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Quasi-States in Name Only: How System Integration May Address Somaliland, Eritrea, and the Quasi-State Problem[1]

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With: Dr. Jamie Levin

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Introduction

The study of international relations is rife with *unsolvable* problems. It is at once incredibly frustrating and perpetually intriguing: one state; one movement; or even one individual can both influence and puzzle scholars and policymakers for decades on end. Many problems in global politics have yet to be resolved and show no signs of meaningful progress. Others have seen meaningful change, but only after years of dedicated efforts. At times, it is a stubborn adherence to age-old methods that hold scholars back; in other circumstances, our best and most modern practices remain unable to keep up with new issues that emerge. Still, one single issue in international relations can capture the attention of a generation of policymakers and can drive the future of their work for years to come. The issue that this thesis is concerned with has not exactly captured the attention of a generation of policymakers, nor has it influenced much decision-making. In reality, the issue I aim to tackle here has remained fairly under the radar for decades. To a degree, however, it has maintained its 'unsolvable' status. Inspiring a relative reticence, it has nevertheless concerned the lives of millions; several state governments; the inner workings and mechanisms of numerous international organizations of significant stature; and the very laws that govern international politics. It is ethnopolitical, social, colonial, historical, geopolitical, and economic; it lies, like many 'unsolvable' political problems, at the intersection of a great many crucial topics.

The issue I mean to tackle is that of *novel quasi-statehood*. When an entity emerges from an already-established state and claims legitimacy in governing over a certain realm – including a distinct population and defined territory – but *fails to receive any recognition* of that supposed legitimacy, it is relegated to novel quasi-statehood. This issue knows no real regional boundaries. A novel quasi-state could theoretically emerge wherever the impetus existed – be that in the Americas, Oceania, Europe, Asia, or Africa. These entities, however, have historically persisted in the latter three continents. European quasi-statehood has largely emerged in the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia. Deep-seated political and ethnic strife characteristic of former European communist territories have contributed to a higher incidence of fractured statehood.[2] This leaves vacuums often filled by state alternatives. As for Africa and Asia, quasi-states likely emerge owing to the absence of foundational elements of statehood – foundations that would otherwise have helped to establish more stable, responsible, and proactive governments. Instead, upon

[2] Pål Kolstø, "The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 6 (November 2006): pp. pp. 723–40, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343306068102.

the eve of the departure of the European powers, soon-to-be African and Asian states were, as Robert H. Jackson puts it, "ill-prepared" for independence.[3] Dissatisfaction, pride, and ambition amongst newly independent Global South populations have contributed to an increased prevalence of secessionist movements and quasi-statehood there, as with the formerly communist regions of Europe. While Pål Kolstø warns of sweeping characterizations of these states, we can say with a degree of certainty that the majority of the quasi-states that exist today lie in Eurasia and Africa.[4] Even throughout its decades-long observable history, this phenomenon has rarely occurred beyond those continents. The only secessionist movement to have emerged at any time in the relatively recent past in the Americas as a whole was in Quebec, attempting on several occasions to secede from Canada.[5] Since the 1990s, however, this movement has fallen into a state of disarray and relative obscurity.[6] Quasi-statehood is therefore mostly limited to the developing world; the Eastern hemisphere; the Global South; and the aforementioned Eurasian and African contexts.[7]

Quasi-statehood is also a byproduct of temporal factors. While a novel quasi-state may now emerge in a technically unlimited (though, in reality, limited) geographical context, it is an exclusively modern political phenomenon that could not have possibly existed before the global adoption of modern international legal standards and interpretations of statehood. A significant landmark that has come to greatly influence international affairs is the Treaty of Westphalia.[8] The enshrinement of statehood as a legally recognized concept and the idea of non-intervention as a right guaranteed to sovereign entities are both crucial mechanisms of contemporary international politics. This also means that

[3] Robert H. Jackson, "Quasi-States, Dual Regimes, and Neoclassical Theory: International Jurisprudence and the Third World," *International Organization | The MIT Press* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): pp. 519–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300027594.

[4] Kolstø, "The Sustainability…" (2006).

[5] Bridget Coggins, *Power Politics and State Formation in the Twentieth Century: The Dynamics of Recognition* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[6] Philippe J. Fournier, "Have Quebecers Moved on? Sort Of.," Politico, 17 June 2022, https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/17/quebec-francois-legault-referendum-00040228.

[7] One case worth mentioning is the State of Palestine. Though a widely-contested entity that finds itself at the centre of a longstanding territorial dispute with Israel, it does not fall under the preconditions for *novel quasi-statehood* as established further in this thesis. It is neither novel nor entirely unrecognized. In fact, it is recognized as a sovereign state by a majority of UN Member States (139/193) – though not by any Western state or the UN itself.

[8] Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz et al., "Para-States, Quasi-States, and Black Spots: Perhaps Not States, But Not 'Ungoverned Territories,' Either," ed. Bartosz H. Stanislawski, *International Studies Review* 10, no. 2 (June 2008): pp. 366–96, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00795.x.

quasi-statehood may only exist in the post-Westphalia era, being that the quasi-state exists only as an alternative to the state proper. The window of quasi-state opportunity closes further with (1) the conclusion of WWII, which resulted in the establishment of myriad new states through decolonization and postwar treaties, many of which were (and continue to be) unstable and poorly constructed, and (2) the fall of the Soviet Union and the 'day after' that saw Marxism-Leninism as a method of statecraft and governance either struggle to remain in place or collapse entirely. Though the dissolution of the USSR was not explicitly or formally complete until 1991, the process was long and drawn out and had become a relatively clear eventuality by the late 1980s.[9] Thus, considering that the majority of current cases emerged in the early 1990s, my research will assume quasi-statehood to be a post-Cold War phenomenon (contextualized by postwar politics).[10]

These limitations have consequences. Certainly, the political and legislative consequences are clear – there would be much less need for research such as this without them. So long as secessionist movements and quasi-statehood remain moribund in the West, it is likely that the issues and their potential solutions will remain in regional hands. If Western cases were to emerge and persist, sweeping changes to international legal and political legislation and norms would need to be enacted to achieve substantial change elsewhere. But I am getting ahead of myself – my responses to those consequences will come later. The consequences relevant to my research, in particular, are important to address first: the similarities that many of these quasi-states share in terms of their sociopolitical origins, their relative geographic proximity, and their temporal congruency with one another make comparative empirical research much more easily conducted. Though the narrow scope and limited variability among cases may otherwise thrust my work into an inescapable niche, the conclusions that can be drawn even between two incredibly proximate entities may sufficiently apply to other cases worldwide. We also must consider that the novel quasi-statehood problem is irrevocably an effect of its era, and it must be addressed as such.

The two entities that I have chosen as my cases not only share a continent, but they also share a relatively small region of that continent; they lie somewhere a few hundred kilometres apart – perhaps a five-hour drive. In fact, if not for the tiny state of Djibouti,

[9] Mark Kramer, "The Dissolution of the Soviet Union: A Case Study of Discontinuous Change," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2022): pp. 188–218.

[10] South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria emerged in 1990; Somaliland, Eritrea and Nagorno-Karabakh in 1991.

they would border each other. For all their similarities, *Somaliland* and *Eritrea* as they stand today present two sides of the same quasi-statehood coin. The differences between these two countries not only form the inspiration for the pursuit of this project, but they serve as the two main cases that I will research to develop and justify my theory; the two cases will themselves be justified further throughout the section entitled *Theoretical and Methodological Framework.*

A novel quasi-state may capture the hearts and minds of the international community in the blink of an eye, or it may remain in political limbo for decades on end. It may reflect historical geopolitical rifts, or it may be a flash in the pan; a manifestation of an instantaneous political conflict that then makes all maps before it obsolete. It may achieve none of these things. As a concept, it is relatively unpredictable with our current approaches; the novel quasi-state problem is just that – a problem – because few scholars, few laws, few cases of widely applicable precedent, and few normative foundations have yet addressed it. In this thesis, I will attempt to reverse this by answering the question: *under what circumstances are novel quasi-states internationally recognized?*

In doing so, I will adhere to the following structure. First (*Literature Review*), I will examine the relevant literature and assess its applicability not only to current affairs but also to how I seek to answer the novel quasi-state problem. Next (*Theoretical and Methodological Framework*), I will address the gaps in the literature and how I aim to fill them – here, I will explain my theory entitled *System Integration*, and what each of its parts – or elements – address. Throughout these first two sections, I will also address many aspects of this niche area of study that require further explanation, and justify my case selection and my usage of terminology (including *novel quasi-statehood*). Finally (*Empirical Findings*), I will provide a brief history and outline of the cases at hand (Somaliland and Eritrea), at which point I will approach each element of System Integration (*Participation; Marketability; Investor Consent;* and *IO Vacillation*) in-depth, and explain how each case either fulfills or does not fulfill each one. And, after a brief overview of potential focal points for future research, I will conclude by summarizing the lessons learned and what they mean for the future of the novel quasi-state problem.

Literature Review

The *diplomatic recognition of states* (often simplified as *recognition*), as a topic in international relations, international law, and comparative politics, does not always

operate in black and white. The processes that drive international recognition are often unable to accommodate all aspects of state variation; certain cases are cut and dry, but many are somewhat ambiguous. The grey area that exists between the state and the non-state is sometimes referred to as *quasi-statehood*. Definitions of quasi-statehood, straddling the same disciplines that recognition does, attempt to reflect both the legal and real-world characteristics and behaviours of these political anomalies. As such, they often vary quite strikingly. And, as scholars are caught between realism and liberalism, or any number of different perspectives on law and politics, literature becomes inconsistent. As it is also quite sparse, many proposed quasi-state theories often differ not only based on how they employ empirics or political theory but also merely in the way that they choose to define the quasi-state. Avenues towards quasi-state definitions and solutions posited by scholars are often contextualized by how they perceive statehood (*what makes a state?*), the recognition regime (*what is the status quo?*), the parent state (*what are their rights?*), and quasi-states themselves (*what are they?; where do they stand among international actors?; etc.*). These are important questions, but combined they can muddle our conceptualizations of the space. The question I choose to ask (*under what circumstances are novel quasi-states internationally recognized?*) is not only important as well, but may also help to declutter the space. By clearing through the literature regarding quasi-statehood, my approach to answering this question will become clearer; in turn, this crucial topic will be made more easily digestible.

Let us first consider the most basic and foundational notions and concepts regarding statehood. Statehood can be broken down into standard binaries, the first of which can be seen in assessments of *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty.[11] For a state to have *de jure sovereignty*, it must legally be declared a state; for a state to have *de facto sovereignty*, it must genuinely control what it lays claim to. De jure and de facto sovereignty do not always coexist. Recognition may also be *declaratory* or *constitutive,* which Sean D. Murphy explains as the two approaches that recognizers may take in the recognition process.[12] The declaratory (or *traditional*) theory is an approach that bestows statehood upon those who meet certain criteria. These are often lifted from the Montevideo Convention of 1933 at which it was decided, in Article 1, that the four criteria of statehood are:

[11] Latin for 'by law'/'in effect', respectively.

[12] Sean D. Murphy, "Democratic Legitimacy and the Recognition of States and Governments," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (July 1999): pp. 545–81, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020589300063430.

A defined territory;

A permanent population;

Government;

Capacity to enter into relations with other states.[13]

Since 1933, the 16 Articles established at Montevideo have been considered the legal status quo of recognition. The constitutive school of recognition, on the other hand, transcends legality. In actuality, it ignores it. The constitutive school's *modus operandi* is 'a state is a state if it is said to be a state'; *ipso facto*.[14] The *recognition regime*, as Stephen D. Krasner would label it, is therefore divided on itself. The principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures that define it come to split the already limited literature.[15]

The split is unavoidably widened by another binary concerning terminology. Frank Chiang explains that two types of diplomatic recognition exist in modern politics: the *recognition of statehood*, and the *recognition of government*. Often linked but certainly distinct, state and government recognition have different legal and real-world meanings, limitations, and consequences. The recognition of a government is an assertion that the government in power is legitimate and, to a certain extent, governs (or is expected to govern) effectively. In contrast, the recognition of a state is an assertion that the entity over which the government presides is fit to be a state (in a declaratory sense). Chiang uses the example of Taiwan to illustrate the difference between the two: when much of the world opted to recognize the Mainland Chinese government of Deng Xiaoping, they did not necessarily cease to recognize either China or Taiwan as states but rather decided to recognize the government that presided in Beijing, rather than that which resided in Taipei, as that which represented all of China and Taiwan. As such, there has yet to be a state that has had its recognition of *statehood* revoked in history. In fact, in Article Six of Montevideo, it is stated that recognition of statehood is irrevocable. Recognition of government is comparatively much more flexible, and it is extended and revoked

[13] "Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States," in *Convention on Rights and Duties of States* (1933). https://www.ilsa.org/Jessup/Jessup15/Montevideo%20Convention.pdf.
[14] Murphy, "Democratic Legitimacy…" (1999).
[15] Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): pp. 185–205, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300018920.

regularly.[16] For reasons both functional and stylistic, I will focus my work on the recognition of statehood.

Many also refer to another foundational concept of international recognition: Max Weber's conclusion that a *monopoly over the legitimate use of force* is the determinant factor of statehood.[17] This terminology is often used in scholarly discussions regarding international relations, war, and secession. Through its parsimony, Weber's notion that a state must merely wield power through legitimate uses of force is applied to states today – if it has a functioning military or a police force generally uncontested by another armed group with separate affiliations, it is easy to conclude that it is a state. The waters become muddied by those states that fail to monopolize the use of force; by those that are usurped by other groups in their territory; and by unrecognized states that organize armed forces. Cases such as these complicate Weber's statehood theory.

Contemporary scholars have built upon these foundations, but again, not always in a way that concerns my area of research. Largely focusing his work on African states, Jackson defines "quasi-states" as "states by courtesy". Noting the failure to develop public realms, institutions, and checks and balances that would otherwise exist to help constrain executive roles, Jackson considers political offices in these *quasi-states* to be treated as personal possessions rather than earned positions, therefore equating "quasi-statehood" to *kleptocracy* sponsored by self-interest and international courtesy. Jackson argues that this corrupts the state's politics by granting it sovereignty prematurely. Additionally, his terms "negative sovereignty" and "positive sovereignty" somewhat reflect *de jure* and *de facto* statehood.[18] I do not wish to adopt Jackson's approach to defining quasi-statehood; our definitions arguably reside in separate categories, yet bear the same name. Though his attention to different forms of sovereignty and his ideas regarding post-colonial Africa certainly have to do with the cases I have selected, his definition is in a niche that does not capture what I wish to focus on. This is a significant issue with the term *quasi-state* – it is used in multiple contexts to define different international relations phenomena. They may overlap, but neither one is constitutive, nor entirely subservient to the other. By omitting Jackson's take on the term quasi-state and focusing elsewhere, literature relevant

[16] Frank Chiang, *The One-China Policy: State, Sovereignty, and Taiwan's International Legal Status* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier, 2018).
[17] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (lecture, 1918).
[18] Jackson, "Quasi-States…" (1987).

to his perspective (that is, in this limited space, comparatively plentiful) will also be omitted.

