

External Patrons, Violence, and Internal Legitimacy in *de facto* States

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Abstract: Post-war state-building is fraught with steep challenges, key among which is for former “war-makers” to demonstrate to their citizens that they are now legitimate “state-makers.” This is particularly so for *de facto* (or unrecognized) states born out of violent struggles, as they need to show to multiple audiences that they deserve to become independent states. One influence on citizens’ confidence in post-war states is their assessment of the provision of public goods, such as welfare and, importantly, physical security and safety. But with *de facto* states, such state-building is rarely *sui generis*. Russia, for example, provides significant financial and military assistance to most of the post-Soviet *de facto* states forged from separatist struggles in the early 1990s. Generating local legitimacy by reliance on external subventions and security, however, can complicate these entities’ quest for legitimacy. To date, scholars have no systematic understanding of how views of internal state-building achievements relate to assessments of external patrons. To comparatively examine both the internal and external influences on internal legitimacy, we use multi-level modelling to analyse original survey-data and new data on local violence from the post-Soviet *de facto* states—Abkhazia, Nagorno Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transdnistria.

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1. Introduction

For armed groups, winning the war against the state is just the beginning.¹ Indeed, the post-war era is fraught with challenges. Depending on how long the war lasted and how bloody and encompassing it was, post-war states face economic challenges such as depressed economic growth (e.g. Collier et al. 2008); societal challenges related to the return of refugees (e.g. Ó Tuathail and O’Loughlin 2009), reintegration of former combatants (e.g. Humphrey and Weinstein 2007), altered social networks (e.g. Wood 2008), and reconciliation among people who have found themselves on opposing sides (e.g. Hewstone et al. 2006); and political challenges related to (re)building representative institutions (e.g. Paris 2004; Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; Zürcher 2011). One of the most foundational challenges—but one that has impacts on all the others—is for former “war-makers” to demonstrate to their citizens that they are now legitimate “state-makers.” As put by Klaus Schlichte, they have to show their citizens that they are “not only able to kill and to destroy but to build and invest as well” (2009: 96). This challenge is particularly pertinent for so-called *de facto* (or unrecognized) states born out of violent struggles, as they have a double burden to produce legitimacy not only amongst their own citizens but in the eyes of the international community as well (e.g. Caspersen 2008; 2010).

It seems reasonable to posit that one central task in acquiring internal legitimacy, i.e. legitimacy among their own citizens, is for the post-war authorities to be good state-builders. As we have shown in the case of Abkhazia (Bakke et al. 2014), citizens’ confidence in post-war states hinges on their assessment of the provision of public goods such as welfare and, importantly, security. Yet state-building is rarely an exclusively internal endeavour, particularly not in post-war states. In the *de facto* states in the former Soviet world, Russia has played a central role as external patron both during and after the violent separatist struggles that gave birth to these entities in the early 1990s. Indeed, Russia provides both financial and military assistance to Abkhazia, Transdniestria and South Ossetia. Constructing internal legitimacy by reliance on such external subventions and security can complicate the dynamics of legitimacy within *de facto* states. To date, scholars have no systematic understanding of how views of internal state-building achievements relate to assessments of external patrons. In this study, we utilize our original survey data collected in 2010-2011 in four *de facto* states in the post-Soviet realm to explore the relationship between internal and external factors in shaping internal legitimacy. To our knowledge, this is the first study to comparatively assess such post-war dynamics.

The study proceeds as follows: In the first two sections, we define what we mean by *de facto* states and internal legitimacy. We then develop an argument that considers both the internal and external dynamics shaping internal legitimacy. In the fourth section of the paper, we discuss the research design, based on survey data and local-level data on violence in four post-Soviet *de facto* states: Abkhazia (formally part of Georgia), Nagorno Karabakh (formally part of Azerbaijan), South Ossetia (formally part of Georgia), and Transdniestria (formally part of Moldova). The fifth section discusses our empirical findings, and the final section concludes with implications for theory and policy. Indeed, to the degree that internal legitimacy in *de facto* states is dependent on both internal and external dynamics, there are important policy implications for international actors engaged in finding a permanent

¹ Civil wars can have a range of outcomes. They can, somehow, fizzle out; they can end in a negotiated settlement (with varying types of settlements, from ceasefires to full-fledged agreements); and they can end in military victory for either the state or the challengers to the state, the rebels (e.g. Licklider 1995; Walter 2002; Toft 2010; Themnér and Wallensteen 2013). This study focuses on the aftermath of separatist struggles, where the challenger to the state has emerged as a partial victor, in the sense that the challenger now controls the territory it sought to capture, but without a formal settlement and without full international recognition.

settlement—be that reintegration, joining an adjoining state, or independence.

