De Facto State Death

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ABSTRACT

De facto states are political entities that control populated territories but lack diplomatic recognition of their sovereignty. Contemporary examples include ISIS and Somaliland. Recent examples include FARClandia and Tamil Eelam. Historical examples include the Confederate States of America and warlord states in early 20th century China. These examples indicate de facto states are neither new nor restricted to any one region. They also hint that de facto states are associated with civil wars and state failure episodes, and thus are often causes or symptoms of periods of instability and conflict. Consequently, conditions that accelerate the process by which de facto states are restored to the control of sovereign states should be associated not only with improved conditions for those sovereign states, but also with improved conditions for neighbors and distant states with a stake in the sovereign state threatened by the presence of de facto states. In this article we evaluate theoretical arguments about de facto state death – focusing on conditions internal to the sovereign state, characteristics of the de facto state, and international influences, all of which are expected to influence de facto state persistence. We find considerable support for all arguments about when de facto states die.

Somaliland and Puntland were parts of Somalia until 1991 when they emerged as independent political entities in control of substantial parts of the country. Neither is recognized as sovereign states, though both do a better job governing their territories than does the "official" government of Somalia (Bradbury 2008, Bahadur 2011). The official government of Somalia will never be able to restore Somali stability until these de facto states[1] are either reincorporated into a unified Somalia or one of them conquers Mogadishu and establishes a functioning national government recognized by the rest of the world.[2] Neither of these scenarios is likely to materialize anytime soon, and so Somalia continues to fester in a prolonged crisis of state failure.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has experienced two periods in which the official government lost control of some of its territory to de facto states. The first stretched from independence until the mid-1960s (Young 1965). A second started in the mid-1990s and persisted for most of the first decade of the 21st century (Reyntjens 2009). These episodes featured civil wars that posed existential threats to the state. In the first episode the de facto states were, with one minor exception, reincorporated by force into a then much stronger Congo (Young and Turner 1985). In the second episode although most de facto states were reincorporated into a unified state,

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[1] De facto states are political entities that control populated territories and function like sovereign states except that they are not recognized as sovereign nor are they authorized by the government that is sovereign to control the territory in question.

[2] Somalia's official government faces more obstacles than the presence of these two de facto states, but any resolution of Somalia's state failure crisis will have to resolve the dilemma of their existence.

central control over eastern DRC has proven illusory, and as a result the DRC ranks among the world's worst-governed states (Autesserre 2010).

As these examples indicate, the presence of de facto states generally accompanies periods of war and state failure and thus knowing what makes de facto state survival shorter promises insight into how state failure and civil war episodes can be terminated or prevented. While it is common for failed states and for states involved in civil wars to suffer de facto states controlling some of their territory, the overlap is far from complete. In the dataset used in this paper (described below) under 50 percent of the de facto state year observations experienced war.[3] Just over 10 percent of the de facto state year observations are characterized by the "host" being a failed state (defined by a -77 code in the Polity dataset). Thus, there are many observations of de facto states not involved in wars with their "host," as well as of civil wars in which the rebel side does not control territory. De facto states also commonly exist absent their host's state failure, and there are plenty of instances of state failure without de facto states present (e.g. Nicaragua in 1980-81 after the Sandinistas removed Somoza from power, Iran in 1906-07 and again from 1910-16 as the Qajar dynasty disintegrated, and Lesotho in 1998-99 after a contested election caused a political crisis that provoked an SADC intervention to restore order). It is incorrect to suggest that the presence of a de facto state always coincides with civil war or state failure. Rather, they are related to each other and scholars concerned about civil war or state failure should also be concerned about

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[3] This is with war defined very broadly: any COW or ACD conflict, any mention in Clodfelter, or any account of militarized conflict involving the de facto state found in the extensive sources upon which the dataset is based.

de facto states. Thus, in addition to policy implications, knowledge of what affects de facto state duration is relevant for scholarly debates as well.

In the next section we briefly describe the new dataset used to assess de facto state survival. Of particular interest is the fact that de facto states can cease to exist in a number of ways. We believe that domestic (that is, domestic to the sovereign state and domestic to the de facto state), and international factors influence how long de facto states persist, and in the pages below we develop hypotheses about relationships between domestic and international variables and specific forms of de facto state death. We then justify the research design choices we have made in order to evaluate these hypotheses, present the results, and discuss their implications both for our arguments and for future research.

A New De Facto States Dataset

De facto states are political entities that control populated territories but lack recognition as sovereigns. The analyses reported here take advantage of a recently completed dataset about de facto states. The dataset was collected by First Author and is described in detail in First Author and Collaborator (n.d.); a brief description follows.

The new dataset includes information about independent political entities in control of populated territory but lacking diplomatic recognition. Data coverage starts when they first gain control of territory and lasts until they no longer control territory, or when they are recognized as a sovereign state. No minimum area, population, or duration thresholds are employed. Unlike the only other existing de facto state dataset (Florea 2014), the new dataset does not require political entities to have declared independence in order to qualify for inclusion. A general motivation for this broadening of inclusion criteria is that small area, population, or short duration likely coincide with weakness, and selecting based on some minimum threshold on these dimensions would curtail

variation on this variable, reducing the desirability of the dataset for analyses of state making and state failure. It strikes us as particularly disadvantageous to have a minimum duration threshold when analyzing how long de facto states persist, as we do below.

But, rejecting these thresholds greatly expands the number of de facto states in the dataset. As a result, it also complicates the process of finding information about them. Due to these constraints the dataset thus reports de facto states within the territories of a random sample of 62 developing world states rather than for the entire international system. Coders were assigned sovereign states from the sample and instructed to read widely in that country's history, looking for instances when part of the national territory was governed by something other than the sovereign state recognized as possessing the territory. When coders found candidate de facto states they conferred with First Author to ensure their candidates plausibly did control territory, and if so they proceeded to collect a considerable amount of information about each de facto state: area controlled, terrain type, years of control, how the de facto state came to control the territory, how it lost control of the territory, conflicts it engaged in, alliances it formed, population estimates for the territory, troop estimates for the military force defending the de facto state, whether the de facto state funded itself by trafficking in contraband or ransoms, and a number of other variables of interest. The dataset includes a codesheet for each de facto state, which provides full documentation including sources consulted.

All told, 187 de facto states were identified on the territories of the 62 developing world states included in the sample. This averages just over three de factos per sovereign, with a range from zero (twenty sovereign states in the sample never had any de facto states on their territories) to twenty (in Burma). The most important aspects of the dataset for this article is information about how long each de facto state persisted, and also how those that ceased to be came to lose

territorial control. De facto state death can take four forms: absorption into a competitor de facto state (12 instances), forceful reintegration into the sovereign state (77 instances), peaceful reintegration into the sovereign state (52 instances), and recognition as sovereign states, usually by defeating the sovereign state and being recognized in its stead (19 instances; and there were 27 de facto states still in existence at the end of the dataset's coverage in 2010). In the next section we develop a theoretical argument anticipating what makes de facto states more likely to die in each of these ways.