My work will instead most closely follow the work of Kolstø. His definition asserts that quasi-statehood requires the fulfilment of the following criteria:

"Its leadership must be in control of (most of) the territory it lays claim to;

"it must have sought but not achieved international recognition as an independent state;

"it must have persisted in this state of non-recognition for [more] than two years."

Employing this criteria, Kolstø claimed in 2006 that Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus, Somaliland, and Tamil Eelam were the current quasi-states in the world. In the time that has passed since this article's publication, the LTTE (or Tamil Tigers) that sought independence from Sri Lanka was effectively dismantled by the latter, and the proposed state of Tamil Eelam has thus largely fallen by the wayside. Additionally, Kolstø suggests Western Sahara lacks sufficient control of its territory, and that Kosovo and Kurdish Northern Iraq, without formal declarations of independence, remain inapplicable as well. Kolstø then acknowledges the singularity of Taiwan and relegates it to a category outside the realm of quasi-states. Kolstø's criteria and his designation of Somaliland as a quasi-state are pertinent to my work, and I will adopt his definition of quasi-statehood (as above).[19]

Quasi-states are perhaps best understood in their relationships with their *parent states*. Martin Plaut uses the term when discussing Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan, and their quasi-state counterparts (Somaliland, Eritrea, and South Sudan, respectively).[20] Hersch Lauterpacht, writing in the *Yale Law Journal* in 1944, denotes *secession from the parent state* as being an avenue to statehood. This is the earliest mention of the term that I have found.[21] The *parent state* is understood as a state that has recognition, is formally established as a state in the international system, and would otherwise maintain full control over the territory that the quasi-state then moves to claim, as Pål Kolstø

[19] Ibid.
[20] Martin Plaut, *Understanding Eritrea: Inside Africa's Most Repressive State* (London, UK: Hurst & Company, 2019).
[21] Hersch Lauterpracht, "Recognition of States in International Law," *The Yale Law Journal* 53, no. 3 (June 1944): pp. 385–458.

mentions.[22] In this way, understanding the parent state is essential to understanding the quasi-state.

Kolstø also sees the parent state as a factor that may sustain and/or truncate quasi-statehood. The weakness of the parent state, as posited by Kolstø, can foster quasi-state emergence as both a causal factor and as the impetus to put secessionist desires into action. He sees the parent state as factoring into the potential "ends" of quasi-states as well, in one of two manners: complete reabsorption or inclusion as a separate entity.[23] The former would mean a resumption of *normalcy*, so to speak, as a return to the form taken by the state before secession, and the latter would mean new status for the secessionist part of the parent state, likely as an autonomous or semi-autonomous region of sorts.

Kolstø's proposed outcomes go beyond the parent state. Whereas solutions that centre around the parent state can either be highly likely and highly safe (as is the case with potential inclusion as a separate entity) or fairly unlikely and highly volatile (complete reabsorption), Kolstø sees independence as the most unlikely outcome, and the one most conducive to state failure. He describes that, in the postwar era, an unwritten set of rules has governed statehood so strongly that the international community of recognized states has become "closed at both ends". And, though it may seem to contradict the system's closed nature, he explains that the United Nations' Right to Self-Determination typically pertains to the populations of established states as a whole, rather than subgroups, emerging secessionist movements, and/or ethnic, cultural, or religious uprisings. There are no legitimate pathways to *opting out* of the state, even through self-determination. Kolstø does, however, consider two waves to have broken this postwar tradition: the African decolonization independence wave of the 1950s-1960s, and the post-Soviet-collapse wave of the 1990s-2000s. He also predicted that a third wave may come about as a result of non-Islamicist movements in the Middle East or Kosovan independence – the former has not occurred, while the latter has, but has failed to inspire change. Considering his perspective that the international community has restricted secessionist independence to such a degree that it must occur in distinct waves and that the majority of African states formed as a result of decolonization, Kolstø subtly argues that Somaliland's union with Somalia in 1960 was the nail in the coffin for future Somaliland independence efforts. He argues that as long as the parent state remains weak; the

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

international community remains staunch, indecisive, and inconsistent; and the seceding state continues to devote a majority of its funds to its military, quasi-states will not mature into full states.[24]

In establishing a continuum upon which states are contrasted with one another based on *stateness*, Stanislawski et al. posit that quasi-statehood has something to do with the efficacy of governance and sovereignty both inward and outward. They note that these aspects follow states inherently which have been dominant since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Borrowing from Jackson, Hedley Bull, and Adam Watson, who again focus more on kleptocracy and faulty bureaucracy, aspects of their work can be applied to mine regardless of the limited theoretical overlap. They introduce the idea that quasi-states feature two types of publics: *civil* and *primordial*. From the civil public, the population gains materially but participates begrudgingly; from the primordial, the population participates enthusiastically even if not for material gain. In turn, I argue that this can be understood as a separate but closely related principle of quasi-statehood: people belong simultaneously to the parent state and the secessionist state, and their involvement is contextualized by their unique relationships with both. This causes a schism of public opinion and can further entrench divides between societies. Stanislawski et al. also note the existence of *Black Spots*, which they characterize as lacking recognition, being isolated from the governance of the parent state, and remaining between de jure and de facto sovereignty as we know it.[25] Their conception of black spots thus breaks the mould of the aforementioned binary of statehood and applies to some quasi-state cases.

What happens when recognition of statehood and government become intertwined? Jan Teorell argues that the idea of *governmen*t as a legitimizing factor of statehood, as outlined in Article One of Montevideo, had been misconstrued in the century between the Congress of Vienna and the First World War. He follows Weber in that he claims the *long 19th century* saw evaluations of the *monopoly over the legitimate use of force* as constitutive of de facto recognition. The system, moving away from the "dynastic legitimism" (statehood determined by royalty) that defined the early 19th century, came to recognize states based on "whether the state was able to effectively *act* like a state". This came to skew the values of good governance, as recognizers tended only to legitimize those regimes they saw as resembling their own. Teorell argues this has remained true postwar, despite the advent of the so-called *rules-based international order*.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Stanislawski et al., "Para-States, Quasi-States, and Black Spots…" (2008).

The *eye test*, as I call it – an assessment of statehood that already exists, yet unrecognized as such – is the true status quo of recognition, according to Teorell.[26]

John Dugard contextualizes the study of state secession and recognition by asking similar questions to those proposed at the beginning of this section and disparages the Montevideo Convention among other institutions of recognition.[27] Montevideo does not have a definition for quasi-states and only deals in the aforementioned binary of state or non-state.[28] This is also why Teorell and Fabry can so easily disagree on whether *de facto* or *de jure* statehood has constituted statehood since World War II; ideas such as self-determination, the contemporary rules-based order, and international law more generally are often conflictual with ideas such as *the monopoly over the legitimate use of force* as statehood evaluators.[29] Teorell nevertheless argues that "an assessment of domestic statehood", buttressed by self-interest and assessments of prestige, drives recognition.[30] This implies that quasi-states cannot simply rely on international 'rights' such as self-determination posited by the UN, but must well and truly establish themselves as proper, functioning states to gain admission into the international system. But even then, they may lack the prestigious status that recognizers look for – which, paradoxically, is often only attained through recognition itself.

Sascha Dov Bachmann and Martinas Prazauskas refer to the United Kingdom's recognition strategy, as developed by John Hobhouse. Adopted by the British government as it toiled over the Republic of Somalia upon the ousting of Siad Barre, recognition would thereafter be based upon:

"Whether it is the constitutional government of the State;

The degree, nature and stability of administrative control, if any, that it itself exercises over the territory of the State;

[26] Jan Teorell, "Rules of Recognition? Explaining Diplomatic Representation since the Congress of Vienna," *Cooperation and Conflict* 58, no. 2 (15 May 2022): pp. pp. 155–74, https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367221093151.
[27] John Dugard, *The Secession of States and Their Recognition in the Wake of Kosovo* (The Hague, Netherlands: Brill, 2013).
[28] "Montevideo Convention…" (1933).
[29] Mikulas Fabry, *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[30] Teorell, "Rules of Recognition?..." (2022).

Whether Her Majesty's Government has any dealings with it and if so what is the nature of those dealings;

In marginal cases, the extent of international recognition that it has as the government of the State."

Bachmann and Prazauskas argue that the third and fourth criteria are assessments not of the efficacy of the state, but rather of its status. Here, the United Kingdom displays the self-interest and indecisiveness pointed out by Teorell. Bachmann and Prazauskas also agree that the world operates on a largely declaratory basis – but this form of declaratory recognition easily becomes encumbered with, as mentioned, self-interest and bias.[31]

Bachmann and Prazauskas craft a detailed, comprehensive, and cohesive work on quasi-state recognition, approaching the issue from a multifaceted perspective that accounts for both legality and reality. One point that they make quite convincingly is that democratic principles play an important role in the recognition process. Citing Vaughan Lowe, they agree that "however effective the control over a territory is," (as in the Weberian sense), "the government will not be recognized if it is hopelessly undemocratic". They argue that it is inappropriate for this to be the case, as no law stipulates democratic tradition is integral to recognition, nor is there any empirical precedent. Middle Eastern states, which by and large operate under Sharia Law, are largely undemocratic; few (if any) of them, however, lack the recognition of the majority of Western, democratic states.[32] Murphy also argues that democratic values play a role in recognition. In 1999, he predicted that democratic legitimacy as an ideal had the potential to emerge as an *international entitlement*. Here he cites Thomas Franck who, seven years earlier, proposed that democratic governance was shortly to become an international right as a byproduct of the contemporary rules-based order. Looking at the 1991 Haitian coup, Franck noted that the Haitian military later had to relinquish power as the international community denied them their legitimacy due to the absence of democratic institutions. Murphy cites a *democratic gloss* that now skews the Montevideo criteria of "government" into *effective government* – this is not a cause, but rather a byproduct, of the emergence of democracy as the status quo. The poorly defined bounds of the Montevideo criteria give way to the misappropriation of what 'effective' government entails, and

[31] Sascha Dov Bachmann and Martinas Prazauskas, "The Status of Unrecognized Quasi-States and Their Responsibilities Under the Montevideo Convention," *The International Lawyer* 52, no. 3 (2019): pp. 393–438.

[32] Bachmann and Prazauskas, "The Status of Unrecognized…" (2019).

more often than not, states will recognize only those that align with their ideals of governance.[33] As Bachmann and Prazauskas note, it is a common mistake to conflate the ideas of efficacy and democracy.[34] Teorell agrees that the system faces this problem.[35]

Citing Judge Bruno Simma in his evaluation of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, John Dugard posits that international law "has not yet come to regulate, or indeed, will never come to regulate" certain aspects of international relations. Dugard characterizes international law on secessionist movements as being uncertain, contradictory, and inconsistent. The international legal standards that the community has come to follow, established largely before the 1950s, were rooted in immediate postwar ideals. Self-determination; the creation of the United Nations; the Prohibition on the Use of Force of 1928; and, of course, Montevideo (1933) are all examples.[36] Though some of these were not explicit products of postwar liberalism, they are nonetheless obsolete. Considering the de jure status quo of recognition is still considered to be based on these international legal agreements, certain authors believe a solution to quasi-statehood must first lie in a reconstruction or reformation of the legal aspects of the regime.[37] By mending that which constitutes the traditional approach, the dominance of the constitutive approach may well be mitigated.

So argues the work of Bachmann and Prazauskas. They commit to a deep analysis of the efficacy of international legal standards, including Montevideo, to understand how standards of recognition may be skewed in favour of self-interested state policy. They argue that Article One of the Montevideo Convention was and remains unable to account for the rapid and substantial change in international politics that began shortly after its codification. The Montevideo criteria for statehood are, as Bachmann and Prazauskas argue, ineffective in applying to the whole of the international state community. Thus, they posit the inclusion of quasi-statehood (*de facto regimes* and *unrecognized entities*) into an updated Montevideo-based legal standard that not only acknowledges their singular position but also establishes their responsibilities and roles in the community as actors with sovereign equality.[38]

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Dugard, *The Secession of States…* (2013).
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

Bachmann and Prazauskas also discuss the United Nations and its role as a recognizer. They argue that when the UN recognizes a state, it is a confirmation of that state's fulfilment of the criteria outlined in Article One of Montevideo. They argue this within the context of Kosovan independence, which they argue has been declared and subsequently achieved both in the absence of a formal government and with no legitimate control over the territory it would lay claim to thereafter. This would affirm the politicization of recognition practice and implicitly argue the constitutive approach took precedence in a very recent (and exceptionally significant) case.[39] Decades before Kosovan independence was formally proposed, Jackson argued that the UN was already a recognizing and legitimizing force, as he notes the UN as "fostering new sovereignties around the world."[40] UN membership is an issue certain authors have approached more broadly. Malcolm Shaw argues that, while not necessarily essential, UN Member State status has come to be *as close* to essential as anything else in recognition.[41] The United Nations as an organization can, as it stipulates the responsibilities of states and their necessary behaviours, also be argued as contributing to the skewing of *effective* governance to be akin to *democratic, Western-style* governance, as pointed out by Bachmann and Prazauskas.[42]

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The study of International Relations has generally been well-served by theory, analytics, statistics, and quantitative data. Much of what we can understand about the trends that both drive and suppress the processes most integral to global politics and its development are best contextualized and explained by theory. These methods, however, may only take us so far, leaving behind certain issues and areas of study that necessitate the intervention of qualitative analysis and empirical data. It is essential to the study of such issues that they be looked at through the most modern, competent, and relevant lenses possible. The respective studies of quasi-statehood, unrecognized states, and, in particular, the case of Somaliland, must currently be treated as issues of the sort. Those who research such topics must examine and interpret real-world events and historical

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[42] Ibid.

evidence to reach any substantive conclusions regarding the nature, positionality, and future of quasi-statehood.