1.1. *De Facto* States

In most separatist conflicts, where non-state groups fight for independence or greater autonomy within a state's border, the outcome entails no major change to state boundaries (e.g. Seymour 2012). The separatists are either defeated or appeased with some form of institutional solution short of independence, such as decentralized governance or various autonomy arrangements. Yet in some cases, the conflict results in the creation of so-called *de facto* states. Referred to as breakaway regions by their parent states, most *de facto* states aspire to be fully independent. While they possess domestic or 'internal sovereignty', in that they control and administer most or all of the territory they claim (cf. Krasner 1999), most *de facto* states fail to acquire full international legitimacy as states. Rather, they become unrecognized or partially recognized states. As such, they are entities denied international legal sovereignty, sometimes termed 'external sovereignty', by the existing community of states.²

The post-Cold War era has seen a proliferation of *de facto* states, most of them born out of violent struggles with their parent states. The collapse of the Soviet Union and armed conflicts in Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova were followed by the emergence of a number of such 'statelets'—Chechnya, Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdniestria—but *de facto* states exist also in other parts of the world (e.g. Somaliland and Iraqi Kurdistan) and have been features on the international scene for decades (e.g. Northern Cyprus and Taiwan). At least 21 *de facto* states have been created since World War II (Caspersen and Stansfield 2010, 4).³ More than half of these entities have ceased to exist as *de facto* states and either been recaptured by their parent state (Chechnya in Russia, for example) or, in a few cases, received international recognition as states (Eritrea and East Timor have received full international recognition, while Kosovo is now recognized by some 110 out of 193 states). Yet many *de facto* states also endure for years on end, despite their lack of international recognition.

1.2. Internal Legitimacy in *de facto* States

One factor facilitating the endurance of *de facto* states is how legitimate they are internally, in the eyes of their inhabitants. Indeed, for any political entity, ruling is easier and less costly if the governing authority is considered legitimate. Among its subjects, legitimacy fosters an obligation to obey or comply with the authority's rules predominantly through consent—as opposed to coercion. Lake argues that, "Obligation arises from the collective's belief in rightful rule" (2010, 31). Building on our previous work (Bakke et al. 2014) we capture legitimacy by examining the *perceptions* of 'the ruled': their belief in and sense of loyalty to 'the ruler' (cf. Bellina et al. 2009).

We hone in on two dimensions of internal legitimacy: state and regime legitimacy. State legitimacy means that the population within a state accepts the state's myths and rules

² For definitional discussions, see Pegg (1999), Caspersen and Stansfield (2010:3-4), Anderson (2010:184-187), and Mampilly (2011: 25-48).

³ Caspersen and Stansfield's (2010) list includes Abkhazia, Anjouan, Biafra, Bougainville, Chechnya, East Timor, Eritrea, Gagauzia, Katanga, Kosovo, Kurdistan-Iraq, Montenegro, Nagorno Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Republika Srpska, Republika Srpska Krajina, Somaliland, South Ossetia, Taiwan, Tamil Eelam, and Transdniestria.

of the game (Migdal 1988, 32-33). It is about believing in the state and its right to exist; it is about the population’s adherence to the foundational myth of a political entity as a state. In the case of *de facto* states, we can, empirically, think of state legitimacy as belief in the entity’s existence as independent from its parent state—an acceptance of its foundational myth. Regime legitimacy, in contrast, is not about the state *per se* but about its governing class; it is about trusting the people in power, most importantly, the president.⁴

All the post-Soviet *de facto* states were born out of violent separatist (or irredentist) struggles, each of them a response to nationalist mobilization in their parent states. Indeed, in the wake of *perestroika*, nationalist movements emerged all across the Soviet Union in the late 1980s-early 1990s (e.g. Beissinger 2002). In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the titular population sought autonomy and later independence from Georgia; in Nagorno Karabakh, the Armenian population wanted to be part of Armenia rather than Azerbaijan; and in Transnistria, both the Slavic population and parts of the Moldovan population mobilized against the emerging pro-Romanian nationalist wave in Moldova.⁵ The violent struggle in Transnistria was relatively short-lived and, in comparison to the other struggles, not very bloody. Table 1 below provides an overview of the still-existing post-Soviet *de facto* states; it excludes Chechnya, which functioned as a *de facto* state from 1996 to 1999, but was then recaptured and re-assimilated by the Russian Federation.