Before turning to that theory, we wish first to address a conceptual critique about de facto states as included in the new dataset. The norm in de facto state research is to employ a more-narrow conceptualization of de facto states that requires that they have declared independence and that they persist for at least two years (Pegg 1998, Kingston and Spears 2004, Casperson 2012, Florea 2014). Proponents of the narrow conceptualization of de facto states might characterize the de facto states in the new dataset as "territorial contenders," only a subset of which are "true" de facto states. We prefer the broader conception for a general reason and for a reason specific to this article's topic. The general reason for preferring the broader conception is that the decision to declare independence is surely a strategic one, taken because of an expectation that it will increase legitimacy for the group either with domestic or international audiences, and thus is likely related to expectations about recruitment and resource mobilization. That is, when political entities think they have a greater chance at winning popular approval they will declare independence. This means that the groups that qualify for a narrow-conceptualization dataset will, on average, be more capable de facto states and thus be more likely to succeed. Surely this affects outcomes of interest to de facto state researchers, such as how long de facto states persist and whether they cease to be de facto states because they are reincorporated into their host sovereign state, or because they

succeed in winning recognition as sovereign states in their own right. Turning to the reason for preferring a broad-conceptualization specific to this study, we feel confident that sovereign states plagued by the existence of a de facto state that has declared independence (like Abkhazia in Georgia) or one that has not (like the FARC in Colombia) are in comparable situation even though a declaration of independence has been made in only one case. Further, we think that neighbors and other sovereigns that care about the sovereign plagued by the de facto state (because they trade with the sovereign, or have a shared history in some way) are not only concerned about de facto states that have declared independence. We understand if narrow-conceptualization partisans prefer to think of our article as one about Territorial Contender Death, we represent it as De Facto State Death.

Theory

The Somali and Congolese examples indicate that de facto states constitute a major threat to sovereign states. Weak sovereign states might have no choice but to tolerate the existence of a competitor political authority controlling some of "its" territory. However, a capable sovereign state might also have to tolerate a de facto state competitor if that de facto state was supported by another sovereign state. These thoughts motivate our theoretical expectations about de facto state survival: de facto states persist longer when the sovereign state hosting them is weak or plagued by foreign rivals. In addition, characteristics of the de facto state should also influence its survival: more capable de facto states with greater resources should persist longer.

As the previous section indicates, not all de facto states die the same way. Forceful reintegration denies the de facto state not only continued existence but also likely comes with no concessions from the government. Similarly, absorption by another de facto state likely denies the absorbed de facto state any meaningful concessions – the de facto state being absorbed is either

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conquered or is joining a rival de facto state from a position of weakness most likely to avoid conquest by the sovereign state. From a de facto state's perspective, forceful reintegration or absorption by another de facto state are undesirable ways to die. Conversely, peaceful reintegration is often a more desirable type of death for a de facto state because it likely coincides with substantial concessions made by the sovereign state's government. Finally, elevation to sovereign statehood is the most preferred way for a de facto state to ``die,'' as doing so yields not only continued survival but the benefits of sovereign statehood (Fazal and Griffiths 2014).

Based on this straightforward theoretical perspective, we expect that characteristics of the sovereign state will influence both how long a de facto state survives and the manner in which it dies, at least vis-à-vis the host state. We expect that characteristics of the sovereign state and its security environment that are disadvantageous to de facto states should make bad deaths more likely, good deaths less likely, and continued existence less likely. Contrariwise, characteristics of the sovereign state that are advantageous to de facto states should make bad deaths less likely, good deaths more likely, and continued existence more likely. A number of sovereign state characteristics are likely to drive these processes, including: national material capabilities, the number of additional de facto states plaguing the sovereign state, whether the sovereign state is experiencing state failure, and the level of development of the sovereign state.[4]

Similarly, we anticipate that some characteristics of de facto states will affect how long they persist and what forms death will take, should it come. Most obviously, larger de facto states

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[4] It is unclear whether these characteristics influence whether de facto states will voluntarily join each other or conquer one another, so we do not generate expectations about sovereign state characteristics and absorption.

with more resources are more formidable foes, and thus harder for sovereign states to conquer or for other de facto states to absorb. Consequently, when a de facto state has a large population or many troops, the likelihood of bad deaths should decrease while the likelihood of good deaths should increase. Turning from capabilities, significant events in de facto states' experiences can also affect whether they survive and if not, how they die. The most obvious such event would be loss in war,[5] which should make bad deaths more likely and good deaths less likely. Note that the characteristics of a de facto state condition their likelihood of dying by the hand of the host state, or by competitor de facto states.

Finally, our theoretical framework anticipates that international factors influence whether and how host states eliminate de facto states. Sovereign states with many allies should have more resources with which to force de facto states into bad deaths. By contrast, sovereign states confronted by foreign rivals are at a disadvantage not only because they have to preserve military resources to deter attacks from their rival but also because their rival is a natural ally of their de facto state opponent. Several existing studies, for example, have found evidence that states encourage non-state actors to sow discord in a rival's territory (Conrad 2011; Findley, Piazza and Young 2012). Thus, sovereign states with allies should have an easier time forcing de facto states

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[5] Recall from footnote 3 that the dataset used here defines "war" very broadly. A de facto state can lose a war to a sovereign state or to another de facto state, and such wars might involve as few as 25 fatalities. What's more, readers should not understand war loss and death to be the same thing. There are 57 instances of de facto states losing wars, 7 of which do not correspond with death. There are 160 instances of de facto states dying in this dataset, 110 of them do not coincide with a war loss.

into bad deaths and sovereign states with rivals should have a harder time doing so. Expectations about good deaths are reversed; allies should make them less likely, rivals more likely. Our expectations about sovereign, de facto, and international influences on de facto state deaths are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Theoretical Expectations

Sovereign State Characteristics	Absorption by other DFS	Forceful Reintegration	Peaceful Reintegration	Promotion to Sovereign Statehood
Sovereign State Capabilities	-	More Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
Number of DFS	-	Less Likely	More Likely	More Likely
Sovereign State Failure	-	Less Likely	More Likely	More Likely
Sovereign State Development	-	More Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
De Facto State Characteristics				
DFS "War" Loss	More Likely	More Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
DFS Population	Less Likely	Less Likely	More Likely	More Likely
DFS Troops	Less Likely	Less Likely	More Likely	More Likely
International Influences				
Sovereign State Rivals	-	Less Likely	More Likely	More Likely
Sovereign State Allies	-	More Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely

The distribution of de facto states across the territories of sovereign states is not random. It would be reasonable to expect that weak sovereign states are more likely to be confronted with de facto state competitors, and that sovereigns with few allies or with interstate rivals are more likely to face de facto state competitors. If so, then many of the variables we hypothesize to be related to de facto state survival might also be related to de facto state emergence. If this were in turn the case, it could create an adverse selection problem where the variables hypothesized to be causes here actually had their primary effect at an earlier stage in the process by which de facto states emerge, contest sovereign states, and survive or die. That would likely produce substantial diminishment in the variation on some of the independent variables in this analysis: weak,

underdeveloped sovereigns experiencing state failure episodes, confronted by many rivals and with few allies, would be over-represented in the dataset. These variables would then vary little, but we know there is substantial variation in how long de facto states persist and in how they die, which should prevent us from finding support for our hypotheses.[6]

We do not anticipate that such selection bias issues will contaminate our analyses. It turns out that the expectation that state characteristics and international friends and foes will influence de facto state emergence is plausible but evidence for it is weak at best. In a random forest analysis of de facto state emergence, sovereign states' capabilities, state failure episodes, and level of development have only very small permutation importance, while interstate rivals and alliances have virtually none (First Author & Collaborator n.d.).