This is owing in large part to the extant theoretical literature on these topics. The available scholarly works are, at present, insufficiently developed; poorly applied/related to current empirical cases; and often based upon obsolete understandings of laws and norms, and how behaviours and trends have diverged from them. Above all else, the academic work that has heretofore been produced, regardless of how strong, is sparse and ineffectively diverse. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the aforementioned divergence between expectations and reality in the numerous cases that persist in the system today. As such, I will illustrate the gaps left by the literature, and explain why these gaps must be filled regarding those cases I am researching.

The first failure of the literature is its confused understanding of the recognition regime. In the study of I.R., many take the Montevideo Convention to be the status quo of recognition. Murphy explains that the Traditional Theory of state recognition is still seen as the status quo of recognition worldwide.[43] Intrinsically linked to Montevideo, the Traditional Theory is based upon the four criteria that its first article outlines as being essential to both statehood and recognition as such.[44] Teorell would disagree that the status quo of recognition lies in legality; he would argue instead that recognition is more often granted on bases unique to the recognizer, making the standards and criteria of recognition inconsistent – not legally universal, as the Montevideo Convention parties once hoped it may be.[45] Thus, many states we have discussed above should perhaps already be widely recognized when, of course, they are not. The dispute may lie in the fact that the foundation is conflated with what is built upon it: though Montevideo seemed to serve its purpose once upon a time, the state of affairs in global politics has changed to such a degree that its criteria could be painted as obsolete.[46] Fabry emphasizes the role of the right to self-determination as an institution contradictory to a strictly legal view of the recognition process, and questions whether anything new, beyond de facto

[43] Ibid

[44] Ibid

[45] Ibid

[46] The Montevideo Convention somewhat effectively reflected the characteristics of states in the early 20th century but nevertheless remained inapplicable to every state in the system. Events that would soon follow (two World Wars, waves of independence, and independence efforts by state subgroups) would soon make it much more symbolic than realistic. It is unclear whether it was ever truly effective. Regardless, it remains the widely understood 'status quo' by scholars and lawmakers.

assessments, is worth exploring.[47] Examples of innovations in global politics and diplomacy go further, and many historical occurrences and trends as early as the decolonization of Africa contradict the criteria outlined in Article One of Montevideo. The recognition regime is built upon many contradictory aspects of legality, empirical data, and normative concepts. Unlike how authors have yet approached recognition research, it may very well be more productive to take recognition as it is, suspending those foundational legal and normative expectations in favour of a more grounded, realistic understanding of the processes that define the practice. In doing so, research can more easily focus on how current affairs shape the context of recognition, rather than how the function of recognition shapes current affairs.

Another shortcoming of the present literature is that of its inconsistent usage of terminology. The term *quasi-state* is, as mentioned in the previous chapter, a term used in a variety of contexts. Often used to describe entities that fail to live up to the standards of effective statehood – for example, those operating within poorly defined borders as a result of persistent conflict, or those that claim the same population as another state – *quasi-state* is a difficult term to pinpoint, with poorly defined limitations and varied understandings. Jackson defines quasi-states as kleptocracies and focuses on how these states perform in terms of the integrity of positions and roles taken by government officials.[48] Kolstø, on the other hand, would understand *quasi-statehood* as those that effectively function as states but have yet to achieve recognition as such. These opposing conceptualizations are a one-way contradiction in terms and the lack of uniformity in understanding quasi-states results in the keywords that help drive and define research being confusing and misleading (albeit unintentionally). This also hampers the present literature's ability to coalesce into a cohesive perspective. To combat this gap, I will not only adopt Kolstø's definition of quasi-statehood but will also emphasize it further by using the term *novel* to describe the entities I am interested in.[49] Thus, my research question will read: *under what circumstances are* novel *quasi-states internationally recognized?* This will narrow the scope of my research, including only those cases that are new, unrecognized parties to the international system – those who have already been

[47] Fabry, *Recognizing States* (2010).

[48] Ibid

[49] Note: Kolstø's *quasi-statehood* criteria are that entities (1) "must be in control of (most of) the territory it lays claim to; (2) must have sought but not achieved international recognition as an independent state; and (3) must have persisted in this state of non-recognition for [more] than two years."

established and have, for example, fallen into disarray (that have *become* 'quasi-states' in Jackson's understanding) will not be considered. This will help to distinguish my work from that which focuses on quasi-statehood which is more akin to Jackson's conceptualization.

Owing to the embryonic nature of this realm of study, much of the relevant scholarly work is more focused on laying the groundwork than it is on self-testing its validity. Much of the work remains hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing. It is also true that many contemporary cases of unrecognized quasi-statehood remain largely underexamined. This leaves many important aspects of entity behaviour unaccounted for and leaves the theories and hypotheses generated inapplicable to those entities. Cedric Ryngaert and Sven Sobrie work to propose a new legal framework that incorporates both moral and factual aspects of statehood but fails to stress aspects of, as an example, the behaviour of a pre-independence Kosovan quasi-state that contributes to its overall position in the system, beyond how it may be interpreted by current legal frameworks.[50] Bachmann and Prazauskas operate similarly, targeting the efficacy of institutions but glossing over unique entity behaviours that may or may not contribute to a more compelling case for recognition.[51] In the case of Somaliland, which has been under-researched in general, much of what contributes to its inability to achieve de jure sovereignty can be found in how it, as an entity, behaves. Considering what we have already established to be the shortcomings of the current literature and the foundations of the recognition regime (in that they are obsolete, incomplete, inconsistent, and often confused)[52], it would not make sense to continue to evaluate a novel quasi-state using the same tired criteria, normative concepts, and legal standards.

[50] Cedric Ryngaert and Sven Sobrie, "Recognition of States: International Law or Realpolitik? The Practice of Recognition in the Wake of Kosovo, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 24, no. 2 (May 6, 2011): pp. 467–90, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0922156511000100.

[51] Ibid

[52] Other issues persist. These include: an overreliance on the perceived efficacy of NGOs, IOs, and other organizations that have a history of failure, inconsistency, and a lack of jurisdiction or effective power over states and unrecognized entities alike; an unwillingness to discuss *Track II* diplomacy and aspects of state behaviour that move beyond strictly political characteristics, such as the presence and activity of multinational corporations; and a tendency to understand normative and institutional values and characteristics as unwavering, consistent, and universal. These aspects are important to understand as being damaging to the overall ability of the current literature and the recognition regime alike to continue to tackle cases of the present and future; most will be discussed further in the main body of this thesis, with reference to the main aspects of *System Integration* to which they are related.

This is the major gap I seek to fill in my research. We have established that the current statuses of recognition institutions, literature, and norms are inadequately constructed to approach the novel quasi-state cases that persist today. It is not necessarily true that an entity such as Somaliland is a basket case unworthy of sovereign equality. Rather, the processes of recognition and legitimate state-building lack the impetus to recognize because a bundle of confused recognition traditions may, in addressing a unique case such as Somaliland, ignite more conflict than it solves (in the eyes of potential recognizers). What I propose is an alternative way of understanding the characteristics that constitute statehood in the contemporary era. Rather than attempting to revive, revitalize, or reanimate certain institutional and legal standards that constitute de jure, traditional, and declaratory schools of recognition practice – or perhaps worse yet, to passively revert to constitutive statehood – my research introduces a new set of normative, legal, empirical, and theoretical characteristics that may more easily convey a state-hopeful's ability to transition into legitimacy by way of diplomatic recognition.

This set of ideas is what I call *System Integration.* While this is not a concept that is to be understood as a 'third way' of recognition to compete with the declaratory and constitutive schools, it may be considered a new method of conceptualizing statehood contemporarily, allowing for a more streamlined, yet perhaps more detailed, synthesis of characteristics that can be assessed as either falling in or out of the tendencies and preferences of the system. Through my empirical research on Somaliland and Eritrea, certain consistencies emerged regarding the abilities of both, as unrecognized entities, to integrate into the international system. Somaliland and Eritrea, as formally expounded secessionist movements, both emerged in the Horn of Africa in the early 1990s and have historically been linked with Marxism and Communism. They are therefore very similar to each other, and their independence efforts are part and parcel of the Cold War's end (without being relegated to the *successor state* context). Since they both emerged, however, Eritrea has become a fully-fledged member of the international system of states, while Somaliland has had no success of the sort. The differences do not end there: in the time since its establishment and subsequent recognition, Eritrea has fallen into staggering disarray, and has, for the entirety of its existence, been ruled by dictator Isaias Afwerki. On the other hand, Somaliland has held regular democratic elections; managed peaceful government turnover; and displayed a knack for maintaining relative peace and stability in a region notoriously riddled with conflict.

Certain aspects of *pre-independence* Eritrean activity (political, social, and economic) were far more successful at conveying statehood readiness than those exhibited by Somaliland. These behaviours have never truly been identifiable by *status quo* institutions such as the Montevideo Convention. Of course, parsimony makes for easily digestible policy, and more easily digestible policy will make for more efficient bureaucracy; perhaps those in charge of recognition processes would rather take Occam's Razor to the face of recognition rather than plucking hair by hair. I argue that, in terms of statehood, the characteristics that fly under the radar of simplified criteria are simply too important to gloss over. While, yes, Eritrea may have succeeded in its embryonic form to participate in the international system of recognized states better than Somaliland has, it is quite evident that Eritrea has since failed to live up to the standards associated with the legitimacy of statehood.[53] System Integration and its categories of entity behaviour account for this as well, by providing a holistic lens through which the international system and those who wish to gain access to it may be observed.

Notable cases that I will not feature in my work are numerous. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are novel, and are certainly quasi-states, but are inextricably linked to Russia and the former USSR, and the numerous issues therein. Western Sahara is another case that could be included in future research but is a uniquely situated case that not only is *not* considered a quasi-state by Kolstø's definition but also has few potential comparison partners in the current or past system – at least, no partners that compare so sufficiently as Somaliland and Eritrea. And, though it is another African state, it is effectively situated in the Muslim North African context, rather than the distinct East African/Horn context. This, along with the fact that it remains unrecognized, makes it a redundant and ineffective second comparison partner for Somaliland. Somaliland and Eritrea are the main focus of my work not only because of their proximity but because of how their similarities at birth have diverged into radically different contemporary existences.

System Integration Overview

The four main categories of entity behaviour as outlined by System Integration are as follows (in no particular order): *Participation; Marketability; Investor Consent;* and *IO*

[53] Plaut, *Understanding Eritrea* (2019).

Vacillation.[54] *Participation* considers a state-hopeful entity's record of involvement and diplomacy with other states, non-state actors, movements, and institutions in the international system. For example, one may gauge the readiness of a novel quasi-state for full statehood by its willingness or stated interest in paying its membership fees to the United Nations; participating (in good faith) in the International Court of Justice; or signing on to become a party to non-proliferation treaties. Whether or not a novel quasi-state has expressed a genuine willingness to involve itself in wider aspects of the international system beyond mere membership may determine whether it is worthy of that membership in the first place.

Marketability looks at an entity's ability to craft a suitable image, and thereafter market itself to parties, states, organizations, and other groups or actors in the system. This, history tells us, is essential to getting independence claims off the ground; it is arguably marketability and image that are the first and last word in an entity's claims. In such a politicized and simultaneously bureaucratic world, an entity's claim that is bolstered by a polished, steadfast, and well-constructed presentation is far more likely to impress onlookers than one unable to settle on its own identity. In addition, it is not merely one's identity, but how sufficiently they propose that identity as being compatible with the international system (and those therein) that may contribute to its success.

Investor Consent looks at the willingness and interest of outside parties to invest in (or more generally involve themselves in the development of) novel quasi-states. These investors may be international firms, aid agencies, foreign governments, or multinational corporations. Concerning the latter, it has been asserted that the presence of multinational corporations (or lack thereof) may be a determinant factor of the relative success of a quasi-state that has yet to be internationally recognized.[55] On the other hand, it may simply be a sign to onlookers that such a case is worthy of their attention. The consent of potential investors is indeed a strong aspect of an entity's ability to integrate into the system. Whether a state has a *Starbucks* (for example) has increasingly become a sign of its integration into the international system as it stands. For quasi-states, securing the approval of investors with the influence and the funds to assert their legitimacy in return is now essential to the recognition process. It is a sign that other investors may consider

[54] Certain other subpoints exist and, though they contribute to System Integration, are less easily confined to the main four categories, often straddling two or more of them. Some will be expanded upon as smaller effects of my theory.

[55] John Rabuogi Ahere, *The Paradox That Is Diplomatic Recognition: Unpacking the Somaliland Situation* (Hamburg, DE: Anchor Academic Pub., 2013).

the state-hopeful to be a secure asset, and a sign to potential recognizers that the entity has taken the steps to open itself up to the global market, which is a sign not only of maturity but also of a general willingness to participate in world affairs.

Finally, *IO Vacillation* reflects upon the history of international organization (IO) activity in, or relating to, that novel quasi-state. Certain questions may be asked to determine whether or not IOs consider a novel quasi-state worthy of consistent support and/or involvement. For example, if considering the UN: what does the UN say about it?; how involved has the UN been in the past?; has the UN had success in past missions or interventions, and if not, have they since tried again? The answers to these questions, and countless others, may point to the overall feelings of IOs towards that particular case. Observing historical cases tells us that the tendency of IOs to vacillate, or even to abandon certain entities, has been make-or-break for those entities. As the number of international organizations (including INGOs, IGOs, GONGOs, QANGOs, etc.) continues to rise at a startling rate, their collective ability to influence global politics increases.[56] Appealing to the most influential of them is crucial for quasi-state evolution.

As mentioned, I will endeavour to explore System Integration in two cases. These two cases are significant in that they represent what success and failure look like in emerging from novel quasi-statehood. Somaliland, one of the foremost novel quasi-states in the history of the international state system, has existed for over 30 years as an unrecognized entity within Somalia. Emerging in 1991 after the fall of Somali dictator Siad Barre, Somaliland has hoped to establish itself as an independent state along the same boundaries as its pre-unification predecessor, the 1960 State of Somaliland. Also emerging in 1991 (a mere *six days* after Somaliland), Eritrea received recognition as a sovereign state within two short years. Divorcing from Ethiopia, it found itself ravaged by the civil war that birthed it and has since fallen into disarray under the ceaseless rule of Afwerki. Considering their similarities (proximity, history, political affiliations) and their differences (their contemporary statuses, rates of success, and regime types), the two Horn states make perfect comparison companions. I will compare Somaliland and Eritrea to paint a picture of the importance of a novel quasi-state's willingness and ability to integrate into the system. In so doing, I will attempt to convey the importance of System

[56] Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, "Global Report 2011: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility," Center for Systemic Peace, January 2011, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232621340_Global_Report_2011_Conflict_Governance_and_State_Fragility.