<i>Main separatist group(s)</i>	<i>Parent state</i>	<i>Violent conflict begins</i>	<i>Ceasefire / birth of de facto state</i>	<i>De facto state</i>	<i>Endurance</i>
Armenians/ Karabakhis	USSR/ Azerbaijan	1988	1994	Nagorno Karabakh	Still existing
Dniester Slavs	Moldova	1990	1992	Transnistria	Still existing
Ossetians	Georgia	1991	1992	South Ossetia	Both still existing but separation challenged in 2008 war with Georgia
Abkhaz	Georgia	1992	1993	Abkhazia	

Table 1: Still existing post-Soviet de facto states born out of violent struggles.

1.3. Internal and External Sources of Internal Legitimacy

There are a number of reasons to believe (and empirical evidence to support) the contention that internal legitimacy is significantly influenced by how good states—or, as in our study, *de facto* states—are at providing their citizens with public goods. Legitimate

⁴ A third dimension of internal legitimacy is institutional legitimacy and refers to people’s perceptions of state institutions in themselves, such as the police or judiciary (Norris 1999: 221-22; Seligson 2002).

⁵ Transnistria’s population was split in 1989 among ethnic Moldovans (40 percent), Russians (25 percent), and Ukrainians (28 percent) (Kaufman 2001, 130). Notably, the separatist quest was supported not only by the region’s Slavic-speaking population and was more of a “regionalist” quest (Kolstø and Malgin 1998) than in the other *de facto* states, where the struggle was fought in the name of the titular ethnic groups, and the wars entailed forced displacement on all sides.

authority rests with an implicit (and often mythologized) social contract between ruler and ruled: the ruler provides benefits, most importantly social order, to the ruled, and the ruled, in turn, accept the ruler's right to rule (cf. Moore 1978, 20-25). Given the importance of security in the social contract between ruler and ruled (Wickham-Crowley 1987; Lake 2010), as well as the centrality of the monopoly on the legitimate use of force to what it means to be a state (Weber 1958), an ability to ensure "national security" both from external enemies and domestic instability, is key for both states and *de facto* states' internal legitimacy. And, indeed, in our previous work on Abkhazia (Bakke et al. 2014), we find that societal perceptions of safety and security—including their views on crime, corruption, and the danger of renewed warfare—are important determinants for internal legitimacy, as are concerns about democracy (cf. Norris 1999; Mishler and Rose 2001; Caspersen 2008) and the provision of economic goods (such as employment) and material well-being (cf. Scott 1972; Moore 1978; Gilley 2006; OECD 2010). The more concerned people are about the lack of public goods provision related to both physical and material safety—that is, entity's ability to fulfill the social contract—the less likely they are to find the entity itself or its regime as legitimate. Legitimacy, however, it should be stressed, can be shaped by more than public goods provision,⁶ but our goal here is to investigate this one important aspect of it.

As far as security goes, in all the post-Soviet *de facto* states born out of violent struggles, the war concluded without a full-fledged peace settlement. Rather, the separatists, with external patron support, gained the upper hand in the armed struggle, leading to ceasefires. While Transdnistria's post-war record has been relatively free from political violence and without an overhanging danger of war recurrence, it has featured criminal violence, much of it in the hands of the state (Bobick 2011). Nagorno Karabakh has been the scene of some elite-level struggles among former allies, including an assassination attempt on former President Arkady Gukasian (de Waal 2004), and there has been numerous clashes and sniper attacks on the boundary line to Azerbaijan over the years.⁷ Fieldtrips in Nagorno Karabakh's "border" regions in June 2011 and April 2013 revealed both long-standing and new tank emplacements and trenches—signs of a state where the worry of war recurrence is far from gone.

Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia saw serious but brief outbreaks of fighting before the August War of 2008. In May 1998, low-intensity conflict particularly in the Gal(i) district of Abkhazia, led to the renewed forced displacement of thousands of ethnic Georgian Mingrelians from the area, as well as the violent deaths of dozens. In August 2004, Georgian manoeuvres in South Ossetia triggered the outbreak of violent exchanges that left similar numbers of combatants dead (Welt, 2009). In August 2008, low-intensity skirmishes, and invasion fear, induced a Georgian military assault on South Ossetia, which in turn triggered a short but deadly inter-state conflict as Russian forces invaded to save their South Ossetian allies. Abkhaz forces, with the help of Russian air power, used the opportunity to establish control over the upper Kodor(i) Valley, which the Georgians had controlled since the 1992-1993 war. Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia have seen internal political struggles that have occasionally spilled into violence. Garii Aiba, a former mayor of Sukum(i) and opposition figure in Abkhazia, was gunned down in June 2004 (for other examples, see ICG 2010).⁸ In

⁶ For an overview of debates in philosophy about various sources of political legitimacy, see Peter (2010).