It is important to discuss an alternative argument about de facto state survival. Florea's theory (2017) stresses credible commitment as the key cause of the variation in de facto state death outcomes. In his account, "commitment" is to peaceful resolutions that end the conflict (military or not) between the sovereign and the de facto state. Florea focuses on four sources of commitment problems: foreign military support for the de facto state, state building efforts by the de facto state (e.g., construction of governance institutions), whether the de facto state is part of a unified or fragmented opposition movement, and how constrained the sovereign state government is (which he calls Government Veto Players). Like our argument, Florea offers hypotheses about good and

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[6] It is hard to anticipate how the post-emergence characteristics of the de facto states could influence their emergence, so relationships involving these variables would not be suspected of contamination by selection bias.

bad de facto state death types, though he does not use this terminology nor does he have any instances of absorption into another de facto state. Nevertheless, his expectations are as follows:

Table 2: Theoretical Expectations Derived from Florea (2017)

	Forceful Reintegration	Peaceful Reintegration	Promotion to Sovereign Statehood
DFS Foreign Support	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
DFS State Building	Less Likely	Less Likely	More Likely
DFS Fragmentation	More Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
Sovereign State Executive Constraints	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely

Justifications for each hypothesis can be found in Florea's text (2017:340-343), the general intuition is that the first two variables affect the dyadic balance of power between sovereign and de facto state, and the second two affect each actor's internal ability to commit to a bargain to end the stand-off between sovereign and de facto state. In his statistical analyses Florea finds considerable support for his hypotheses, with three-fourths of his coefficients having the correct sign and one-half over-all being both correctly-signed and statistically significant. Analyzing 780 de facto state year observations (across 34 de facto states) in a competing risks model asks a lot of the data, so we find his results impressive. We choose to evaluate his argument as well (anticipating similar effects of the variables on absorption as for forceful reintegration) and include in our analyses as many of his variables as possible. We return to this topic in our research design section when we discuss variable measurement.

Research on civil war duration is interesting to consider as well. Many of the de facto states in the dataset spend at least part of their existence as rebels. However, while the overlap between rebel group and de facto state is far from perfect, it is reasonable to expect that factors that prolong how long rebels persist in their conflicts with governments might also help us understand why some de facto states persist longer than others.

A first variable of interest from the civil war duration literature is mountainous terrain. Fearon and Laitin (2003) famously introduced this as a factor associated with civil war onset, but their logic can be easily extended to duration. If mountainous terrain makes it harder for government forces to apprehend rebels, it not only emboldens them to start a war but also empowers them to prolong it. We might then anticipate that when a de facto state occupies mountainous terrain, it is harder for the government to re-incorporate their territory forcefully, and we might also anticipate that it is similarly harder for competitor de facto states to absorb them. Mountains thus might be expected to decrease the hazard of bad deaths, while perhaps not having any effect on good deaths – it is hard to anticipate that having a mountainous base area would make it more likely the de facto state would win major concessions from the sovereign state or be recognized as a sovereign state themselves.[7]

A second variable suggested by the civil war duration literature is lootable resources. Ross (2004a, 2004b) concludes that the case study literature demonstrates a strong positive effect between lootable resources (narcotics and gemstones) and civil war duration, particularly when the looting is undertaken by the weaker side in the war. His explanation for this persistent finding is that the looting both increases the resources which enable the weaker side to resist longer, and creates dynamics where the war is needed to continue to provide cover for illegal trafficking in the loot. Advancing similar arguments, Fearon (2004:285) reports that "contraband" (diamonds and narcotics) is a significant positive influence on civil war duration. Translating from rebels to de facto states, we anticipate that by enhancing the ability to persist, lootable resources should

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[7] Two studies that investigated the impact of mountainous terrain on civil war duration found it to have no significant effect (Collier et al. 2004:261; Cunningham 2006:890)

diminish the likelihood of bad deaths, and also diminish the likelihood of good deaths (since it is hard to imagine governments making meaningful concessions to traffickers, or to envision the international system welcoming traffickers as sovereign states).

Table 3: Theoretical Expectations Derived from Civil War Research

	Absorption by other DFS	Forceful Reintegration	Peaceful Reintegration	Promotion to Sovereign Statehood
DFS Mountains	Less Likely	Less Likely	No Effect	No Effect
DFS Lootable Resources	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
Sovereign State Neighbors	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect

Finally, we consider the influence of external bases and civil war duration. Salehyan (2007) shows that when conditions are amenable to opposition groups establishing bases on foreign soil, civil wars are more likely. He also shows that when rebels rely on external bases, civil war duration increases (2007:240). We do not anticipate a similar effect for de facto states, because if de facto states are forced to rely on foreign bases, they likely have lost control of territory within the sovereign state and consequently have died. Thus, rather than include a variable for the possession of foreign bases (very few of the de facto states in the dataset analyzed here occupy territories that straddle borders), we include a variable for the number of directly contiguous neighbors the sovereign state has. Our thinking is this: Salehyan shows that availability of foreign bases makes civil war more likely, and once civil war has begun the use of foreign bases makes civil war last longer. To the extent that de facto states behave like rebel groups, the availability of foreign bases should prolong de facto state existence. However, since the dataset analyzed here codes the loss of territory within the sovereign state as de facto state death, we think the availability of foreign bases (as represented by the number of neighboring states the sovereign has) should have no effect on de facto state duration. A null finding on this variable is consistent with the

observation that de facto states and rebel groups are far from a perfect overlap. Our expectations about variables suggested by the literature on civil war duration is as follows:

Research Design

Cases

In order to evaluate our hypotheses we analyze de facto state years drawn from the dataset described above. As indicated there, we have information on 187 de facto states. Our dataset includes 1,942 annual observations (though in the analyses below missing data reduce us to 1,782), for each of which we have information for all but one of the variables included in the tables above.

Dependent Variables

Our dependent variable indicates how long each de facto state persists, and for those de facto states which have died, it indicates how they died. De facto states are coded as dying when they lose control of their territory or when they are promoted to sovereign statehood by being recognized as a legitimate member of the international system. In either event, they are no longer de facto states.