Integration and exemplify that its implementation and good faith usage may not only make for more cohesive future research but also a more effective recognition regime.

Empirical Findings

Somaliland

"There is an irony that while Somaliland has demonstrated a high degree of empirical statehood, it lacks juridical sovereignty. In contrast, while Somalia lacks empirical sovereignty, international political and development policies treat its juridical sovereignty as intact" – Mark Bradbury.

Somaliland and its territory have historically been inhabited by nomadic pastoralists.[57] As such, they were an 'embryonic nation'; an amalgamation of peoples loosely and distantly connected merely by the land upon which they lived and made their livelihoods, with no sense of 'political' organization in the Western sense. Little interaction between individuals or the few groups that existed ever took place.[58] Nomadic pastoralists are often typified as having their livelihoods greatly impacted by European interference, having grazing rights stripped and becoming subjugated by an entirely foreign political system.[59]

The British colonized Somaliland from 1827-1960. In that time, a severe famine and the Dervish Uprising occurred, which had complex and lasting effects on state-building. As a result, development was incredibly slow in the decades leading up to World War II. The British governed with their African colonial doctrine of *indirect rule*. This reinforced traditional authority to an extent that the British hoped would limit uprisings by maintaining an effectively indigenous-led governance system. Somaliland lacked the chiefdoms Britain typically relied upon to carry out political roles, leading them to make senior elders (*caaqils*) out of *dia-paying* people.[60] While some argue the arbitrary appointment of authority and the introduction of Western law challenged unique Somali

[57] Nomadic pastoralists are consistently mobile in a constant search for fertile land upon which crops and livestock may be tended to.
[58] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (London, UK: Progressio, 2008).
[59] Naresh Yadaw, ed., "Pastoralists in a Modern World," essay, in *India and the Contemporary World I*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (New Delhi, India: NCERT, 2006), pp. 97–116.
[60] Paying a *dia* reinforced shared lineage through a traditional system of informal payment that indicated mutual support among kinship groups.

social norms, others argue the importance of new wealth to the development of the post-colonial state. The stark difference between Somalia and Somaliland is also emphasized: while the British were indirect in their control over Somaliland, the Italians ruled over the rest of modern-day Somalia with an iron fist, doing nothing to reinforce traditional forms of authority. This has contributed to Somalia's inability to rebuild, and Somaliland's stable independence, post-civil war.[61]

In 1960, Somaliland gained independence. Lasting only five days as an independent state, it unified with the rest of Somalia, which was far more developed than its northern counterpart.[62] Somaliland's politicians enthusiastically pursued the Act of Union, which ended up being quite poorly constructed. It had no agreement for the amalgamation of institutions; it greatly reduced the relative political strength of Hargeisa in the North in favour of Mogadishu in the South; it failed to approach the issue of the four competing legal systems in the region;[63] and it was retroactively approved by a Southern-dominated Somali national assembly a year after the respective North and South legislatures had drafted two separate acts. As a result, people today still question the legal and substantive validity of the Act of Union.[64] Indeed, because the act was adopted under such precarious and dubious legal pretenses, some argue it is legally invalid.[65] Nevertheless, what would follow was a near-decade of democratic experimentation and constant government turnover. In this era, Somalia attracted great sums of foreign aid but remained caught between communist and capitalist sources. The 1969 election would end the Somali "democratic experiment."[66]

In a 'bloodless revolution' that year, dictator Siad Barre seized power – he was neither unwelcome nor met with enthusiasm upon his ascension to power. His rule would be characterized by steep militarization. State Islamic leaders were executed, freedom of expression was limited, and a thinly veiled socialist identity quickly withered. Nomadic pastoralists suffered more severely under Barre than they did under colonial rule. The country also found itself embroiled in military conflicts – one with Ethiopia over the Ogaden (which it lost) and another with itself, the buildup of which resulted in Barre's

[61] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (2008).
[62] Having been governed by Italy and subsequently the UN Trusteeship Council, Somalia was well-developed.
[63] These included: Shari'a law, Somali customary law, British common law, and Italian law.
[64] Ibid
[65] Ahere, *The Paradox…* (2013).
[66] Ibid

ouster.[67] As a result of the Civil War, Somaliland would formally declare its independence from Somalia in 1991.[68]

Perhaps the most consequential aspect of Barre's rule was his fierce opposition to the North. As a result of many of the historical details above, the regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool (which, today, comprise Somaliland) suffered the most during Barre's tenure.[69] These regions were also almost uniformly populated by Isaaqs, who became second-class citizens under Barre. Seen as backward, they often had little-to-no social mobility.[70] Isaaqs received little aid that entered Mogadishu but supplemented this by herding livestock, which they continue to do today.[71] In the late 1980s, the Isaaqs would ultimately face a genocide colloquially known as the *Hargeisa holocaust*.[72] In "liquidating the Isaaq problem", Barre levelled 70-90% of Hargeisa.[73] A "forgotten genocide" in the contemporary global context, it resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Isaaqs and contributed not only to the Civil War but to Somaliland's secession from the union.[74]

On 18 May 1991, Somaliland formally declared independence from Somalia. The process was driven primarily by the Somali National Movement (SNM), which had been active in pre-secession Somaliland politics for over a decade. Beginning, according to Clapham's typology, as a *reform* insurgency, the SNM became a *separatist* insurgency in 1988, after developing a military wing some years prior and failing to coalesce with the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), another prominent faction. As Barre softened on Ethiopia, the SNM moved its headquarters from London to Addis Ababa. In May 1988, the SNM launched an offensive on Hargeisa and Burao. The Mogadishu response was swift and harsh, inspiring further support among Isaaqs. Barre soon fell out of favour in the South. Upon his fall, the SNM managed to end a decade-long effort of ridding the

[67] The formal stages of the Civil War began in earnest upon the overthrow of Barre.
[68] Ibid
[69] Consider the high concentration of nomadic pastoralists; the lack of development under British colonialism; the persistence of clannism; and the precarious development of the Act of Union.
[70] When they did manage to ascend the social food chain, they were routinely cut down, as when Barre imprisoned his Isaaq foreign minister and vice-president.

[71] Ibid
[72] Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, "'We Swallowed the State as the State Swallowed Us:' The Genesis, Genealogies, and Geographies of Genocides in Somalia," *African Security* 9, no. 3 (2 July 2016): 237–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2016.1208475.
[73] Ibid
[74] Ingiriis, "'We Swallowed the State…'" (2016).

north of the Somali armed forces. The SNM abandoned Shari'a Law and militarism after around a year of operation which, combined with its espousal of democracy, acceptance of pluralism, and softness on dissent, set the stage for Somaliland's unique political system. The organization has an uncertain legacy: Some argue it struggled to transition to independent governance, especially in contrast with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in Eritrea; others argue that its anti-Barre/pro-north stance and its ability to differentiate itself from the south were crucial aspects of the independence process.[75]

The SNM dissolved in 1991, but regular democratic turnover continued, encouraging peace, stability, and steady (if slow) growth. Political cooperation flourished at a series of conferences that would set the stage for the country's future governance. The 1993 Borama Conference, produced a peace charter and a national charter, allowing for basic security and authority to be recognized legally. The UN, through UNOSOM, continued to neglect Somaliland, opting to support 'fantasy' Somali demilitarization programs that would ultimately fail. President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal (1997-2002) embraced Somaliland clannism and embedded it into governing democratic institutions. Upon Egal's death, the swearing-in of non-Isaaq Dahir Kahin marked a peaceful turnover between leaders of different ethnic backgrounds – a rarity for post-colonial African governance.[76] In the mid-2000s, Somaliland received congratulations from the United States, the Arab League, and the UN for its free and fair elections.[77]

Somaliland remains a rare African democracy that lacks the formal approval of global political and economic actors. Like nearly all African states, Somaliland's territory is internally contested by various prominent political and paramilitary groups.[78] These groups largely revolve around actors in the Sool, Saanag and Cayn (SSC) regions of Somaliland, which John Rabuogi Ahere noted as being crucial to the future of the quasi-states inner functionality.[79] Indeed, SSC-Khatumo (or Khatumo State) declared independence from Somaliland in 2023, receiving support and recognition from Mogadishu soon thereafter.[80] In 2008, Bradbury argued that a potential discovery of

[75] Ibid
[76] I.M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History, Society* (London, UK: Hurst & Company, 2011).
[77] Ibid
[78] Ibid
[79] Ibid
[80] Abdirisaq Shino, "Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration," Horseed Media, 19 October 2023, https://horseedmedia.net/somali-federal-government-recognizes-new-ssc-khatumo-administration-383891.

crucial resources would increase the likelihood of recognition.[81] Bradbury's prediction has partly proven true, as Somaliland would discover oil in its territory in 2023. According to Michael Walls, this could mean new developments for Somaliland's independence efforts, but could also upend regional stability.[82] In Nigeria, for example, the discovery of oil could mean disastrous outcomes for political and social development. Kleptocracy and corruption typically surge upon the discovery of resources that introduce new revenues.[83] The resource curse, however, has seldom been observed in an unrecognized yet democratic state. Despite the many challenges it faces, Somaliland has maintained a unique record of political efficacy and stable democracy in a region (and continent) notorious for inefficacy and conflict.

Eritrea

"Italy created Eritrea by an act of surgery: by severing its different peoples from those with whom their past had been linked and by grafting the amputated remnants to each other under the title of Eritrean" – Martin Plaut.

Eritrean history bears a substantial resemblance to the history of Somaliland. Though distinct in important ways, the two former colonies-turned-secessionists have crossed paths several times. In fact, their respective declarations of independence were made a remarkable six days apart. In entertaining the concept of *System Integration*, Eritrea serves as a perfect companion, acting as the successful 'control' to Somaliland's arguable experimentality.

Eritrea is often contextualized by its relationship with Ethiopia. Ethiopian invasions into Eritrea occurred as early as 1000 BC, the ramifications of which are still felt today. Shari'a Law and Islam were introduced in the 7th century and continue to be influential, as do Christian cultural staples. Before European colonialism, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Ottomans seized control of portions of Eritrea spanning the 16th and 19th

[81] Ibid
[82] Michael Walls, "Opinion: Somaliland's Oil Find Could Reset the Regional Balance - Here's How," UCL News, January 27, 2023, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2023/jan/opinion-somalilands-oil-find-could-reset-regional-balance-heres-how.
[83] Osaghae, Eghosa E. "Resource Curse or Resource Blessing: The Case of the Niger Delta 'Oil Republic' in Nigeria." Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, vol. 53, no. 2, 10 Mar. 2015, pp. 109–129., https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2015.1013297.

centuries.[84] With a nomadic pastoralist history, Eritrea and Somaliland bear some resemblance in the makeup of their respective populations. Eritrea, however, is much more diverse, with nine distinct ethnic groups.[85]

In the late 19th century, Italy seized Eritrean territory, holding the colony from the 1880s until 1945. For a brief time, Ethiopia was also colonized by Italy, which forcibly furthered the ties between the two states. Italian colonization of Eritrea developed the country to an extent, but not significantly. For the most part, as they were in Somalia, Italy was a brutish landlord which failed to reinforce lasting or substantial notions of self-governance in the native population. Upon Italy's exit, Eritrea seemed to only be marginally better prepared to enter a modern age of global politics than it potentially could have been on its own.[86]

The British, post-WWII, seized Eritrea from the Italians, subsequently handing the issue over to the newly formed UN. Though a Sudanese-Ethiopian split of Eritrea was considered, the UN refused to endorse such a decision, opting instead to create an Ethiopian federation that would include a 'considerably autonomous' Eritrea. Emperor Haile Selassie, however, would rule over the province with sheer brutality. Outlawing the native language and replacing it with Amharic; levelling and relocating industry; and politically stifling the former colony, Selassie was to Eritrea as Barre was to Somaliland. Many, despite their collective suffering, continued to advocate for some sort of relationship between themselves and the distant centralized government (as some Isaaqs similarly did in Somaliland). Christian highlanders, sizeably populous in Ethiopia, supported the union until 1982. Many supporters saw the brutality of Selassie's rule as an issue of poor leadership rather than true political and cultural incompatibility.[87]

Nevertheless, violent resistance, emerging in earnest in 1961, would last thirty years until a formal declaration of independence was finally made. Throughout Eritrea's War of Independence, several seismic events occurred: Selassie was ousted by the *Derg*, a military junta, in 1974; the Derg carried out multiple genocides; a famine swept the state; and Eritrean nationalism emerged as a true force. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) both surfaced as Marxist

[84] Muluberhan Berhe Hagos, "Eritrea," *Human Rights Law in Africa Online*, 2004.
[85] Dan Connell, *Against All Odds: A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution* (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1993).
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid

political factions headquartered in Eritrea, but only the latter would advocate for independence, thus attracting more widespread and lasting support. With the EPLF as a guide (as the SNM was to Somaliland), Eritrean independence efforts would sustain regional and global political strife. The Front's politics throughout this era have contributed to the state's future diplomatic standing.[88] To stave off armed pushback from the Derg, the EPLF developed both a stationary and mobile paramilitary force, partially trained by China and Cuba.[89]

China and Cuba were not mere outliers in an otherwise barren Eritrean support system. Rather, they were just two of the nine states that the EPLF managed to secure support from. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Libya were keen partners of the EPLF. And, though ties with the U.S. were strained by the EPLF's espousal of Marxism and acceptance of assistance from communist and anti-West states, the organization found a surprising supporter in the British *Labour Party*. This was a significant achievement and a step towards recognition that Somaliland has still arguably yet to take. With informal diplomatic ties throughout the Arab world, in crucial communist states, and even in the developed and democratic West, Eritrea managed to garner global support for its separation from Ethiopia, which in turn helped it to achieve international recognition more swiftly.[90]

"[Winning] the political battle", as Dan Connell emphasizes, has not guaranteed security and stability. In the decades since its de jure independence was earned in 1993, Eritrea has faced substantial and, to this point, seemingly insurmountable troubles. Expectations were, at one point, quite high. Connell remarks that during a visit in November 1992, the country was calm, with rare instances of gunfire. Eritrea encouraged popular political participation at the local level; played a mediating, peacekeeping role in the region; and hosted a peaceful and recognized referendum in 1993.[91] Boutros Boutros-Ghali was quoted as saying that the successful referendum in Eritrea offered yet another illustration of the links between democratization, development and peace.[92] Hopes soon

[88] By publicly supporting the Soviets, and declaring that the Soviet Union was *not* an imperialist state, Eritrea aimed to satisfy the UN and appease the USSR, in hopes of maintaining lasting ties with both upon independence (to a great degree of success).
[89] Ibid
[90] Ibid
[91] Connell, *Against All Odds…* (1993).
[92] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *The United Nations and the Independence of Eritrea* (New York, NY: United Nations, Dept. of Public Information, 1996).

faded as the newborn state marked a new entry in the millennia-old Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict, waging war with its former parent state between 1998 and 2000; it would be one of Africa's most brutal. In the next two decades, it would establish itself as incapable of, despite its efforts, persuading its residents to stay.[93] With a disastrous economy and the same freedom fighter-turned-dictator (Isaias Afwerki) still at the helm, Eritrea sees few positive pathways forward. It is most certainly a contributor to the notion that the Horn of Africa is one of the continent's (and the world's) most politically unstable regions.[94] Ironically, though it no longer fits mine and Kolstø's definition of a quasi-state (having successfully attained recognition), it unfortunately fits Jackson's.[95]

Where Do We Stand?