⁷ Per the Uppsala Conflict Database, in 2005 and 2012, border clashes led to a battle-related death toll of at least 25.

⁸ See also Zaal Anjaparidze, "Infighting Plagues Abkhaz Separatist Camp," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) 1(39), June 24, 2004; Inal Khashig, "Abkhazia's Political Roulette Goes On," *Caucasus Reporting Service* (Institute of War and Peace Reporting), No. 262, November 17, 2004; Inal Khashig, "Abkhazia: Veterans Challenge President," *Caucasus Reporting Service* (Institute of War and Peace Reporting), No. 187, July 31, 2003.

the disputed elections in 2011 in South Ossetia, the winner Alla Dzhioyeva was subsequently attacked and her victory annulled (she currently serves as deputy prime minister). Both entities have also experienced criminal violence. According to an International Crisis Group (2007) report, criminal activities on both the Georgian and South Ossetian side of the boundary line has been intertwined with kidnappings and killings. These kinds of violent incidents, along with concerns about economic public goods provision and democracy, are likely to shape internal legitimacy, as they raise the question of order and security, and whether *de facto* state can do what recognized states are supposed to do.

Yet state-building and internal legitimacy are rarely, if ever, purely a result of domestic dynamics, particularly not in post-war settings. Post-war states, like many developing states, need the help of external actors in fulfilling public goods provision—be that economic aid, democratization assistance, or even direct help in ruling and providing security (e.g. Fearon and Laitin 2004; Krasner 2004; Krasner and Risse 2014). Also so in *de facto* states born out of violent struggles; indeed, one of the perils of living with non-recognition is some degree of external dependence (Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2008). Once external actors become involved in state-building processes, questions of legitimacy, dependency, and local ownership arise (e.g. Paris and Sisk 2007). Our argument is that, to the degree that the external actors who back the domestic authorities are considered illegitimate, the domestic authorities' internal legitimacy will suffer. Directly, this goes simply by way of association, particularly if the domestic population perceives the domestic authorities to be too close to the external actors. Indirectly, it is difficult for external actors to provide effective and efficient public good assistance if they are seen as illegitimate (Krasner and Risse 2014; cf. Gizelis and Kosek 2005; Suhrke 2007; Goodhand and Sedra 2010), and their involvement will, in turn, tarnish the legitimacy of local authorities.

In Abkhazia, for example, neither the entity's state-building efforts nor people's perceptions of the *de facto* state and its regime can be seen in isolation from substantial financial and military back-up from Russia (ICG 2010; Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2011). Nor can questions of legitimacy in Abkhazia be seen in isolation from the view that "the West" is not providing support. Indeed, in Abkhazia, the authorities have for years been calibrating a fine balance between being grateful for Russian support, yet wanting to avoid being seen as entirely dependent on their powerful neighbor or subject to their dictates. In the words of the deputy foreign minister:

There is no direct attempt of the Russian Federation to influence our decisions; there is no dictating from Russia. I can't imagine that happening. (...) Of course, the Russian presence here is felt. Abkhazia needs huge assistance: money and expertise. The only country offering that is Russia...⁹

Indeed, since Russia's recognition of Abkhazia in August 2008 in the wake of the Georgia-Russia war, one of the central debates in Abkhaz politics concerns Russian influence.¹⁰

South Ossetia and Transdniestria are also recipients of Moscow's aid, and Armenia serves as Nagorno Karabakh's patron (cf. Kolstø 2006). The former minister of industry in Transdniestria characterized Russia's support as "symbolic aid" to Transdniestria. This, he

⁹ Bakke's personal communication, Sukhum(i), September 11, 2013. This sentiment is echoed in an interview with Mr. Khintba, published in English on the Abkhaz MFA's website, "Russian Influence in Abkhazia Certainly Does Exist," from August 28, 2013. Available online at <http://mfaapsny.org/en/information/index.php?ID=1447> (accessed Feb. 21, 2014).