There are four death types in our dataset: absorption by another de facto state (12 instances 6.4% of the de facto states die this way), forceful reintegration into the sovereign state (77 instances, 41.2% of the de facto states die this way), peaceful reintegration into the sovereign state (52 instances, 27.8% of the de facto states die this way) and promotion to sovereign statehood (19 instances, 10.2% of the de facto states die this way). The remaining de facto states (27, 14.4%) were still de facto states in 2010, the end of the dataset's coverage. These deaths are coded within the dataset described above, and are self-explanatory. If the coders encountered a statement along the lines of: "the national military marched into the territory and reasserted control," that de facto state is coded as having died by forceful reintegration. If instead the commentary indicated a de

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facto state ceased independence due to a negotiated settlement with the sovereign state, that case is coded as having died by peaceful reintegration. The 19 instances of promotion to sovereign statehood are also quite straightforward, as are the 12 instances where a de facto state merged into or was conquered by a competitor de facto state. Specific details for each case can be found in the codesheets that accompany the dataset, and are described in First Author and Collaborator (n.d.).

Independent Variables

Our first independent variable, Sovereign State Capabilities, reports the Correlates of War Composite Indicator of National Capabilities, or CINC, score for the sovereign states upon whose territory each de facto state exists.

The Number of De Facto States indicates how many additional de facto states exist during that year within the sovereign state host to each de facto state. If there is only one de facto state on the territory of that sovereign state, this variable is equal to zero. Data for this variable are taken from the dataset described above.

Sovereign State Failure is an indicator of whether the sovereign state playing host to the de facto state is in a condition of state failure for that year. The specific measure codes state failure as present whenever Polity assigns a -77 (interregnum) value for that sovereign state for that year. This measure is introduced by Iqbal and Starr (2016), and is attractive because it indicates state failure episodes over the entire duration of our data coverage (1816 to 2010).

Sovereign State Development indicates the level of development of the sovereign state against which the de facto state is striving. The specific measure, introduced by Bremer (1992), is the ratio of each sovereign state's CINC economic components (energy consumption and iron/steel production) divided by its demographic components (total population and urban

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population). This variable correlates nicely with GDP per capita (a more common measure of development), but has far fewer missing values.

The next three independent variables, DFS War Loss, DFS Population, and DFS Troops are drawn from the dataset described above. While population and troops are relatively self-explanatory, a word or two about DFS War Loss is useful. This variable is coded one in any year in which the de facto state in question was coded by COW or ACD, or Clodfelter or the country-specific sources used in compiling the dataset, as having lost a war or conflict. These conflicts might be with the sovereign state, but sometimes they are with other de facto states and in a few instances are against non-territorial groups within the sovereign state's territory. It thus encompasses a very broad definition of "war," since many of these conflicts have far fewer than 1000 total battle fatalities. They all have battle fatalities, however.

Finally, the last two variables, Sovereign State Rivals and Sovereign State Allies are counts, of the number of rivals (according to Thompson 2001) or allies (according to COW and as reported in Gibler 2009) the sovereign state has for that annual observation.

The next set of independent variables are suggested by Florea's (2017) study of de facto state survival. DFS Foreign Support indicates whether the de facto state received foreign military support during that year. It is drawn from the dataset described above. Florea's second variable counts the number of different types of state building institutions the de facto state developed (e.g. a police force, a tax collection agency, a judiciary, etc.). This variable is not available in the dataset we employ and thus we cannot control it. However, we can control a potentially related variable Florea included: DFS Recognition counts the number of sovereign states that have extended diplomatic recognition to the de facto state (a DFS is promoted to sovereign status only when it is recognized by all other sovereign states, such as by UN membership). This variable is drawn from

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the dataset described above. DFS Fragmentation is a dummy variable indicating whether the de facto state in question is itself a fragment or splinter from another de facto state, or whether the de facto state is the rump from which other splinters have fragmented. The data for this variable are drawn from the dataset described above. Finally, we include Polity IV's executive constraints measure, which Florea uses as a proxy for veto players in the sovereign state.

The final set of independent variables are motivated by existing literature on civil war duration or rebel group survival. DFS Mountainous is a dummy variable indicating whether the territory occupied by the de facto state contains mountains. We use this rather than a mountain indicator for the sovereign state playing host to the de facto state, because it could be that the sovereign state is quite large and hosts de facto states both in mountainous and flat parts of its territory. By indicating specifically whether the de facto state's territory is mountainous we avoid this potential over-aggregation problem, though we potentially suffer from a dummy variable rather than a continuous one such as used by Fearon and Laitin (2003). DFS Lootable Resources is a time-varying dummy equal to one if the de facto state funded itself by engaging in trade in contraband or by taking hostages and ransoming them. Finally, Sovereign State Neighbors is a count of the number of direct land neighbors of sovereign states playing host to de facto states. This variable was drawn from Cunningham and Lemke (2013).

Estimator

We evaluate our theoretical expectations using cox proportional hazards models (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). These models are built around the concept of a hazard rate *h(t,X)*, which, in our application pertains to the rate of de facto state death at time *t given covariates X*. The hazard rate is estimated both with respect to a baseline hazard $h_0(t)$, which reflects the rate

of failure among units when all the covariates above are equal to zero, and a systematic portion of the model containing all covariates X. The model takes the form:

$$h(t|X_{it}) = h_0(t)exp(X_{it}\beta)$$

Where i indexes de facto states and t indexes years of de facto state survival. X_{it} is a matrix of the covariates described above, and β is a vector of coefficients associated with each indicator. Note that our covariates are also indexed annually, as we record each of our covariates annually. The baseline hazard is shifted up, corresponding to a heightened hazard of de facto state death, or down, indicating the opposite, depending on the values of the covariates captured in the systemic portion of the model, $X_{it}\beta$, which is specified as:

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\begin{aligned}
X_{it}\beta = \ & \beta_1 Sovereign\ State\ Capabilities\ +\ \beta_2 Number\ of\ DFS\ +\ \beta_3 State\ Failure \\
& + \beta_4 Sovereign\ State\ Development\ +\ \beta_5 DFS\ War\ Loss \\
& + \beta_6 DFS\ \ln(Population)\ +\ \beta_7 DFS\ Troops\ +\ \beta_8 Soverign\ State\ Rivals \\
& + \beta_9 Soverign\ State\ Allies\ +\ \beta_{10} DFS\ Foreign\ Support \\
& + \beta_{11} DFS\ Recognition\ +\ \beta_{12} DFS\ Fragmentation \\
& + \beta_{13} Sovereign\ State\ Executive\ Constraint\ +\ \beta_{14} DFS\ Mountainous \\
& + \beta_{15} DFS\ uses\ Lootable\ Resources\ +\ \beta_{16} Sovereign\ State\ Neighbors
\end{aligned}
$$

Because we are not only interested in whether a de facto state survives, but also how it dies we employ an independent competing risks specification (Zorn and Van Winkle 2000). This is equivalent to estimating separate Cox models for each of the four types of de facto state death discussed above. In each of these models, de facto state duration is measured with regard to one specific type of de facto state death – observations dying in other ways are treated as censored, as are de facto states that continued to persist in 2010, the final year of observation.