"Conceivably, the sympathies of the international community could […] allow for a third wave of entries into the international state system. [A] perhaps more probable scenario would be independence for Kosovo." - Pål Kolstø

"To give Eritrea its independence, they argued, would dismember one of the world's oldest nations and set a dangerous precedent for many emergent African states." – Dan Connell.

"Southern Sudan's nearly certain secession […] is likely to set a dangerous precedent." – Hamza Hendawi

"There are indeed risks for the AU to say, 'yes' to Somaliland's request for recognition and set the 'wrong precedent'." – Alemayehu Behabtu.[96]

As of April 2024, if you visit the official website of Somaliland's Department of the President and visit the section entitled *National Priorities*, the resulting page tells you, "No Results Found."[97] Unfortunately, the state of affairs in Somaliland is currently neither as straightforward nor as prosperous as this may indicate. Though it has long maintained

[93] Escaping military service in Eritrea is illegal; this has historically acted as one deterrent mechanism to keep citizens within its borders. It nevertheless became Europe's biggest source of immigrants between 2014 and 2016.
[94] T.G., "Why Eritrea Is Called Africa's North Korea," The Economist, 14 August 2018, https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/08/14/why-eritrea-is-called-africas-north-korea.
[95] See page 4.
[96] Emphasis added.
[97] "Priorities Projects," Madaxtooyada JSL - Presidential Office, 2024, https://presidency.govsomaliland.org/articles/priorities-projects.

its status as the most peaceful and democratic state in the Horn of Africa (and this could still be argued to be true), the last year and change (2023-2024) of political activity in the novel quasi-state has left Somalilanders uncertain of the future. In that time, three major events have thrust Somaliland into a state of disarray. The first of these was the discovery of oil in early 2023. Mark Bradbury predicted that the discovery of crucial natural resources in Somaliland could fast-track the recognition process.[98] Current reports argue that (in a manner not mutually exclusive to that prediction) the regional balance could shift as a result. Somalia has long opposed drilling in Somaliland, while Ethiopia remains intrigued by the increased profitability of its neighbours.[99] Perhaps unsurprisingly, another major event to occur in Somaliland was Ethiopia's proposed recognition of it. In the first weeks of 2024, Ethiopia made a deal with Somaliland that, in exchange for access to its Red Sea-adjacent port, it would recognize the novel quasi-state as sovereign.[100] Mutually beneficial, and make-or-break for Somaliland, the deal has encountered turbulence from Somalia, which perceives the deal as a hostile chess move, and from the African Union (AU), which continues to attempt to quell tensions in the region.[101] As a result, two months later, Ethiopia was reported as being much less enthusiastic about pursuing the deal as proposed.[102] The last major recent event to have consequential ramifications for Somaliland is that of Somalia's recognition of SSC-Khatumo, a chess move of its own that serves to undermine Somaliland's claim to the northwestern portion of Somalia and paint the failed state as one that *wants peace*.[103] Realistically, this move will likely produce nothing of the sort, as tensions are likely to continue to flare in Somaliland, wherein conflict has been stirring among local leaders.

As for Eritrea, recent developments have been much of the same. Isaias Afwerki remains a strange, somewhat reclusive kleptocrat – some of his only recent newsworthy activity included congratulating Russian President Vladimir Putin on his March 2024 re-

[98] Ibid.
[99] Walls, "Opinion…" (2023).
[100] Economist Explainer, "Why Ethiopia's Port Deal with Somaliland Fuels Tensions," The Economist, January 5, 2024, https://www.economist.com/films/2024/01/05/why-ethiopias-port-deal-with-somaliland-fuels-tensions.
[101] Simon Marks and David Herbling, "Ethiopia May Scrap Somaliland Recognition amid Regional Pressure," Bloomberg.com, March 8, 2024, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-03-08/ethiopia-may-scrap-somaliland-recognition-amid-regional-pressure.
[102] Tafi Mhaka, "It Is High Time the AU Takes a Firm Stance against Ethiopia's Aggressions," Al Jazeera, February 9, 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/2/9/it-is-high-time-the-au-takes-a-firm-stance-against-ethiopias-aggressions.
[103] Shino, "Somali Federal Government…" (2023).

election.[104] Otherwise, Eritrea maintains its position as the "North Korea of Africa;" a repressive, dictatorial regime that limits freedom of expression and the mobility of its people.[105]

The recent headlines concerning Somaliland notwithstanding, the question remains: how did we get here? Eritrea, a state characterized by its shoddy resemblance to one of the world's most notorious personalist regimes, earned de jure sovereignty within two years of its independence claims. In contrast, Somaliland has been fighting for international recognition since 1991 – just six days before Eritrea – and has long been associated with remarkable stability considering its regional context. Now, with background information on each state, we may begin to answer the question: *under what conditions are novel quasi-states internationally recognized?* What will follow is a deep dive into the elements of System Integration and how Somaliland and Eritrea respectively fulfill each one (concerning certain specific characteristics and trends).

Somaliland, Eritrea, and the Elements of System Integration

Participation

Participation, the first element of System Integration, considers a bundle of characteristics, behaviours, and trends that speak to a quasi-states willingness, readiness, and ability to participate in the international system of recognized states.[106] These qualities, as for most elements of System Integration, can range from implicit to explicit and may require a deeper understanding of international political trends and the history of the state in question to fully realize their importance. As an example, consider a state with a history of hostility, censorship and a high carbon footprint; if that state were to provide an external environmental advocacy organization with emissions statistics that portrayed it as a state with modern, ecologically conscious emissions policies, that may imply that the state in question is not participating in the international system in good faith. Looking at the numbers themselves may not necessarily tell you this; it is only the

[104] TesfaNews, "Eritrea's President Congratulates Putin on Re-Election," TesfaNews, 19 March 2024, https://tesfanews.com/eritrea-president-isaias-afwerki-congratulates-putin-reelection/.
[105] T.G., "Why Eritrea Is Called Africa's North Korea" (2018).
[106] Though this is the first element of System Integration that we will consider, and while it is very important, there is not necessarily a specific order to be followed concerning the elements of System Integration.

context of the state and the trends of the international system that lead us to believe this state to be a poor participant in global political mechanisms.

Participation presumes what may occur when state membership (i.e. sovereignty and recognition as such) is no longer in question. This element is therefore concerned with how a state will participate in the system once it is a sovereign member of it and bases its assumptions on the behaviours of a pre-sovereignty novel quasi-state. This may include behaviours related to that state's relationship with its neighbours; its ability to be a productive and active member of treaties, international organizations, and economic partnerships; and its willingness to develop responsible diplomacy. Ensuring the application of due process to all aspects of state-state relations is a key, if understated, aspect of participation as an element of System Integration. This is not, as it may seem, a tautological or fruitless concept. Though some may understand 'participation in the international system' as being *exclusive* to recognized states, this is not entirely true. Novel quasi-states may participate in various aspects of global politics, or at the very least signify their intent to. Western Sahara, for example, is a member of the African Union, despite it not being a recognized state.[107] Participation, for novel quasi-states, is akin to volunteer work or internships; though not a full member of the organization (the global political community), the work done by those in these positions may still contribute to its functioning, and may lead to full membership in the organization in the future.

Somaliland has had a fairly poor history of participation. Beginning in earnest with its declaration of independence, its participation in the international system as a unique entity (including its behaviour in its interactions with Somalia, other states in the region, and global state- and non-actors) has been markedly unproductive, and often non-existent. Generally, Somaliland's actions in this position have derailed, curtailed, or ignored necessary political processes, and its integration into global systems of partnership has been limited at best. These behaviours are observed when looking at Somaliland's participation in the Somali peace process and its economy.

Somaliland's resistance to engaging in the Somali peace process is telling of its historical unwillingness to fully participate in the international system. Somaliland's parent state, Somalia has a now decades-long history of state failure and has required significant domestic effort and global intervention to manufacture even a minimal rebuilding process. Inseparable from Somaliland's declaration of independence, Somali state failure

[107] AU African Union, "Member States," African Union, 2024, https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2.

has most certainly influenced an effort on the part of the former to establish a functioning and lasting state apparatus. This, combined with a belief that its recognition is already deserved (rather than it still needs to be earned) has contributed to the compounding factor of pride. One "Mr. Z" (name withheld by Ahere) has explained that Somaliland's chance to be in the good graces of the international community is likely conditional on direct engagement with the Somali government, to reach a peaceable decision regarding the future of both states. This issue has persisted for nearly the entirety of Somaliland's existence as a novel quasi-state, dating back to 1997. Albeit one of Somaliland's most important political figures, President Egal made a significant mistake when refusing to attend an Egypt-organized conference that attempted to make peace between warring factions in Somalia – a conference that Somaliland would most certainly have been integral to. Later, in 2002, Somaliland would again refuse to attend a Somali peace process conference, this time in Kenya.[108] There were, on one occasion between 2012 and 2015, peace talks between Somaliland and Somalia. That time, it was Somalia who acted against the interest of peace, causing the talks to collapse.[109] This notwithstanding, Somaliland's historic and repeated refusal to contribute to the cessation of hostilities has cut talks short and is taken as an acceptance of hostilities as either endemic or self-serving. Regardless, Somaliland's conscious unwillingness to contribute to peace in Somalia is indicative of its poor adherence to participation as a tenet of System Integration.

The same can be said of Somaliland's reluctance to develop a robust, modern, and internationally integrated economy. The economy is "precarious", with youth unemployment and poverty at exceptionally high rates – but this is not necessarily the issue.[110] A continuation (in spirit) of its nomadic pastoralist roots, Somaliland has maintained an agrarian economy based almost exclusively on livestock production/export and rain-fed agriculture, buttressed by less prominent (but growing) urban entrepreneurship and civil service sectors. Additionally, despite little available data surrounding diaspora *politics*, the Isaaq diaspora does contribute quite a bit to Somaliland's significant remittance economy.[111] Somaliland's economy, dating back to the Act of Union with Somalia, also has significant foundations in Marxism-Leninism. A

[108] Ibid.
[109] Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization, "UNPO Member Profile: Somaliland," UNPO, February 1, 2017, https://unpo.org/members/7916.
[110] Rakiya Omaar and Saeed Mohamoud, "Somaliland: Where There Has Been Conflict but No Intervention," *PRISM* 5, no. 2 (2015): pp. 84–93.
[111] An economy substantiated by finances from locals who have migrated abroad.

close Soviet ally, Barre's regime was run under the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, which organized all parts of the economy but livestock and the production of bananas.[112] In conjunction with its clan traditions, this socialist history has led to the development of shared revenue centres, with one major example being Berbera. Under President Egal, Berbera's profits would be equally and nationally shared, which was a significant early development, especially when the Saudi Arabian ban on livestock was lifted. When Hargeisa's national airport expanded in the mid-1990s, and revenues were not equally distributed, it caused a rift among the Isaaqs.[113] Now, the World Bank has described Somaliland's economy as having reached a point of "significantly diminishing returns", unable to closely integrate with the world economy – this being due in part to its unique economic principles.[114] It is therefore not strictly an issue of poor development, but also of poor foundations. Somaliland's unique economic principles have made it largely incompatible with the economies of the world. It is not entirely communist, having no real commitment to the ideology as an independent entity; it is certainly not capitalist, as a pastoralist subsistence economy that makes efforts to distribute profits nationally; and it finds its roots in a clan history entirely unique to Somaliland. It has already struggled to make friends out of its neighbours; the aforementioned Saudi livestock ban would hamper Somaliland's development for years.

In contrast, Eritrean system participation was fairly successful in its years as a quasi-state. In fact, some of Eritrea's strongest participatory efforts are almost direct contradictions to the failings of Somaliland. By successfully interacting with its parent state, Ethiopia; committing itself to a globally adaptable economic policy; and opening itself up to internationally recognized plebiscites, Eritrea (under the EPLF) successfully advocated for its independence.

Eritrea and Ethiopia's relationship, between the founding of the EPLF and Eritrea's independence, was by no means peaceful. A war of independence would last thirty years, and even in peacetime tensions were high. But this did not mean that communication was not occurring. In fact, through the war, Eritrea and Ethiopia would communicate much more effectively than Somaliland and Somalia did without it. Somaliland's *cold shoulder* technique served to alienate the Somali government. Eritrea's full-on commitment to its cause, on the other hand, was a shock and a burden for

[112] Ibid

[113] Ibid

[114] Peter Mousley et al., *Somaliland's Private Sector at a Crossroads: Political Economy and Policy Choices for Prosperity and Job Creation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015).

