international funding for elections has been less forthcoming in Puntland than Somaliland—is always a challenge, and Puntland has struggled to balance security concerns with its democratic agenda. Elections have been rightfully perceived as potentially destabilizing and dangerous in a context of tense clan relations and tenuous internal peace. Elections, as Caspersen (2012) warns of unrecognized states more generally, might undermine regional unity.

Puntland’s justifiable fear of terrorism has encouraged the overdevelopment of its United States–funded intelligence service. Like Somaliland, Puntland’s ambiguous legal status attracts foreign antiterrorist and antipiracy funding. As Mountz (2011) writes of islands, sites on the “geographic margins of the nation-state” often function as valuable locations for detention and interrogation beyond the oversight of media and without clear legal obligations for detainees’ treatment. In Puntland, where foreign funding for normal security forces has been limited, the foreign-funded Puntland Intelligence Service has developed into “the most powerful state institution” (ICG 2009). Its existence and ability to operate with impunity are not conducive to the freedom of assembly and speech necessary for meaningful democratization and must be addressed as part of Puntland’s democratization.

Conclusion

Most states in sub-Saharan Africa rely heavily on international recognition and access to the international loans, military assistance, and commercial contracts that it provides, but scholars of African politics argue that such international recognition does not ensure that state building will occur and may actually discourage it (Bates 2001; Clapham 2002; Herbst 2000; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Reno 1997). Somaliland and Puntland offer rare opportunities to examine what state building in Africa looks like without international recognition and its related guarantees. Their experience suggests that the absence of international protection can create a security situation that motivates state building. When started more or less from scratch with limited international assistance, state building will likely focus first on the security apparatus, as Tilly (1985, 1992) found in early European states; in the longer run, however, the desire for international recognition and legitimacy can encourage the democratization of state institutions.

Somaliland's and Puntland's paths further indicate that nascent African states are unlikely to aspire to full hegemony. Instead, they will increasingly rely on nonstate actors to provide many of the services historically associated with the state. In this, Somaliland and Puntland actually resemble many contemporary African states. They provide extreme versions of a broader trend, in which "African states [appear] to be withdrawing from development activities" (van de Walle 2001:164), leaving them to aid agencies, diasporas, and other private actors. Contrary to Eubank's (2012) portrayal of Somaliland as a place that receives little aid, both Somaliland and Puntland depend on international agencies for humanitarian and development programs. Formal recognition by the majority of sovereign states does not appear to be a prerequisite for foreign support for domestic state building; however, in de facto states, the majority of that aid will not go to the government, further reinforcing the tendency for the state to focus on security while letting developmental functions fall to other actors.

For unrecognized states, the meaning of the comparison of Somaliland and Puntland is complicated. We have demonstrated that Somaliland's commitment to securing full international recognition as an independent state helped unify the population, encourage business support for the state, and create pressures for democracy, and we have shown that Puntland leaders' engagement with the TFG complicated local state building, but if we look at the larger universe of de facto states, we see that a commitment to independence is not enough to create a strong state. Many de facto states hold fast to independence, yet struggle with authoritarian tendencies, instability, and state weakness (Kolstø 2006; Lynch 2004). As several scholars have argued (Bradbury 2008; Caspersen 2012; Eubank 2012), Somaliland's experience of bottom-up state building without a strong external patron to ensure its survival is unique. International recognition provides an incentive, and international norms create democratic pressures that help shape Somaliland's state building, but they should be understood as facilitating the process, rather

than serving as its primary driver. Puntland's experience also indicates the power of domestic factors in driving state building; nevertheless, it suggests that international incentives can matter: when access to the perks of international cooperation are not contingent on building or democratizing state institutions, as was the case with the TFG, reasonable politicians may see little reason to make the difficult sacrifices and compromises required to develop a strong, democratic state. Finding the balance between facilitating Somalia's reconstruction, with or without Somaliland, and aiding the short-term development of state institutions that can serve Somalis, requires careful attention to the unintended but potentially meaningful consequences of internationally generated incentives.

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NOTES

1. International recognition is a fluid concept. Full international recognition would include such things as membership in the United Nations, the ability to access International Monetary Fund assistance, and diplomatic recognition by the vast majority of sovereign states. But new states generally do not receive full recognition all at once. Partial recognition first, by a single state or a small number of states, followed by a larger number of states, and sometimes, though rarely, the international system as a whole is more common. Certain *de facto* states, like Kosovo, have existed in a state of partial recognition for years. Somaliland has started this piecemeal process, but remains at best only partially recognized.
2. This percentage corresponds roughly to that offered by Menkhaus (2007) and Mesfin (2009).
3. By secession, we mean the withdrawal of the Somaliland population, territory, and resources from the authority of any future state of Somalia (McLean and McMillan 2003:480).
4. Available at <http://www.somalilandsun.com/index.php/community/444-somaliland-government-unleashes-anti-terrorism-units-against-demonstrators>.
5. Available at <http://www.politico.com/politicoinfluence/0313/politicoinfluence10302.html>.
6. Italics added; available at <http://www.somalilandfocus.org.uk>.
7. Somaliland politicians have also engaged with Somalia-wide negotiations and the TFG. This was particularly true in the 1990s, but has been less common more recently. As our interviewees noted, the only legitimate public position contemporary politicians can take

is proindependence. The most recent example of a politician engaging the government of Somalia is Fowzia Yusuf Hajji Adam, a Somaliland nationalist, appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in the new federal government of Somalia in 2012. Now that she has entered the Somali government, her position on reunification remains to be seen, but if she favors reintegration, "Somaliland will consider her to be a traitor" (Hammond 2013:189).

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