Finally, we test for violations of the proportional hazards assumption by regressing the Schoenfeld residuals obtained from each model on the logged values of time (Box Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001; Box Steffensmeier and Jones 2004:133-137). Violations are addressed by extending the model specification above to include interactions of the offending covariates with

the natural log of time, measured as the number of years a de facto state has persisted. We discuss these violations substantively in the following section.

Results

Table 4 reports the results of our competing risks analysis of de facto state death via: (1) absorption by another de facto state; (2) forceful reintegration with the host state; (3) peaceful reintegration with the host state; and (4) transition to sovereign statehood. Across all models, positive coefficients correspond to an increase in the baseline hazard of a given death type, while negative values correspond to a reduced hazard. We discuss significant effects below in terms of the percent change in the baseline hazard of a given type of death occurring. Like the percent change in odds, these values have a lower bound at -100 and no upper bound.

We begin with our expectations regarding sovereign state characteristics. For each we find a degree of empirical support, with the only exception being state development, which never exerts a statistically significant effect across any death type. As expected, de facto states facing a capable host state are much less likely to be promoted to sovereign statehood themselves – a standard deviation increase in the host state's material capabilities is associated with an 89 percent decrease in the hazard a de facto state will supplant an existing sovereign state. We do not uncover a robust relationship between host state strength and peaceful reintegration, competitive absorption, or forceful reintegration. These indicate that while material capabilities buttress a host state against the risk of being overthrown, they alone are not sufficient to coerce de facto states into negative outcome types. Taken in conjunction with Lyall and Wilson (2009) who find that conventional capabilities are poor determinants of civil conflict outcomes, these results suggest that while material capabilities may buttress a state against the risk of being overthrown, they do not afford host states with sufficient bargaining leverage to coerce de facto states into forced reintegration.

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Table 4: Competing Risks Analysis of De Facto State Death, 1824-2010

	(1) Absorption By Other De Facto State	(2) Forceful Reintegration		(3) Peaceful Reintegration		(4) Transition to Sovereign Statehood	
	Main	*Main*	*Interactions with ln(time)*	*Main*	*Interactions with ln(time)*	*Main*	*Interactions with ln(time)*
Capabilities	-0.455 (0.572)	0.084 (0.124)		-0.147 (0.155)		-1.492** (0.610)	
Number of other De Facto States	0.145 (0.199)	-0.481** (0.197)	0.208** (0.100)	-0.318** (0.085)		-0.734 (0.580)	
State Failure	1.915* (1.061)	0.084 (0.382)		0.787 (0.513)		-2.701 (2.167)	6.221** (2.034)
Development	-0.688 (0.543)	-0.002 (0.039)		0.103 (0.065)		0.185 (0.145)	
"War" Loss	2.216** (1.076)	4.146** (0.320)					
Ln(Population)	-0.377 (0.264)	-0.019 (0.093)		-0.081 (0.129)		1.311** (0.573)	
Troops (Thousands)	-0.019 (0.055)	-0.005 (0.011)		0.007 (0.011)		0.038* (0.021)	
Sovereign State Rivals	0.589* (0.310)	-0.246* (0.132)		0.475* (0.271)	-0.499** (0.168)	0.393 (0.401)	
Sovereign State Allies	0.602 (0.606)	0.189 (0.159)		-0.434* (0.245)		-1.357 (0.856)	
Support	-0.444 (0.936)	0.113 (0.308)		0.071 (0.365)		0.926 (1.094)	
Recognition	-0.842 (1.349)	-0.232 (0.399)		-0.624 (0.481)		-2.320 (1.955)	
Fragment	1.482* (0.840)	-1.417** (0.596)		0.025 (0.478)		-0.563 (2.306)	
Executive Constraint	0.223 (0.239)	-0.023 (0.071)		0.254** (0.087)		1.242* (0.656)	-2.369** (1.011)
Mountainous Terrain	-2.118* (1.142)	-0.188 (0.292)		-0.312 (0.392)		-1.616 (1.026)	
Lootable Resources	0.512 (0.824)	-0.053 (0.417)		-0.730* (0.409)		0.571 (1.273)	
Sovereign State Neighbors	0.870** (0.424)	0.015 (0.069)		-0.103 (0.209)	0.358** (0.114)	-0.570* (0.334)	
Failures	12	66		43		16	
Years at Risk	1,789	1,789		1,789		1,789	
De Facto States	164	164		164		164	

We uncover support for our expectation that the number of contemporaneous de facto states a host faces decreases the hazard of forceful reintegration, and increase the hazard of peaceful reintegration or promotion. Beginning with forceful reintegration, the number of contemporaneous de facto states violated the proportional hazards assumption and was therefore interacted with the natural log of de facto state duration. The negative coefficient on the constitutive term for the number of de facto states therefore corresponds to its effect when a de facto state first comes into existence, while the interaction corresponds to the extent to which this effect varies as a function of logged time. In this case, the number of de facto states has a negative, statistically significant impact on the hazard of forceful reintegration, but this effect significantly increases as time progresses, as indicated by the positively signed, interaction term.
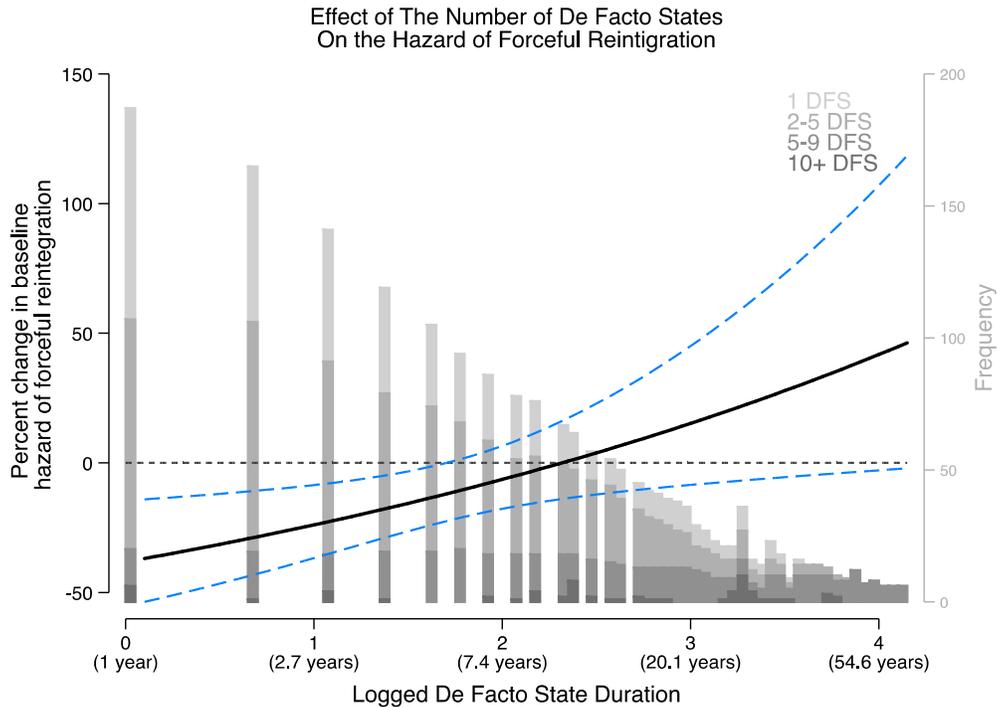

Figure 1: The Effect of the # of De Facto States on the Hazard of Forceful Reintegration
Note: Plot reports the effect of a one-unit increase in the number of contemporaneous de facto states on the hazard of forceful reintegration. The effect varies across de facto state duration, measured in logged years. Values below zero correspond to a decreased hazard of forceful reintegration, while values above zero indicate a positive effect. The plot is superimposed on a histogram displaying the distribution of de facto state years over logged duration.