¹⁰ Inal Khashig, "Abkhaz Opposition Fear Growing Russian Influence," *Caucasus Reporting Service* (Institute for War and Peace Reporting), Issue 505, Aug. 7, 2009. Available online at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/abkhaz-opposition-fear-growing-russian-influence> (accessed Feb. 21, 2014).

explained, took the form of favorable gas prices and support to the republic's budget for pensions and education (each pensioner receives about \$15 a month from the Russian Federation). This "symbolic aid," he estimated, makes up about 20 percent of the republic's budget.¹¹

Given that the post-Soviet *de facto* states find themselves in different relationships of dependence to their external patrons, any comparative examination of internal legitimacy in these entities requires some consideration of local perception of external influences. We are particularly interested in examining whether *de facto* state inhabitants perceive the external patron to be trustworthy (cf. Krasner and Risse 2014, 13). We hypothesize that higher levels of distrust of an external patron will have negative impacts on local perceptions of state and regime's legitimacy.¹²

2. Research Design

2.1. Survey Data

The public opinion surveys that allow us to explore internal legitimacy in Abkhazia (N=1000), Nagorno Karabakh (N=800), South Ossetia (N=460), and Transdniestria (N=976) were designed by John O'Loughlin, Vladimir Kolossov, and Gerard Toal (for descriptions, see O'Loughlin et al. 2011; 2013; Ó Tuathail and O'Loughlin 2012; 2013). In each research site, the surveys were carried out by reputable agencies, employing local interviewers. Preliminary visits by the investigators to the republics and meetings with the presidential administrations and other local agencies ensured no interference with the surveys. The selection of sampling points, distribution across the various local nationalities, the wide-ranging and lengthy number and nature of the questions (about 75 percent, the same in all surveys), the use of local languages, the use of trusted interviewers (including in Gal(i), the use of local Georgian/Mingrelian teachers as intermediaries and interview assistants), and the close timing of the surveys (March 2010, Abkhazia; June 2010, Transdniestria; October 2010 South Ossetia; and November 2011, Nagorno Karabakh) ensured the ability to engage in comparative analytics and meaningful connections across the four territories. Although our previous publications have highlighted the special political and post-war conditions operating in the individual republics, this paper focuses on their comparable struggle towards building state legitimacy in an international environment where their status as separate political units is challenged and their very existence dismissed as artificial by their parent states.

One problem we encountered in the Abkhazia survey, is that for many questions, the Georgian respondents opt for the "difficult to say/don't know" option. Given the Georgian population's precarious situation in Abkhazia (e.g. Human Rights Watch 2011), this strategy is possibly driven by anxiety, a way out of responding to a politically sensitive and difficult question. Indeed, these answers are not missing but, most likely, the result of sense of insecurity felt by many Georgians in Abkhazia. To avoid the choice that these respondents are systematically excluded from the analysis by treating them as missing observations, we

¹¹ Bakke's personal communication, Tiraspol, September 14, 2012. Other sources indicate that the actual figure is likely much higher.

¹² Given that the external patron serves as a security guarantor in post-Soviet *de facto* states—but to varying degrees—there is also a potentially conditional relationship at work, in the sense that people's perceptions of the danger of renewed warfare or experiences of violence will have a more damaging effect on internal legitimacy if they do not trust the patron's leadership. Similarly, because the patron is a source of financial support—again, to varying degrees—people's concerns unemployment or lack of economic development will have a more damaging effect on internal legitimacy if they do not trust the patron's leadership. In this paper, we do not examine these issues though we recognize their salience.

use copula methods to impute these answers (Nelson 2010; for further description, see Bakke et al. 2014). This tendency of avoiding sensitive questions is unlikely to be driving “don’t know” responses in the other surveys: In the Nagorno Karabakh survey, all the survey respondents are Armenian, reflecting the ethnic make-up of the entity. In South Ossetia, the survey data analyzed in this paper includes only South Ossetian respondents, though the survey included about 10 percent Georgians from the recently incorporated Akhgori/Leningori district in the east. Because of difficulty of getting Georgian respondents in this isolated region of South Ossetia, we prefer to err on the side of caution and thus, do not include any of ethnic Georgians in our analysis. In Transdniestria, the post-war state-building project has been built around creating a multi-ethnic entity (cf. Kolstø and Malgin 1998), hence there is no reason to expect insecurity to be driving answers among the responses of any ethnic group in particular. As already noted, unlike the other three *de facto* states, Transdniestria saw brief and moderate violence in June 1992 and very little ethnic cleansing and other wartime activities. Relations between the ethnic groups there are significantly better than elsewhere, and the state constitution and government agencies guarantee equal rights to all groups, though in practice, ethnic Moldovans suffer discrimination in education, cultural and political entitlements.