Ethiopia, but it produced necessary talks – and the severity of the conflict brought both sides to the table, ultimately bringing cooperation to the forefront as both sides realized that they would fail to achieve what they had set out to if not for diplomacy.[115] Others point out, however, that the sudden unity between the Eritreans and Ethiopians arose upon the fall of Addis Ababa, wherein the formerly dictatorial (and Eritrea-hostile) Ethiopian state was overthrown by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, aided by the EPLF.[116] Nevertheless, as Ahere argues, it was Eritrea's interaction with Ethiopia that helped it seize independence: it was only after Ethiopia first recognized Eritrea that the Organization for African Unity (OAU; the AU's predecessor) did so.[117]

The EPLF was also successful in crafting a widely recognized and transferrable economic identity. Like Somaliland, Eritrea's economy is an incredibly weak one; however, certain elements of the Eritrean economic tradition serve to integrate it with the rest of the world much more effectively than Somaliland. From the very first days of independence, Isaias Afwerki advocated for an economy that was open to the world, citing the "self-reliance" of the EPLF during wartime as a necessary tactic that would nonetheless fail to sustain the state post-independence.[118] Quickly following up on that promise, Afwerki's newly formed People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) would form the Red Sea Trading Corporation and establish economic ties with other states that shared its coastline. A "hand-to-mouth" economy in a capital city that is not conducive to entrepreneurship, the state has nevertheless done significantly better than Somaliland in terms of the development of a *world* economy.[119] Somaliland did not disavow its isolationist tendencies when moving out of the early stages of quasi-statehood, whereas Eritrea did; Somaliland did not build an economy with integration in mind, whereas Eritrea did: the newly independent state was quick to establish itself as a trading partner for others, which in turn helped it market itself to those potential partners (which will be discussed further under *Marketability*).

An internationally recognized plebiscite held in 1991, part and parcel of the Eritrean independence effort, was also indicative of its willingness and ability to

[115] Amare Tekle, *Eritrea and Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994).
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Jennifer Parmelee, "Battle Won, Eritrean Leader Dons a Tie and Talks Democracy," Washington Post, 17 August 1991, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/eritrea/stories/dons081791.htm.
[119] Michela Wrong, "The Surprising Triumph of 'Africa's Kim Jong Un,'" The Economist, 28 September 2023, https://www.economist.com/1843/2023/09/28/the-surprising-triumph-of-africas-kim-jong-un.

participate in the international system. Because of Eritrea's engagement with the UN throughout its independence vote, the organization was able to formally support Eritrea through a validation of the result the next year.[120] In accomplishing this, Eritrea demonstrated a willingness and ability to directly cooperate with international organizations; if not for its open participation with non-state actors, it is entirely possible that its recognition would have been delayed if achieved at all. That very result is seen in Somaliland: a 2001 reaffirmation of their declaration of independence, despite garnering the approval of 97% of the population, made little if any real progress among global actors, as no state nor organization validated the authenticity, process, or result of the vote.[121] Eritrea's ability to do the exact opposite spoke to its willingness to do so in the future, which resonated with states and IOs alike, and furthered their independence cause.

Evaluating participation, like other aspects of System Integration, is a process that returns both substantive and symbolic value. When looking, for example, at the ability of Eritrea and Somaliland to respectively engage with international organizations, it not only highlights instances in which they failed or succeeded at securing the support of key partners but also indicates their participatory status. Those evaluating independence claims by quasi-states look for the early stages of behavioural precedent. So, while a novel quasi-state may be able to survive without the direct support of certain global partners, they must be cognizant of the impacts of their actions. To bypass one actor is to signal an inability or a disinterest in participation in general, and this is evidenced by comparing Somaliland and Eritrea's respective participatory histories.

Marketability

Quasi-state marketability is a difficult metric to measure. It may be assumed that states with recognition are inherently marketable, and states *without* are not. But when comparing novel quasi-states strictly with each other, we find that poor marketing or even marketing in absentia is *not* a quasi-state prerequisite. Of course, those novel quasi-states that manage to craft a successful and attractive image for themselves are those that will influence actors to seriously consider their claims for independence. And those who

[120] Ibid

[121] M.S. Prabhakara, "Referendum on Statute in Breakaway Somaliland," The Hindu, 30 May 2001, https://web.archive.org/web/20121008113215/http:/hindu.com/2001/05/31/stories/0331000f.htm.

are unable to do so will find it much harder to advocate for themselves. To find admirers or sympathizers is essential; it is not often that a novel quasi-state (that is necessarily reliant on the approval of recognized states) may successfully advocate for itself if it is unable to craft an image for itself that may attract supporters. Eritrea and Somaliland are, again, perfect comparison companions; the former has a history of marketing success, whereas the latter has quite the opposite. Identifying the various ways this has manifested will enable us to better understand how Somaliland may reverse this trend.

Eritrea's ability to craft its image and market itself to the global political community was, for a novel quasi-state, extraordinary. As is the case for all movements of its kind, the expected global response to secession is fallout and disapproval; Eritrea managed to counter prevailing attitudes towards secessionist states – especially in a post-decolonization African context – by presenting itself as a beneficial partner for onlookers to have, and by appealing to the interests and ideologies of parties, groups, and governments across the world. The success of Eritrea is evidenced by its ability to draw support from ten states: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, China, and Cuba.[122] A few of these states, in particular, are interesting because of their simultaneous relationships (or lack thereof) with Somaliland: Saudi Arabia would come to ban livestock imports from Somaliland for about a decade between the late 1990s and late 2000s, and would come to ban livestock imports from Somaliland for about a decade between the late 1990s and late 2000s; China and Cuba, two communist countries, share some ideological congruencies and histories with both Eritrea and Somaliland (though to a greater extent the former); and Somalia is, of course, Somaliland's parent state. The ability of Eritrea to attract the consent of those who had at the same time rejected Somaliland is not only detrimental to the latter's case for independence, but is also quite impressive.

Much of this can be boiled down to Eritrea's political stance. Despite advocating for multi-party democracy on the eve of Eritrean independence, Isaias Afwerki's EPLF never really advocated for anything except a country run by themselves and themselves alone.[123] Nevertheless, the EPLF's common assertion that independence would nullify their singular stronghold on Eritrean politics would be enough to convince those onlookers that approving of the new state was a chance worth taking – especially in conjunction with its ideology. Developing firmly socialist, homegrown statecraft proved

[122] Ibid

[123] Parmelee, "Battle Won…" (1991).

to be a winning formula for Eritrea's marketability. And, as previously mentioned, the EPLF even managed to secure the support of the British Labour Party, which recognized their independence in 1981, extending their support base to the powerful Western and democratic world.[124] What onlookers saw in Eritrea was a reflection of those values, policies, and commitments that they themselves held. By portraying itself as a state-to-be that would firmly 'join a side', as it were, it was undeniable where the state's interests would land when push came to shove.[125] Consider, for example, both direct and proxy conflicts. At a time when the wounds of the Cold War were still fresh (if bandaged), and when *The End of History* was being proposed, it was essential to know where, in political terms, any given state may lie. Eritrea fulfilled these anxious yearnings by constructing itself in the image of socialists, communists, and even mere leftists and, in turn, assuring them that they had another state on their side.

This is only entirely understood in the context of Somaliland's marketing failures – if Eritrea's image was whole, Somaliland's was the complete opposite: vague, uncertain, and unsophisticated. To put it simply, Somaliland committed to no political stance; no ideology; no 'side'. Throughout its entire thirty-year history, Somaliland has stood more on its own than it has in alliance with any other state, group, belief, or organization. Part of this is a continued effort to distance itself from Somalia, which became encumbered by dictatorial socialism that ravaged the state and thrust it into failure. So, despite its successes in constructing a functioning state out of what can only be described as a barren wasteland of political potential, it has thus far failed to craft an image for itself. Only a few characteristics of Somaliland politics are certain: (1) it is widely considered a free and fair democracy; (2) it is essentially an ethno-state comprised of Isaaqs. Beyond these two key aspects, Somaliland's ideology and politics are nearly entirely undeclared.

This has numerous implications, but they are not all negative. Of course, with democracy and a virtually nonexistent ideology, the novel quasi-state is capable of peaceful transitions of power informed by the full consent of the people, and it is less likely to transform into a political machine characterized and limited by a strict adherence to a specific set of beliefs, thus arguably making it less likely to backslide into dictatorship. It is also true that these democratic characteristics have largely served to quell domestic

[124] Ibid

[125] Eritrea's handling of the mid-1980s was indeed another sign to global actors that the organization could serve its people as needed, but that was four years after the British Labour Party had extended the EPLF recognition. This, of course, is also a success in marketing.

instability (barring the rising tensions seen in the 2020s) in the otherwise unstable and corrupt region of East Africa (and specifically the failed Somali state). But, beyond these successes, there is little that Somaliland presents to diplomats, organizations, and states that they may identify with. Somaliland does not have a sense of self-image that extends beyond Isaaq unity, as explained by Bradbury, who said, "In a way, the SNM does not exist; it is simply the Isaaq people up in arms".[126] This largely remains true. Whereas Eritrea was able to establish itself as being aligned with socialism and the left, Somaliland has done little to associate itself with any movement. One must also consider the singularity of Somaliland's political mechanisms (i.e. clan-based democracy) – there is little transferability between Somaliland's political structures and those of potential allies. And, as evidenced by those who supported the EPLF before Eritrean independence, it is most likely that novel quasi-states will attract support from those that more closely align with their beliefs, values, and politics.

When looking at the differences between Eritrea and Somaliland, one final major disparity that separates the two is how they historically expressed their secessionist desires. The EPLF, on behalf of Eritrea, was characteristically violent, engaging with Ethiopian armed forces directly for three decades; Somaliland has opted for peacebuilding to combat Somali state failure and the state's susceptibility to conflict. Here, Eritrea was likely less concerned with how it would be perceived by the international community and more concerned with staving off a hostile and dangerous parent state by any means necessary. Somaliland, in contrast, has faced a significantly less organized parent state threat – that often turns its guns on itself – and has thus worked to establish itself as the peaceable alternative, diverting resources to politics rather than to militarization. Ironically, these respective approaches to escaping novel quasi-statehood have had adverse effects on each entity. The Eritrean case, upon the EPLF's declaration of independence, was met with great haste in an attempt to avoid further bloodshed. The Somaliland case, beginning with its declaration of independence, was put on the back burner – far fewer immediate consequences would be faced if it were to be pushed back in the agenda than if the same were to be done in Eritrea. While it would be reckless, dangerous, and entirely misinformed to suggest that Somaliland should violently battle its way out of purgatory – and I in no way intend to do so or to support such a suggestion in any way – it is impossible to discuss how the international

[126] Ibid

community has historically viewed Eritrea and Somaliland without drawing attention to this disparity and its consequences.

As it stands, Somaliland is an example of successful *state*-building. Emerging from a landscape rife with political, humanitarian, and infrastructural devastation, the novel quasi-state has managed to construct longstanding political structures that incorporate the unique identity of the Isaaq people into its mechanisms and has, to a large degree, maintained peace, stability, and democracy in a region where such state characteristics have long been disregarded. Where it falters is in *image*-building; marketing this bundle of successes to potential buyers, so to speak. As such, some of its successes hamper its marketability: opting to protect the future of the state and avoid the adoption of corrosive ideology by developing clan-based political organisms has set Somaliland so far apart from the rest of the world that it fails to resemble what potential allies are looking for in a new member of their community. Eritrea appealed to the anti-establishment left and the socialist regimes of the world by emphasizing its stance as a socialist, African-built state. By expressing these aspects of its politics, Eritrea surrendered the future support of the West – but in doing so, secured backing from the rest. It was a calculated decision that Somaliland has yet to make. If Somaliland is to remain a safe bet in terms of statecraft, it may ironically remain a hard sell for potential allies. Its autocratic neighbours are not interested in Somaliland's democratization (and what that may mean for them in terms of policy diffusion), and the West is not interested in *how* Somaliland has democratized. For others, it is simply not a compelling enough package to draw them away from Somalia, whose peace process, dismal as it may be, appeals to powerful actors more than the plight of Somalilanders. If, however, Somaliland is to expand upon its identity as a state, it may "head away from the endless middle, and towards the bottom of the top", as it were.[127] In doing so, it will further integrate into the system by crafting itself in the image of those it seeks to align itself with, allowing for an expedited and more seamless transition into recognized statehood.

Investor Consent

John Rabuogi Ahere, when discussing diplomatic recognition in various African novel quasi-state contexts, posited that "the role of [transnational] corporations (TNCs)

[127] Jesse Armstrong, "All the Bells Say," episode, *Succession* (New York City, NY: HBO, 12 December 2021).

must be examined." In line with the findings of Jane Perlez and Raymond Bonner – that the influence of certain corporations in diplomatic recognition may outweigh that of traditional sources of support – Ahere suggests that TNCs, often overlooked, may wield even more power than certain states (and, by extension, certain IOs). Indeed, many TNCs are 'more powerful' than traditional states in the international community with regard to how they contribute to the world economy. Indeed, in 2016, Foreign Policy magazine outlined at least 25 companies that could be considered more powerful than many countries – these companies include Apple, Alphabet (of Google), Samsung, Amazon, Nestle, Microsoft, Maersk, and Emirates.[128] What Ahere argues, and by extension what I argue, is that the presence of TNCs in a state is indicative of that state's acceptance by the wider international community; if some of the largest and most influential actors in the world are either from that state or have been formally introduced to that state in any capacity, that state is much more likely to prosper in the international system today. This is the crux of Investor Consent. Concerning the cases relevant to this project, Investor Consent plays a significant role in displaying the disparity between the respective independence efforts of Eritrea and Somaliland. Though Somaliland has had its fair share of successes, they are exceptionally few; Eritrea, on the other hand, while remaining one of the weakest economies in the world, was positively received by TNCs before its independence. Though Eritrea and Somaliland are not remarkably different in terms of how strong their economies are there is enough of a delta present to understand how Somaliland may seek to improve its standing in the international economic community by providing TNCs a more hospitable environment to invest in.