Figure 1 displays this substantive effect graphically. We find that the number of de facto states reduces the hazard of forceful reintegration until the logged value of de facto state duration reaches about 1.6, corresponding to about five years old. After this point the effect becomes insignificant. Substantively, this accords with our expectation that states facing difficult security environments will be less capable of forcefully reintegrating de facto states. Particularly when a de facto state is young, it benefits from the presence of other de facto states that a host is attempting to manage. That this relationship does not obtain for older de facto states may be reflective of the fact that, when confronted with multiple de facto states, hosts are more likely to target their attention toward older de facto states rather than those in their infancy.

Conversely, but consistent with our expectations, each additional de facto state a host faces reduces the hazard of peaceful reintegration by 27 percent. We do not find robust relationships between the number of de facto states and competitor absorption and transition to sovereign statehood, though these weak relationships may be driven in part by the dearth of observations for these relatively rare death types.

We expected that state failure would decrease the hazard of forceful reintegration and increase the hazard of positive death types. We found no evidence that state failure was related to changes in the hazard of forceful reintegration. State failure is, however, found to have an extremely large effect on transition to sovereign statehood, though in this model specification it was also found to violate the proportional hazards assumptions and is therefore interacted with logged de facto state duration. Though the effect is initially negative and insignificant, after three years of a de facto state persisting, state failure is associated with a massive 6,139 percent increase in the hazard of promotion to sovereign statehood, and this effect continues to increase as time

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goes on. The relationship is perhaps best born out in a simple descriptive statistic: of the 16 de facto states that are promoted to sovereign statehood in our analysis, ten reside in failed states.

Although we did not make predictions linking state failure and competitor absorption, we find that the hazard of being absorbed is 579 percent higher when a de facto state resides in a failed host. These results should be interpreted with caution given sparse observational evidence—there are only four instances of competitor absorption within failed states. Nevertheless, it seems that in the power vacuum created by a failed host, de facto states see greater advantage to absorb competitors with little fear of inciting a multi-party conflict with the host. These environments may also incentivize de facto states to expand territorially in an attempt to secure international recognition themselves. In short, it seems that state failure provides de facto states with an incentive to conquer both their peers and the host states in which they reside.

We turn now to our expectations linking de facto state characteristics on death types. We find robust support for our expectations regarding "war loss," which we defined as losing any organized political conflict resulting in at least 25 fatalities. Consistent with expectations, war loss significantly increases the hazard of undesirable types of death, increasing the hazard of absorption by a competitor de facto state by 816 percent, and increasing the hazard of forceful reintegration by the host state by an impressive 6,217 percent. The relationship between war loss and positive death types is no less impressive. We were forced to drop the war loss covariate from the analyses of peaceful reintegration and promotion to sovereign statehood. No de facto state that has lost a war has ever been peacefully reintegrated by a host state or promoted to sovereign statehood itself. In short, while de facto states typically *are not* engaged in violent conflict, those that are clearly face high stakes – win or be destroyed.

Interestingly, the number of de facto state citizens and troops appear to be an important factor determining which de facto states will be promoted, but do not exert significant effects on other death types. A standard deviation in logged population is associated with a 613 percent increase in the hazard of transitioning to sovereign statehood. The effect of a standard deviation increase in the number of troops fielded by a de facto state leads to a 114 percent increase in the hazard of transitioning to sovereign statehood. Together with our findings on host state capabilities, these results again appear consistent with the notion that attaining the accoutrements of traditional statehood such as a large citizenry and sizable militaries are more important determinants of which de facto states are promoted, but have less bearing on which survive or die by other means.

Finally, we find support for our general expectation that international influences would have a substantial bearing on de facto state survival and death. Though we did not generate expectations in this area, we found that each additional host state rival was associated with an 80 percent increase in the baseline hazard that a de facto state will be absorbed by another de facto state. This relationship may be a result of interstate rivals choosing specific client de facto states abroad, affording them the capacity to conquer their domestic competitors.

We predicted that interstate rivals would reduce the risk of being forcefully reintegrated, and increase the hazard that a de facto state would either be peacefully reintegrated or promoted to a sovereign state since hosts would be forced to re-direct material resources to foreign foes, who would be the natural allies of de facto states. Concordantly, the presence of interstate rivals also reduces the hazard that a host state will forcefully reintegrate de facto states – every additional interstate rival of the host decreases the hazard of forceful reintegration by 22 percent.

The effect of interstate rivals on peaceful reintegration varies by de facto state age, though we nevertheless find qualified support for our expectation. As displayed in Figure 2, we find the

positive effect we expect obtains, but only during a de facto state's first year of existence. By the time a de facto state is about 6 years old the effect reverses and the presence of interstate rivals actually reduces the risk of peaceful reintegration. Though not the effect we anticipate, this might suggest that states facing both domestic and international challengers are more likely to deliver concessions to young, likely weak, de facto states early on. As time persists, however, rivals may have incentives to perpetuate hostile relations between de facto and host states in order to destabilize the latter. Finally, the presence of host state rivals does not impact whether a state transitions to sovereign statehood – this may again be consistent with the notion that rivals use de facto states to destabilize, but not necessary topple, international opponents.
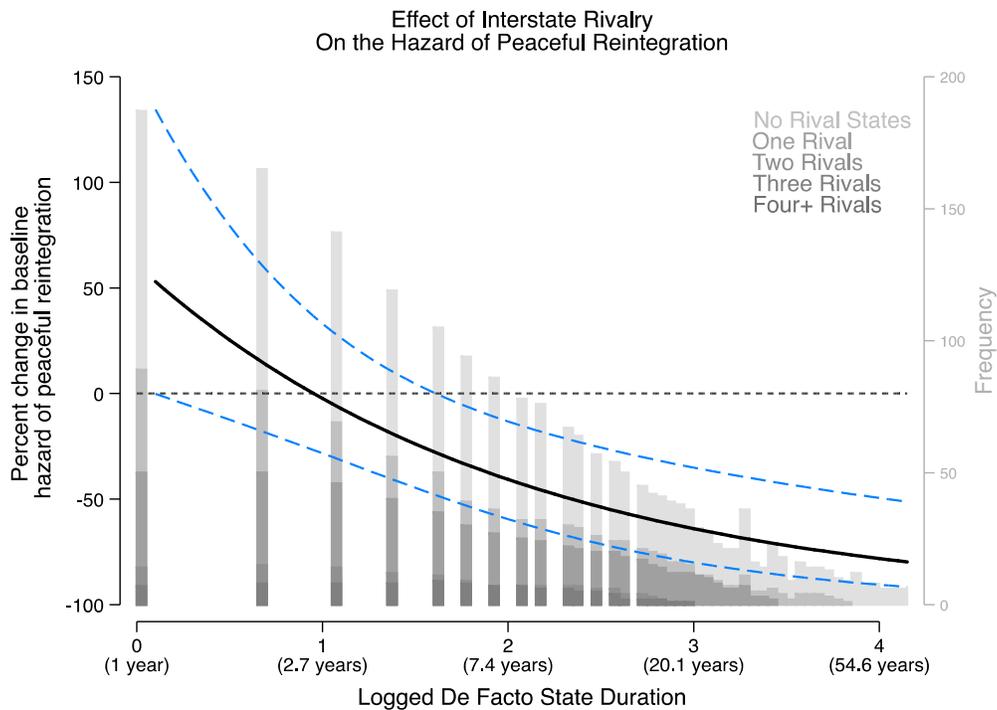