2.2. Operationalization and Description of Variables

2.2.1. Dependent Variables

To assess state legitimacy, which we conceptualize as acceptance of the entity itself, we choose one of the many questions about political preferences, one that asks people what the status of the entity should be (descriptive statistics for all indicators are presented in Table 1 of the Appendix). We distinguish among those who say that the *de facto* state should “remain an independent state” and those who envision another solution—be that other solution reintegration with the parent state, becoming part of the patron state, or even joining another state.¹³ Our assumption is that those who accept the foundational myth of the entity as independent see it as legitimate. Given that in some of the *de facto* states, the separatist quest has included a mix of separatist and irredentist claims, this is a fairly strict measure for state legitimacy. In Abkhazia, our survey results show that about 69 percent of respondents want the entity to be independent with another 35 percent preferring annexation to Russia.¹⁴ In South Ossetia, the independence share is much lower, at 16 percent, as most respondents want the entity to be united with North Ossetia (57 percent) or simply part of the Russian Federation (23 percent). In Nagorno Karabakh, about 51 percent want the entity to be independent (while the remaining respondents want it to become part of Armenia or, in a few cases, retain its current status), and in Transdniestria, 32 percent want the entity to be independent with another 42 percent wanting a union with Russia.

We also use a second measure for state legitimacy, a question that asks whether things in the *de facto* state are moving in the right or wrong direction, which captures people’s overall assessment of the entity’s future.¹⁵ In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, most respondents are positive about the future (about 74 and 69 percent, respectively), as they are also in Nagorno Karabakh (63 percent). In Transdniestria, by contrast, only 29 percent of

¹³ In Transdniestria, for example, 46 percent of respondents wanted to be part of the Russian Federation, while a few also want the entity to be part of neighboring Ukraine (0.04 percent).

¹⁴ This is after imputing the “don’t know” answers across the various original answer categories, which included “should become part of the Russian Federation” and “should be reintegrated with Georgia.”

¹⁵ In this case, we recode all “difficult to say” answers to “moving in the wrong direction,” as the answer indicates a certain level of doubt about where the entity is going.

respondents say that “things are moving in the right direction,” while the remaining respondents find that “things are moving in the wrong direction” or, in even more cases, they are uncertain.

To assess regime legitimacy, we asked the respondents whether they trust the president. Trust in the president signals that people have faith the governing head and it is, therefore, a suitable indicator for the acceptance—the legitimacy—of the ruler’s right to rule.¹⁶ The results show a strong variation from high trust in Nagorno-Karabakh (84 percent) and Abkhazia (82 percent) to lower rates in South Ossetia (68 percent) and Transdniestria (38 percent).

2.2.2. Independent Variables

To the degree that internal legitimacy rests with how good *de facto* states are at doing the things that states perform and are expected to perform, we rely on a range of variables that capture public goods provisions (Bakke et al. 2014). We use survey questions that ask people to assess how big of a problem is lack of economic development or unemployment; how big of a problem is the absence of democracy; how big of a problem is crime; how big of a problem is corruption; and how big of a problem is the threat of another war.¹⁷ In order to capture not only perceptions of safety and security, we also include a measure for local-level violence preceding the surveys in each territory (we use a five year temporal threshold in this paper), expecting that people who live in geographic areas that have experienced violence in the recent past are less inclined to find the entity and its regime legitimate. By treating a violent context seriously in this way, we move beyond viewing it as background noise *and* gain some leverage with respect to concerns about reverse causality.¹⁸

The violence measurement is configured using several Geographic Information Systems (GIS) steps. The data on violent events used here includes the exact location and timing of a violent incident, as well as other qualities of the event, such as the actors involved and the type of event (e.g. violence against civilians or a “battle” event between two armed actors). Here, we use all types of conflict. The geographic coordinates of each event allows us to map individual violent events across each of the study areas. For two of our cases, Nagorno Karabakh and Abkhazia, we have the exact sampling point that was used in gathering the survey data. To aggregate the violence data to survey respondent locations in a GIS environment merging both formats (survey and events), we measure the distance from each respondent’s location to all violent events in their *de facto* state. We then systematically define distance thresholds at five kilometers, 25 kilometers, and 50 kilometers. Within each of three temporal thresholds (the previous five and 10 years, as well as all violence since the

¹⁶ For the questions capturing regime legitimacy, we recode all “difficult to say” answers to “no,” as the answer indicates doubt about trusting the authority in question.