There is little substantive evidence of Eritrea's pre-independence economic activity. Having been mired in a war that left the country destitute, and having had its troubles engaging powerful players in the world economy as a quasi-state, it is difficult to grasp Eritrea's willingness and ability to develop relationships with TNCs (and vice-versa) before 1991. It is also true that the economic world is far less forgiving, and unlike in the world of politics where states and IOs can vouch for a novel quasi-state's potential, the economic world will seldom make a risky gamble based on future prospects alone. This risk aversion tends to penalize novel quasi-states by default, as they cannot legally partake in many aspects of the global economy. Nonetheless, we do have access to enough information to conclude that the EPLF created an environment conducive to the

[128] Parag Khanna and David Francis, "These 25 Companies Are More Powerful Than Many Countries," Foreign Policy, March 15, 2016, https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/15/these-25-companies-are-more-powerful-than-many-countries-multinational-corporate-wealth-power/#cookie_message_anchor.

prosperity of international business. The EPLF's 1987 *National Democratic Program* identified that its economy was *fragile*, and took the development of a more robust economy very seriously, noting that,

"political developments, international relations, wars, conflicts, treaties, economic relations and cultural exchanges increasingly influence each other and no political phenomenon or movement should be seen in isolation."[129]

The program, which was fairly robust for a novel quasi-state in Eritrea's position, sets out a plan for an economy that engages with world trade. Araia Tseggai explains that here, the EPLF formulates a vision for a mixed economy, having found success in building a national economy that is self-sustaining not only to a point where it survived its war with Ethiopia but to a point where it could feasibly engage with foreign partners without risking its domestic development.[130]

Dan Connell emphasizes that the Front was "open to experimentation" with regard to its economy. Whether this flexibility was related to capacity or ideology, it is likely that this openness lent itself to the EPLF's success in engaging with foreign investors, however minimal. Accordingly, he claims that the EPLF was extraordinarily successful at developing its trade sector in preparation for its independence and that its distinct focus on socio-economic development was a priority for the Front in the overall development of the pre-independent state.[131] Connell's observations suggest that the EPLF was much more prepared for international economic participation than the SNM was – as will be discussed at length. Indeed, the Front's 1987 program makes explicit the group's perspective on the modern global economy, recognizing the importance of participating in it to support the state.[132] Soon thereafter, Eritrea would find itself in business with numerous international mining corporations, from South Africa, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Canada. It would also become a party to a number of regional economic integration schemes. It is evident that the state's pre-independence preparedness, and its development of legal and legislative provisions that

[129] Eritrean People's Liberation Front, *Political Report and National Democratic Programme* (Asmara, Eritrea: Hdri Publishers, 2007).
[130] Araia Tseggai, "Eritrea: The Socio-Economic Challenges of Independence," *Africa Today* 38, no. 2 (1991): pp. 15–30.
[131] Dan Connell, "Inside the EPLF: The Origins of the 'People's Party' & Its Role in the Liberation of Eritrea," *Review of African Political Economy*, September 2001, pp. 1–27.
[132] EPLF, *Political Report…* (2007).

promoted and protected TNC investments, facilitated the early, quick construction of an internationally linked economy in Eritrea.[133]

As is often the case, Somaliland's foreign economic development is far less formalized than Eritrea's. The weakness of Somaliland's economy, especially in foreign terms, is a longstanding and deep-seated issue that has come to threaten the novel quasi-state more and more with each passing year. The mismanagement of the Somaliland economy dates back not merely to its union with Somalia, but to its nomadic pastoralist roots. While, yes, Eritrea has a similarly agrarian history, its aforementioned economic flexibility has enabled it to develop beyond its pastoralist beginnings and build a system suitable for modern economic engagement. Somaliland has remained much more intently focused on developing and upholding its traditional economy, with far less emphasis on diversification. Its insistence on wealth redistribution and its reluctance to move away from farming and herding have hampered its ability to develop as Eritrea did. This was an issue under Barre, as nomadic pastoralists were persecuted for their 'backwardness' – but his regime did not fare much better in developing a robust economy. Barre's economic policies limited foreign investment and hampered the development of the North.[134] This was sometimes referred to as a "shadow economy". When Barre began to lean more capitalist, however, it was still the North that suffered the most.[135] Altogether, these trends have had a negative impact on the environment that TNCs find in Somaliland.

As for its more recent developments, it has continued to falter. Tabea Zierau describes the Somaliland economy as "completely deregulated," with the few government interventions – including the central bank and the national currency – holding no true value or influence to large-scale actors in the international system, including TNCs. Those who benefit most from the Somaliland economy are therefore the formerly disenfranchised, now free from Barre, who typically have no interest in economic expansion. There is, however, a port in Berbera that mainly deals in livestock trade.[136] Trade was severely limited from the late 1990s through the 2000s by a Saudi

[133] WID UNCTAD, "Country Profile: Eritrea," UNCTAD WID Country Profile: Eritrea, November 2006, https://land.igad.int/index.php/documents-1/countries/eritrea/investment-2/481-unctad-dite-wid-country-profile-eritrea/file#:~:text=International%20companies%20operating%20in%20the,Tan%20Range%20Exploration%20(Canada).

[134] Ibid.

[135] Tabea Zierau, "State Building without Sovereignty: The Somaliland Republic," *Mondes En Développement* 123, no. 3 (2003): pp. 57–62, https://doi.org/10.3917/med.123.0057.

[136] Zierau, "State Building without Sovereignty" (2003).

livestock ban that decimated Somaliland's income.[137] The World Bank, in a lengthy review of Somaliland's economy, concluded that the development of more robust policies and protections for TNCs must be sought out, to protect investors. Legal documentation and the legitimate facilitation of dealings have historically been absent in Somaliland; if the novel quasi-state wishes to integrate itself more into the international system, it must accommodate investors, who seek further protections against risks associated with capital adequacy, operations, and liquidity.[138]

Current TNC activity in Somaliland is somewhat surprising. Indeed, the country lacks socio-economic interconnectedness through investment into commodities such as tourist facilities and telecommunications chains, as hotels are all locally developed and phone service is provided almost exclusively by two Hargeisa-based corporations.[139] Where Somaliland finds its success, however, is through its Coca-Cola plant. The second largest in Africa, the plant cost $17m in 2012 and continues to operate in an isolated space an hour's drive from Hargeisa.[140] It is an impressive piece of infrastructure and was, for its time, an indescribably massive success for the unrecognized breakaway Somaliland. Beyond the splendour, however, lie serious problems and doubts. The owner, Somali Beverage Industries (SBI), is a 100% family-owned business. This means that the only significant foreign investment into Somaliland is not necessarily into the state itself – especially because the economy remains entirely deregulated – it is an investment in SBI, with revenues shared between Coca-Cola and the family who run the plant. Additionally, the lead investor in the plant, Moustapha Osman Guelleh, has described the process of bringing business into Somaliland as a logistical nightmare, claiming that those who dare try are "insane."[141] Guelleh is not necessarily wrong; the parent company of SBI is the OGF group in Djibouti, an obscure and poorly integrated corporation (that, for context has not updated its online presence in 16 years).[142]

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Mousley et al., *Somaliland's Private Sector…* (2015).

[139] Michael Rubin, "Somaliland Can't Wait for Recognition to Address Monopolies," American Enterprise Institute, October 25, 2019, https://www.aei.org/op-eds/somaliland-cant-wait-for-recognition-to-address-monopolies.

[140] Saxafi Media, "Coca-Cola Sets the Pace for Industrialization in Somaliland," SaxafiMedia, 31 May 2019, https://saxafimedia.com/coca-cola-sets-the-pace-for-industrialization-in-somaliland/.

[141] Mark Tran, "Somaliland Bottles Its Hopes in Coca-Cola Plant," The Guardian, 20 July 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/20/somaliland-bottles-hopes-coca-cola-plant.

[142] "OGF Group," OGF Group Partners, 2008, http://www.ogfgroup.com/new/OGF_website/new/partners.html.

So, not only is Somaliland poorly constructed to engage in the world economy, but its only major foreign investment has come from an obscure offshore company and will fail to support the country in any major or lasting way. in fact, it will likely amount to supporting its already significant remittance economy that yields billions each year.[143] With limited foundations to support a foray into the international economy and an antiquated wealth redistribution system that has historically favoured the formerly disenfranchised elite, Investor Consent in Somaliland remains low. Potential trade partners are wary of the lack of due process, and many would rather invest in Somalia. Eritrea's pre-independence efforts far outpaced Somaliland's current trajectory; as a novel quasi-state, Eritrea not only prepared itself legally, infrastructurally, and socially for its entrance into the world economy, but it supplemented its preparedness with action, engaging international mining companies and maintaining these partnerships into independence.

IO Vacillation

To be accepted into the international community of recognized states requires not only the approval of those states already successful in doing so but also of the non-state actors that the system produces. International organizations – including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and the simply-named QANGOs (quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organizations) – have an increasingly substantial role in global politics. The number of IOs in the world today is significantly greater than it was even at the end of the Cold War. And, as they outnumber states more and more, they become even more influential in terms of policy development, diplomacy, development, and conflict resolution. In terms of the recognition regime, IOs have for decades fulfilled a significant role. In fact, as explained by Bachmann and Prazauskas, decisions made by the UN have sweeping consequences. If a state is recognized by the UN, all other criteria of statehood and sovereignty that would otherwise determine a state's position on the independence of another are abandoned as they are assumed to be fulfilled.[144] One may also consider the unique and complex roles that NATO and the European Union (EU) played in Kosovan independence. Their involvement, while not constitutive, was essential to Kosovo's now fairly widely recognized independence. Bearing this history and context in mind, it

[143] Tran, "Somaliland Bottles its Hopes…" (2012).
[144] Ibid.

stands to reason that a priority for novel quasi-states is not merely to secure the support of other states, but also to secure the support of IOs. Those that fail to do so, or at best stand on shaky ground in their relations with important IOs, are those that are more likely to maintain their novel quasi-state statuses in perpetuity. Somaliland is one of these cases; Eritrea was not. Specifically in terms of their respective relationships with the UN and the AU, and how these organizations addressed the unique and oftentimes problematic situations in each novel quasi-state, we find that the relative volatility of IOs in Eritrea and Somaliland has greatly impacted the ability of each novel quasi-state to earn de jure sovereignty.

The EPLF was received exceptionally well by the relevant community of IOs, especially for its time and its context. As is the case with many of Eritrea's pre-independence successes, its ability to elicit positive responses from IOs – at a time when fears of the 'Balkanization of Africa' were heightened in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War – was surprising and historic.[145] It also most certainly contributed to the ability of the EPLF to accede to full sovereign state status. In terms of its relations with the UN, Eritrea's greatest success was in 1991, when it held a plebiscite on its independence that was supported and affirmed by the UN, as previously mentioned in the section entitled *Participation*.[146] That support was part of a larger operative entitled the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER), which was tasked not only with referendum support but also with continued support thereafter. Concluding reports on UNOVER explain that the operation was a success in building the state up to a point where it could feasibly support itself in its impending independence. It also explained, in one of many instances where aspects of System Integration overlap, that UNOVER "helped turn public perception" of Eritrea's relationship with the UN in a more positive direction, thus improving the state's legitimacy by way of both its engagement with IOs and its public image.[147]

Interestingly, it was the democratic nature of this plebiscite that piqued the UN's interest, according to the then Secretary-General of the UN Boutros Boutros-Ghali.[148] In another example of System Integration overlap, the UN's belief in the democratic future of Eritrea exemplifies Eritrea's ability to successfully market itself, adequately participate in the

[145] Ryan McMullen, rep., *Balkanization and the Positive Sovereignty Deficit in Africa* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2011).
[146] Ibid.
[147] Boutros-Ghali, *The United Nations and the Independence of Eritrea* (1996).
[148] Ibid.

system, and avoid the woes of IO vacillation. By planning and hosting a democratic plebiscite, Eritrea would convince the most important IO in the world that it was worthy of positive engagement and support. Regardless of the state's failure to uphold the values that the UN hoped would live on beyond independence, Eritrea had achieved what it set out to do, and that was to secede. Without the public support of the UN, this likely would have been impossible, or at the very least incredibly difficult.

In looking at the OAU, the success of the EPLF is harder to identify. Early OAU operations were successful: in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Nigeria, the OAU helped to focus civil war negotiations, and in Algeria and Morocco, the organization acted as a mediator, successfully quelling a border conflict with the help of African leaders Haile Selassie and Modibo Keita as representatives. The precedent was evident, but the organization would initially fail to fulfil the same positive role in Eritrea. Described as a "question of denied decolonization" akin to the troubled post-WWII histories of Namibia and Western Sahara, Bereket Habte Selassie explains that, even after 28 years of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the OAU had remained silent, succumbing to a myth perpetuated by Ethiopian leaders that the breakaway novel quasi-state was an "internal problem".[149] The reason for the OAU's reluctance to act is unclear, but as with many examples of IO vacillation, it is less of an example of Eritrea's lack of attempts to engage and more of an example of the OAU's unwillingness to do so itself. Indeed, when an independent Eritrea seemed more likely (in 1992), the OAU helped to set up the Provisional Government of Eritrea and oversee the same plebiscite that the UN was involved in.[150] But, for the ambiguous nature of the OAU-Eritrean pre-independence relationship, a letter signed by Boutros-Ghali in early 1992 signifies that Eritrea's compliance with UN policies not only secured the support of the UN but also of the OAU. It was Boutros-Ghali who directed the OAU to meet with leaders in Asmara.[151] This means that, by interacting with the UN, Eritrea managed to instill trust in the OAU as well, suggesting that an entity's engagements with just one IO may more feasibly facilitate wider IO cooperation.

[149] Bereket Habte Selassie, "The OAU and Regional Conflicts: Focus on the Eritrean War," *Africa Today* 35, no. 3 (1988): pp. 61–67.
[150] Befekadu Bogale, "Eritrea's Relation with IGAD and the OAU/AU: The Domestic and International Dynamics," *Turkish Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2014): pp. 1–11.
[151] Ibid.

In 1996, Boutros-Ghali explained proudly that "the United Nations played a crucial role" in Eritrean independence.[152] At the same time, however, he and his organization were criticized for providing "no help" to the Somaliland cause that managed to establish a stable peace and legitimate government on its own.[153] But, 30 years later, Boutros-Ghali's successor twice-removed, Antonio Guterres, urged Ethiopia not to recognize Somaliland, arguing in favour of "the sovereignty and territorial independence of countries, including Somalia".[154] These actions and statements, contradictory in nature, are exemplary of IO vacillation, specifically in the case of the UN's relationship with Somaliland. Not only is the UN inconsistent in if or how it may potentially support Somaliland, but in its decision to support Eritrea (and reaffirm said decision in the years that followed) while not doing the same for Somaliland. Much of this inconsistency may find its roots in the failure of UN interventions in Somalia. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was an abject failure. First, it would take the UN 18 months to meaningfully respond to the fall of Barre and the crisis thereafter in Mogadishu. It would then, upon its commencement in April 1992, be received poorly and met with violence from local Somalis, thus prompting a US-led intervention in the United Task Force (UNITAF) later that same year. It would then also fail to support the Borama Conference of National Reconciliation in 1993 which would, nevertheless, result in a peace charter that empowered Somaliland's peace and political capacity.[155] Bradbury explains that "UNOSOM was a poorly directed failure that impacted the world, not just Somalia," and that the operation effectively empowered warring factions on all sides, prolonging the conflict.[156] Since this crisis, the UN has been wary of any forays into *Somali issues* as a general, if entirely unspoken, rule.[157] Similarly, and yet somehow also slightly contradictorily, the UN has since prioritized upholding Somalia's current borders and working towards peace there. The UN's decision not to

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ismael Ibrahim Ahmed, "Letter: No Credit to the UN for Peace in Somaliland," The Independent, 4 November 1993, https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letter-no-credit-to-the-un-for-peace-in-somaliland-1501919.html.