Figure 2: The Effect of Interstate Rivalry on the Hazard of Peaceful Reintegration
Note: Plot reports the effect of a one-unit increase in host state rivals on the hazard of peaceful reintegration. The effect varies across de facto state duration, measured in logged years. Values below zero correspond to a decreased hazard of peaceful reintegration, while values above zero indicate a positive effect. The plot is superimposed on a histogram displaying the distribution of de facto state years over logged duration.

The presence of host state allies appears to have less impact than that of international rivals. We predicted that international allies would enhance a host state's ability to coerce its de facto states into negative death types, and reduce the risk that de facto states would experience positive death types. We do not, however, find significant results for other death types.

We find mixed empirical support for Florea's (2017) theoretical expectations. Florea predicted that foreign military support would aid de facto state survival, but make them less willing or able to credibly commit to peace agreements, and less likely to achieve sovereign statehood due in part to perceptions that they are agents of foreign actors. Though Florea found support for this expectation, with international support reducing the hazard of both peaceful reintegration and promotion to sovereign statehood, we never uncover a statistically significant relationship across any of our model specifications. Recall that we also included the international recognition indicator as a related, though imperfect, proxy for Florea's measure of state building activities, which he found to be negatively associated with peaceful reintegration and positively associated with promotion to sovereign statehood. By contrast, we never uncover a significant relationship between international recognition and any of the outcome types.

Florea also predicted that de facto states that are part of a fragmented political organization or movement would struggle to strike credible bargains and therefore would be more likely to be forcefully reintegrated and less likely to be peacefully reintegrated or promoted to sovereign statehood. Though Florea did not generate predictions about absorption by competitors, we find that the hazard of absorption is 340 percent higher for de facto states that originate from a fragmented opposition than it is for those that do not. This supports Florea's general intuition that de facto states have an incentive to unify their support base in order to more credibly bargain with a host. We do not, however, find support for his remaining predictions regarding fragmentation.

Contrary to his analysis, we find that fragmented groups are actually *less* likely to be forcefully reintegrated by the host. We also find no relationship between group fragmentation and either peaceful reintegration or transition to sovereign statehood.

Finally, Florea predicted that host state veto players would have an incentive to preserve the political status quo and hamper negotiations with de facto states, reducing the hazard of peaceful or forceful reintegration and de facto state transition to sovereign statehood. In his analysis, he found that, contrary to his expectations, veto players reduce the hazard of peaceful reintegration and the hazard of transition to sovereign statehood.

Our results regarding executive constraints are consistent with these empirical results. A one-unit increase in executive constraints increases the hazard of peaceful reintegration by 80 percent. However, after correcting for violations of the proportional hazards assumption, executive constraints exert differential effects on the hazard of transition to sovereign statehood (Figure 3). When a de facto state first emerges, executive constraints are associated with an increase in the hazard of transition to sovereign statehood. Yet, this effect quickly becomes insignificant, and after about two and a half years the effect reverses such that increased executive constraints are associated with a reduction in the hazard of transition to sovereign statehood.

Finally, we find mixed support for our expectations derived from the civil war literature. We expected that mountainous terrain would make absorption from competing de facto states and forceful reintegration less likely. Consistent with this expectation, residing in a mountainous area reduces the hazard of competitor absorption by 88 percent. We do not, however, find a significant relationship with forceful reintegration. As expected, we also uncover weak empirical relationships between mountainous terrain and peaceful reintegration and transition to sovereign statehood – in each case the standard errors are large and contain zero. We predicted

that lootable resources would make all death types less likely, but only find such a relationship with peaceful reintegration, with the baseline hazard being about 52 percent lower for de facto states that are supported by lootable resources than it is for those that are not.
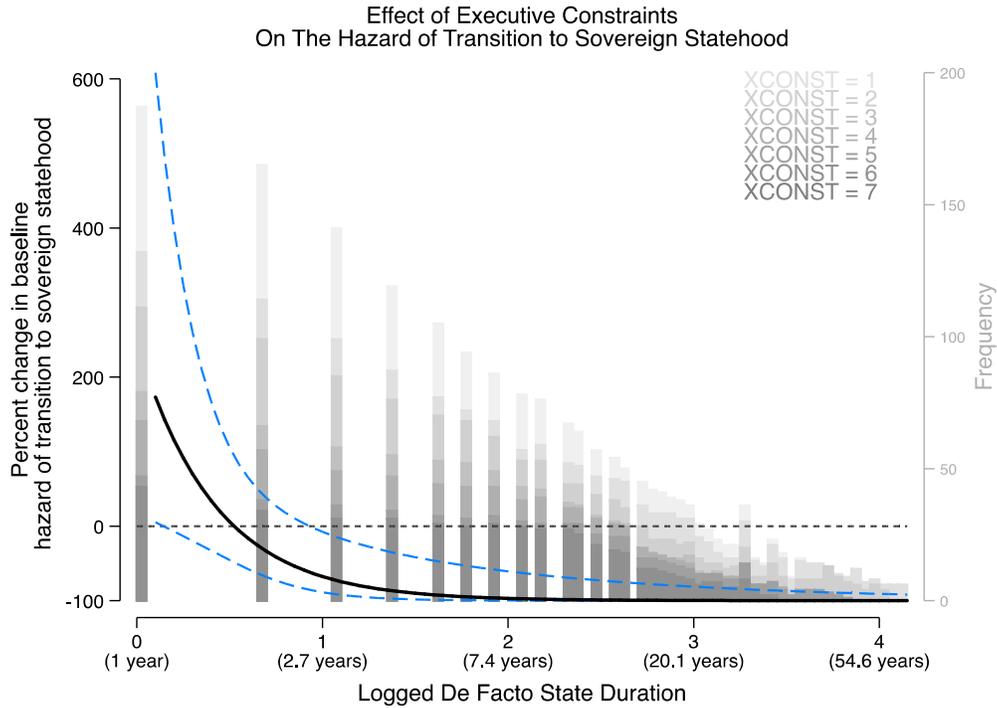

Figure 3: The Effect of Executive Constraints on the Transition to Sovereign Statehood
Note: Plot reports the effect of a one-unit increase in executive constraints on the sovereign state on the hazard of transition to sovereign statehood. The effect varies across de facto state duration, measured in logged years. Values below zero correspond to a decreased hazard of transition to sovereign statehood, while values above zero indicate a positive effect. The plot is superimposed on a histogram displaying the distribution of de facto state years over logged duration.