¹⁷ In the case of Transdniestria, this question is phrased somewhat differently. It asks the respondents to assess “how much tension is there around the current situation in Transdniestria.”

¹⁸ In future work on this topic, we plan to approach this analysis from an instrumental variable approach: In post-war states, violence is integral to ‘context’. Indeed, we know that post-war states often continue to be plagued by violence (either criminal or political) long after the war officially comes to an end, with implications for people’s perceptions of safety and security; with implications for economic public goods provisions (and, thus, people’s perceptions of such public goods provision); and with implications for the development of representative political institutions (and, thus, people’s perceptions thereof). In states or *de facto* states dependent on a foreign patron, violence will also shape people’s perceptions of that patron, particularly if the patron is considered a security guarantor—as it is, for example, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Theoretically, and in terms of statistical modeling, what this means, is that violence shapes the independent variables we think matter for bringing about internal legitimacy. ‘Objective’ (non-survey based) measures for violence shapes internal legitimacy by way of its influence on people’s perceptions of safety and security, their perceptions of economic public goods provision, their perceptions of representative political institutions, and their trust in the patron state. This calls for an instrumental variable approach.

1991 end of the Soviet Union), we count the conflict incidents within the geographic thresholds. The method is slightly different for the sites where the first-level administrative unit is used as the sampling area—in South Ossetia and Transdniestria. In these cases we assign the centroid coordinates to the respondents living in each of the units and then vary the spatial thresholds in a similar manner to the analysis for the other two republics. One benefit of this approach is that it does not rely on political boundaries of the administrative units to define which violence affected survey respondents; this is a desirable approach because violence proximate to a survey respondent may have an important effect on his or her views whether or not the incident took place just across a political border. The raw event count of violence is used as the indicator in both cases.

To capture interviewee perception of how legitimate the external patron is, we rely on a survey question that asks respondents whether they trust the patron state's leadership.¹⁹ Our expectation is that an untrustworthy patron will have negative effects on respondent's perceptions of internal legitimacy, particularly regime legitimacy. Trust in the patron state is overall quite high. In Abkhazia, trust in the Russian leadership is somewhat lower, at 74 percent due to the lower Georgian/Mingrelian figures, but if we look only at the titular ethnic group, the ethnic Abkhaz, trust in the patron state is 87 percent. In Nagorno Karabakh, trust in the Armenian leadership among our respondents is 82 percent, while among our Transdniestrian respondents, trust in the Russian leadership is at 70 percent.

2.2.3. Control Variables

We also control for a range of alternative explanations for respondents' expressed views. As a start, to assess people's lived experience of public goods provision, we include a survey question that asks the respondents to rate their family's income level. As for violence, although our expectation is that individuals' perceptions of post-war violence will shape their assessment of the entity's internal legitimacy, we control for experiences of wartime violence. It is possible that those who suffered most during the war are struggling with its aftermath and have a harder time believing in and trusting anyone, including those in power. To assess this possibility, we use a question that asks whether the respondents or their close relatives witnessed violence during the war.

There are also theoretical reasons to believe that internal legitimacy rests with nation-building as opposed to state-building efforts. Both states and *de facto* states may gain internal legitimacy by fostering a collective identity. Migdal (2001) notes that even states that are remarkably insufficient at providing their citizens with material well-being tend to survive, suggesting that their legitimacy has other sources, such as ceremonies and public rituals aimed at forging unity. In the case of post-war and *de facto* states, such nation-building efforts may be highlighting the population's shared war experiences and common enemy to create collective solidarity (Lynch 2004; Kolstø 2006; OECD 2010; Blakkisrud and Kolstø 2011). Key to the rationale for collective identity affecting internal legitimacy in post-war societies is that shared war experiences have created a notion of belonging together, united against a common enemy. To test this, we rely on a survey question that asks people how they "think now" of the war-time out-group (in the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Georgians; in the case of Transdniestria, the Moldovans; and in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azeris). If people feel negatively about the wartime out-group, they may be more likely to find their own entity as legitimate based on a clear common enemy image. This is an imperfect measure as not all members of the out-group were considered wartime enemies; we use it nevertheless, since, as we show below, it is revealing.