[154] France-Presse Agence, "UN Calls on Somalia and Ethiopia to End Somaliland Dispute," VOA Africa, 21 January 2024, https://www.voaafrica.com/a/un-calls-on-somalia-and-ethiopia-to-end-somaliland-dispute/7448860.html.

[155] Ibid.

[156] The fallout from UNOSOM has been linked by certain actors to various crises, such as the entry of Al-Qaeda into Somalia, and the failure of the UN and US to respond to the Rwandan genocide; though these issues may not seem directly relevant to Somaliland, it must be acknowledged that these sentiments continue to be associated with Somalia, and by proxy, Somaliland.

[157] Ibid.

support demilitarization in Hargeisa but instead to do so in Mogadishu (which, at the time, had no police force) is evidence of its desire not to stoke the flames of Somali politics more than necessary. In the late 1990s and into the 2000s, Somaliland would make attempts to reverse the UN's position on the issue: President Egal instituted a "Planning Ministry" that would engage with foreign liaisons, including UN agencies, to foster good relations. Despite Egal's best efforts, however, the UN has remained historically hostile to Somaliland independence and refuses to support Somaliland's state-building operations, including disarmament programs and policies that would reinforce good governance.[158] The UN's *creeping* support leaves a seemingly false sense of hope in Somaliland, while prospects for true progress seem distant.[159]

The AU has a similarly – if not more – contradictory history in Somaliland. On the positive side, Somaliland and the AU have had relatively deep engagement on numerous occasions. In Ahere's *Paradox*, he cites Alexis Arieff as explaining that, in 2005, the AU organized a fact-finding mission to Somaliland, which then prompted the novel quasi-state to apply for AU membership later that same year.[160] Recall that AU membership, UN membership, and de jure independence are not mutually exclusive; one example of an unrecognized state that has been supported almost exclusively by the AU is Western Sahara (vis-à-vis the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic), which has AU membership but lacks international recognition from either the UN or other states.[161] This suggests a precedent to be followed in Somaliland. However, despite the AU's 2005 mission's findings that Somaliland was "sufficiently unique and self-justified in African political history" and that "Pandora's box" would remain firmly shut in the event of Somaliland's independence, no progress has come about as a result, and the application was dismissed.[162] This dismissal is indicative of the AU's precarious Somaliland policy, that the organization treats as a byproduct of what John Schram[163] notes as "the one area of almost absolute agreement in the AU," being "to eschew any thought of breaking through

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

[161] The 35th UN General Assembly reaffirmed the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, which indicates a level of support from the UN as well – this, however, has not manifested into UN recognition of the SADR.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Schram is the former Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Togo, Liberia, and the OAU; High Commissioner to Ghana and Sierra Leone; and Director for Eastern/Southern Africa during the first South African elections and Canada's participation in the Somalia UNITAF operation.

original colonial […] frontiers."[164] If this one area of unanimity among AU leaders can seemingly be satisfied, it is unclear why the organization has failed to support Somaliland.[165] Nonetheless, it has; despite the AU's "seemingly sincere ambitions," the union has been at best been wavering in regard to Somaliland's independence. It is likely that, as with the UN, the AU is comfortable with its position that Somalia's territorial integrity should not be infringed upon. Unfortunately for Somaliland, it is also true that the AU seems to follow the lead of other states and organizations (as it did in Eritrea), and that the West then follows the lead of the AU.[166] To gain the support of the AU, Somaliland will likely have to engage further with the UN first which may prove difficult.

Generally, pre-independence Eritrea and Somaliland have historically made significant attempts to engage with the international community of IOs. While this relatively brief overview does not necessarily capture the entirety of the respective relationships between IOs the EPLF and Somaliland, it certainly provides a sense of what has worked and what has not for both entities. Typically, engaging deeply with IOs yields novel quasi-states positive results, especially when a few general criteria are fulfilled:

The novel quasi-state in question is open and presents itself as being aligned with and prepared to defend the values and principles of that IO;

The situation at hand is dire; the vulnerability of either the novel quasi-state or its parent state is apparent;

The interjection of the IO is believed to contribute positively to peace and development in the aforementioned situation;

The IO has seen positive results in its work in the parent state and/or the novel quasi-state in the past.

These criteria are based on the disparity in success experienced by Eritrea and Somaliland in presenting their cases to IOs of significant influence. The first criterion is based upon Eritrea's successful marketing of itself that assured the UN (even into the late 1990s) that its UNOVER operation was a great success not only for the Eritrean state and people but for the prospects of a stronger UN and international community more broadly. Somaliland has yet failed to present itself in this way. The second and third criteria

[164] John R. Schram, *Re: Thesis Updates*, 12 March 2024.
[165] This qualm is nullified by Somaliland's history as a unique colony, and by the existence of the State of Somaliland (1960).
[166] Ibid.

concern the Eritrean War of Independence. The war was not headed anywhere constructive, and it seemed that all other options had been exhausted. UNOVER was perceived to be a logical and productive decision to oversee the end of the war and the cessation and prevention of further hostilities. The subsequent support of the AU followed the same logic. As it stands, there is no such situation in Somaliland. In fact, the bulk of the crisis still lies in Mogadishu, not in Hargeisa. As such, IOs would rather prioritize the continuing Somali peace process. The fourth and final criterion is based on the failure of UNOSOM. Put simply, IOs (specifically the UN and other high-level IGOs) are wary of further Somali incursions. Unless the Somali state or public becomes more receptive to the work of IOs like the UN, Somaliland will find it difficult to convince the UN that its case is a gamble worth taking.

Avenues for Future Research

As with any thesis project, this one has encountered substantial trial and error. Having developed numerous iterations between late 2022 and early 2024, the framework upon which my research has been based has changed significantly. The following was my initial hypothesis:

Entities must be able to fulfil the requirements of the Declaratory school, while also gaining the approval of the local superpower, experiencing consistently stable parenthood, and posing a reasonable threat to their parent state or surrounding states in order to achieve independence and recognition as such in the 21st century.

This hypothesis held a few key assumptions: that Somaliland had yet failed to gain the approval of the AU (the "local superpower", that drives regional policy and conflict resolution); that Somalia, as a failed state, was both unwilling and unable to come to the table and construct a formal agreement with Somaliland to either enshrine continuity or recognize the latter's independence; and that, in constructing a generally stable and peaceful state, Somaliland undermined any reasonable threat it could have imposed upon Somalia or the region.

Another avenue that I pursued (at the keen suggestion of my advisor, Dr. Jamie Levin) was the factor of diaspora politics. Noting that the Eritrean diaspora likely had an effect on its ability to secure recognition from the international community, Dr. Levin suggested incorporating it into my theory regarding Somaliland in some way. Unfortunately, with the limited resources of an undergraduate student and because there is little data that

separates the Somalilander/Isaaq diaspora from the rest of the Somali diaspora, this pursuit was short-lived.

One final area of focus that could contribute to further research is the role of international law and international organizations in facilitating recognition. As with the work of Bachmann and Prazauskas, these institutions may be treated as a critical focal point of the mechanisms of diplomatic recognition, and they may also be treated as malfunctioning and/or obsolete.[167] It may also be argued that these organizations (as is true of other actors) pay insufficient attention to *Track II Diplomacy*. In researching their roles in the recognition regime and their efficacy therein, we may discover cracks in the functioning of international politics that desperately need to be addressed.

With adequate resources and independent inquiries, these avenues that I have had to set aside due to the constraints on undergraduate research could produce significant results. Uncovering the inner mechanisms of AU decision-making; unravelling a complex history of Somalia-Somaliland relations; looking into the correlation between organized violence and formalized independence; and investigating the role of the diaspora in spearheading a political cause at home may all contribute to our understanding of the novel quasi-state problem.

Conclusion

This project has set its sights on a problem that few have yet substantially addressed. The problem of novel quasi-statehood is multifaceted. At times, it encompasses notions of international law, political trends, inter-/intra-state conflicts, humanitarian crises, the role of international organizations, political culture, economics, and more. In the decades that novel quasi-statehood has persisted, however, it has not been treated as such. Indeed, the international community's collective response has not reflected the substantially layered nature of the issue. Similarly, the intangible qualities that novel quasi-states possess have also remained unaddressed. As a byproduct of the bureaucratic international system, novel quasi-statehood has long been inadequately addressed by age-old 'status quo' mechanisms, thus incentivizing potential recognizers to politicize the issue and act in self-interest – or, more often than not, ignore the issue altogether. It has been a troubling and perplexing trend that has led to, in the past three decades, the independence and

[167] Ibid.

recognition of Eritrea, Kosovo, and South Sudan, and on the other side, the prolonged novel quasi-statehood of Somaliland.

In constructing *System Integration*, I intended to address many of these issues. First, by making the historically ignored intangibles of novel quasi-state behaviour the focal point of my theory, I sought to construct a system of assessment that could theoretically build a profile to identify how successfully a prospective state would integrate into the already-established international system. The current status quo process to answer the question, "*Is ____ a state?*" tells us astonishingly little about how that entity functions, both domestically and internationally. By examining a novel quasi-state's fulfillment of each element of System Integration, however, we not only understand its adherence to established criteria, but also how it functions in terms of diplomacy, economics, collaboration, and state-building. In developing this theory, it was also my intention to incorporate the multifaceted nature of novel quasi-statehood into how it is approached. By understanding and addressing both its influences and its effects, our collective response to the problem may be much more comprehensive. By accounting for the political, social, cultural, and economic factors at play, System Integration may also serve as a more lasting blueprint for novel quasi-states to become fully-fledged states. Now, I will synthesize the bulk of my work and the many conclusions it has drawn into a few key understandings.

First, as I have asserted several times throughout this thesis, the current state of the international political community's response to novel quasi-statehood is far from adequate. Scholars, politicians, and IO employees alike have, in the past few decades, had a wavering, inconsistent, and lackadaisical approach to the novel quasi-state problem. The relevant literature addressing the issue is incomplete and leaves room not only for my work but also for many works, all of which could assume a different perspective. State governments tend to eschew international law, act in their own interests, and forego norms of statehood that have, for decades, constituted our entire approach to diplomatic recognition. And finally, international organizations have taken on a more significant role in the recognition process, while simultaneously failing to hold themselves to consistent values. These trends have coalesced to make the international community hostile to novel quasi-statehood – not necessarily for established normative or legal reasons, but rather because a widely adopted approach to solving the problem has not yet been discussed, let alone settled on.

What we have learned from System Integration is, in contrast, much more positive. First, *Participation* exemplifies that, despite their limitations, novel quasi-states have a greater chance of recognition if they are consistent and largely positive contributors to the international system. Eritrea's efforts to establish a working relationship with Ethiopia and international observers (including the UN), despite the many hurdles they had to jump, were evidence not only to those actors but also to the world that it was willing to open itself up to the international community. And, by pursuing global economic integration, Eritrea moulded itself to the implicit expectations of the world as it was in the 1990s. Somaliland, on the other hand, failed to participate in the Somali peace process; squandered its chances of ensuring that its 2001 plebiscite was, like Eritrea's, internationally supported; and committed itself to an economy incompatible with the rest of the world. By these observations, it would appear that a novel quasi-state's willingness and ability to participate in the international system is integral to its ascension to full statehood.

Secondly, *Marketability* shows that a novel quasi-state's implicit marketing strategy can determine its success in being recognized by its peers. Eritrea massively outperformed Somaliland in this category, which is particularly evident when you consider the support the EPLF received in its relative infancy; Somaliland and the SNM alike have found no such support. This is because Somaliland's identity can be boiled down almost entirely to its unique and homogenous Isaaq ethnicity, whereas Eritrea (ethnic diversity notwithstanding) crafted a legitimate and explicit identity for itself. We have also learned that a novel quasi-state's identity does not necessarily have to espouse typically 'positive' state attributes – it seems that as long as the entity can appeal to others like it, it will inch ever closer to recognition.

Investor Consent shows that the development of strong, open, and compliant economic foundations is inextricably linked to successful recognition campaigns. Eritrea's early adoption of globally-focused economic policies and its insistence on developing a hospitable environment for investors has made it a fairly attractive landing spot for companies wishing to secure a place on the Red Sea. Just down the coast, Somaliland has yet failed to create that same welcoming environment, and investors are wary of the complete lack of security to safeguard their capital. Its aforementioned reluctance to move past an agriculture-based economy also limits its attractiveness to foreign capital.

Finally, *IO Vacillation* demonstrates that international organizations are key members of a novel quasi-state's support network in the recognition process. By engaging with IOs

early and often, a formal relationship can be formed ahead of recognition, which will enable those organizations to confidently approve of and/or oversee plebiscites, peace talks, and elections. As exemplified by Somaliland, without that positive engagement, IOs are much more likely to vacillate and fall back on inconsistent rhetoric that justifies inaction. It also helps if the local population responds positively to IO work, as evidenced by the disparity between UNOVER and UNOSOM. The role of IOs also suggests that recognition is not an entirely state-driven process.

Of course, these conclusions merely help to predict future novel quasi-state behaviours – System Integration cannot guarantee that a novel quasi-state as recognized will remain the same 5, 10, or 50 years down the line. The reason, however, that these results can be considered 'positive' is that a novel quasi-state's fulfillment of each element of System Integration can be improved upon. What this means is that none of Somaliland's past failures to integrate into the system are terminal. By looking to the intangible aspects of its state-building, diplomacy, and economy, Somaliland may seek to, as in the case of Eritrea, turn public perception in its favour.

System Integration represents a positive turn for novel quasi-state and recognition scholarship. A barren literature landscape that tends not to move too far beyond established norms of diplomatic recognition persists. Recognition politics, too, are threatened. The overt politicization of the process and an overreliance by actors of all types inhibit progress and relegate the most vulnerable entities in the international community to statehood purgatory. What System Integration proposes is an alternative to this; a move away from the tired status quo and towards something more productive. Not only may those who research novel quasi-states benefit from the further development of this concept – but novel quasi-states themselves may, too. It is my great hope that the novel quasi-state problem as a whole may be better addressed by drawing further attention to the elements of System Integration.

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