Finally, while Salehyan (2009) uncovered significant relationships between foreign bases and civil war duration, we do not anticipate a robust empirical relationship between host state neighbors and any of our death types. Instead, we find strong links between host state neighbors and competitor absorption, peaceful reintegration and de facto state promotion to sovereign statehood. Each additional neighbor is associated with a 139 percent increase in the hazard of competitor absorption. The relationship between host state neighbors and the hazard of peaceful reintegration is time-dependent and displayed in Figure 4. After about three years of existence,

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we find that de facto states residing in states with many contiguous neighbors are more likely to be peacefully reintegrated than those residing in states with few neighbors. Finally, each additional contiguous neighboring state is associated with a 43 percent decrease in the hazard of becoming a sovereign state.
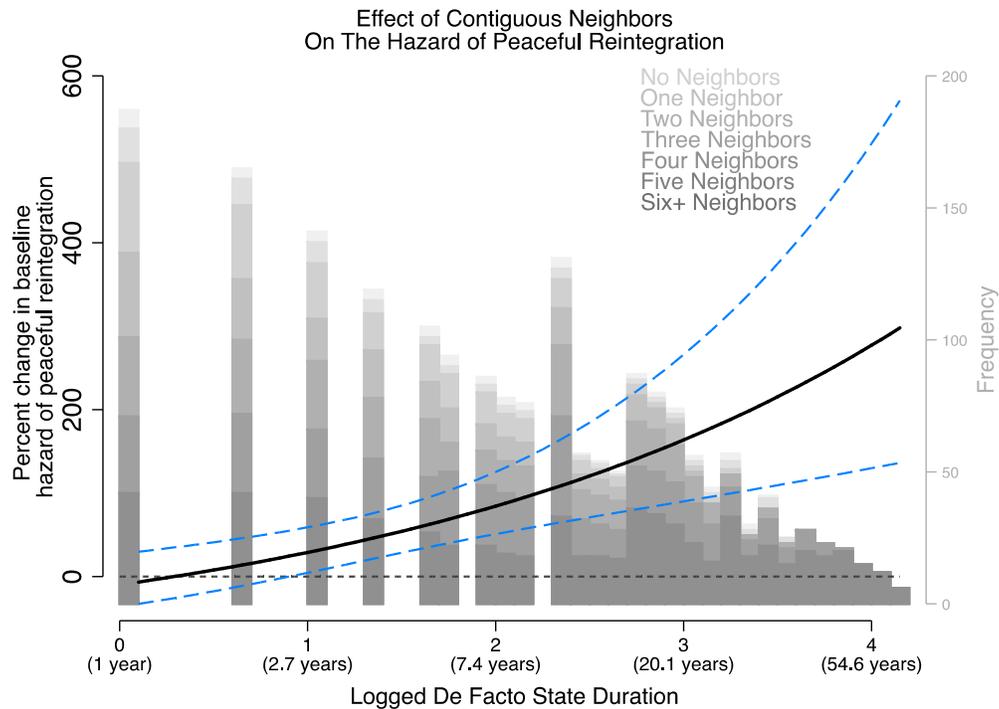

Figure 4: The Effect of Contiguous Neighbors on the Hazard of Peaceful Reintegration
Note: Plot reports the effect of a one-unit increase in host state neighbors on the hazard of peaceful reintegration. The effect varies across de facto state duration, measured in logged years. Values below zero correspond to a decreased hazard of peaceful reintegration, while values above zero indicate a positive effect. The plot is superimposed on a histogram displaying the distribution of de facto state years over logged duration.

Overall, we find considerable empirical support for our theory of de facto state duration and death. Of the 30 propositions we outlined in Table 1, we find empirical support for ten, evidence contradicting only one. Among the eight expectations from Florea (2017) and reported in Table 2, we find empirical support for one and contrary evidence for three. Finally, among the twelve expectations derived from the civil war literature, we find empirical support for five, and contradictory evidence for three. These latter results underscore a need to generate and test theories

of state making apart from those generated to explain civil conflict processes. We conduct a series of robustness tests reported in our online appendix. These include an analysis of how our results change when aggregating different forms of de facto state death (Appendix A1) and model specifications that include separate covariates for Burma (Appendix A2). We find few alterations to the substantive conclusions discussed here.

Conclusions

Since the earth's inhabitable surface is fully occupied by recognized sovereign states, de facto states usurp sovereign state authority when they take control of territory. In so doing they present a dire threat to the sovereign states they confront. The sooner the sovereign state can reincorporate the de facto state's territory, the better for the sovereign state. Thus, an important question about de facto states is why some are reintegrated quickly while others persist for decades.

We provide a comprehensive analysis of what makes de facto state death more likely, differentiating between expectations about sovereign and de facto state characteristics, international influences, credible commitment logic, and civil war duration research. We find little or no support for the civil war or credible commitment arguments' expectations. The credible commitment story is advanced by Florea (2017), who finds considerable support for it. However, his analyses are quite different from ours. First, he has far fewer de facto states in his dataset (34 compared to our 187), and does not include the many additional variables we include. This suggests either that his credible commitment story applies only to a more restrictive definition of de facto states, or that it is not robust to the inclusion of additional explanatory variables and cases.

That many of the expectations based on research on civil war duration are not supported underscores an important lesson for research on non-state actors: the study of de facto states is theoretically and empirically distinct from the study of rebel organizations. Yes, many rebel groups qualify as de facto states and many de facto states rebel, but that overlap is far from perfect and our results suggest that de facto state politics are often governed by different relationships than the politics of rebel organizations.

We are left with a variety of sovereign and de facto state characteristics and international influences as the best predictors of how long de facto states persist and why they suffer one type of de facto state death rather than another. Our findings are in many instances unsurprising: for example, promotion to sovereign statehood is more likely for large population de facto states with many troops located within the borders of failed sovereign states. But, that they are unsurprising does not mean they are uninteresting. A clear implication is that the scourge of de facto states is best eased by enhancing a sovereign state's military effectiveness. We find that the surest way to remove de facto states is to defeat them on the battlefield.

In future work it would be particularly interesting to see what the consequences of different de facto state death types are: does peaceful reintegration create moral hazard and incentivize other opponents of the sovereign state to seize territory in hopes of securing valuable concessions? Does forceful reintegration deter other de facto states from emerging?

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