Because of the ethnocratic nature of the state-building efforts in most of the *de facto*

¹⁹ For this questions, we recode all "difficult to say" answers to "no," as the answer indicates doubt about trusting the patron's leadership question.

states, we need to capture whether there are differences in attitudes across ethnic groups. For two of the surveys, we have respondents from only ethnic group. From Nagorno Karabakh, we have only Armenian respondents, as it is estimated that 98 percent of the population is Armenian (ICG 2005).²⁰ As noted above, in this paper, the survey data from South Ossetia includes only South Ossetian respondents. Among the respondents in Abkhazia, we control whether respondents were Abkhaz, Armenian, and Georgian, expecting the Abkhaz population to find the entity more legitimate than any other ethnic group. In Transdniestria, we include measures for whether the respondents are Moldovan or Ukrainian. For the four territories as a group, we omit Russians, along with small numbers of Bulgarians, Gagauz, Romanians, mixed ethnicities, and ‘other’ as the reference set.

We also control for gender and year of birth. While we do not have any gender expectations, we anticipate that younger respondents, who have come of age and been socialized since the entities gained its *de facto* status after the wars in the early 1990s, are more likely to find the entity ‘naturally’ legitimate than older respondents, socialized in the Soviet context.

3. Empirical Findings

Our empirical findings are reported in Tables 2-4 below. The models are multi-level models with clustering for the *de facto* state scale; because of the individual circumstances of each territory, including their location and connections to parent and patron states, as well as the variable state of the local economies, this is the level where we would expect the most substantial variation in statistical relationships. Stated another way, we expect greater variation across the four major territories because of the combined experiences of respondents than we would expect across more fine-grained resolution locations within the four entities. Tables 2 and 3 report our findings with respect to state legitimacy: whether people think the entity should be independent (Table 2, on status), and whether they think things in the territory are generally moving in the right direction (Table 3, on future). Table 4 reports our findings with respect to regime legitimacy, examining whether people trust the president.²¹ In each table, we sequentially introduce the key variables of interest, on perceptions of public goods provision. In every model, we include the background context of observed violence, along with the individual-level controls, including respondents’ nationality.

When interpreting the tables, note that the perceptual variables are coded so that a higher score indicates that the respondent finds the question under consideration to be a bigger problem. For instance, a high score on the “new war” variable indicates that the survey respondent thinks the threat of a new war with the parent state is a very big problem (this is identical to the interpretation of variables capturing perceptions of crime, corruption, economic development, democracy, and material well-being). For the variable that assesses whether the respondents like members of the out-group, a higher score means that their feelings about the out-group was rated as “very bad”. The variable capturing “trust in patron” is a dummy variable, where 1 indicates that the respondents trust the patron’s leadership, and 0 indicates no trust. Experience as a victim of violence is similarly coded. For ease of presentation, we summarize our main findings in Table 5, focusing on the key questions of

²⁰ While numbers are disputed, it is estimated that after the war, 413,000 Armenians left Azerbaijan and 724,000 Azeris left Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The border between Armenia and Azerbaijan is now closed.

²¹ The N reflects that all “don’t know” and “refuse to answer” answers are dropped from the analysis. As noted above, in the case of Abkhazia, the “don’t know” answers were imputed as we do not believe they are missing at random, but in the other cases, they are not imputed.

interest in this study.

The Effect of Perceptions and Observed Sub-National Level of Violence upon Preference for Status

	M1		M2		M3		M4		M5		M6	
	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr
(Intercept)	2.799	5.181	0.358	5.111	-0.775	5.158	0.154	5.096	0.161	5.183	0.792	5.080
New war	-0.079	0.035 **										
Crime			-0.012	0.038								
Corruption					-0.063	0.035 +						
Econ. dev./employment							-0.075	0.051				
Democracy									-0.013	0.032		
Patron trust											-0.215	0.108 **
Violence (5yr 50km)	0.007	0.003 **	0.007	0.003 **	0.007	0.003 **	0.007	0.003 **	0.007	0.003 **	0.007	0.003 **
Gender	0.083	0.086	0.058	0.085	0.070	0.085	0.067	0.084	0.083	0.086	0.071	0.085
Age	-0.002	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.003	-0.001	0.003
Material well-being	-0.070	0.058	-0.079	0.058	-0.061	0.058	-0.061	0.057	-0.068	0.058	-0.080	0.057
Victim of violence	0.044	0.092	-0.015	0.090	-0.006	0.091	0.016	0.090	-0.032	0.092	0.009	0.090
Likes outgroup	0.194	0.047 ***	0.209	0.046 ***	0.203	0.047 ***	0.190	0.046 ***	0.206	0.047 ***	0.194	0.046 ***
Ossetian	-2.248	0.545 ***	-2.414	0.553 ***	-2.444	0.570 ***	-2.445	0.560 ***	-2.490	0.558 ***	-2.443	0.544 ***
Abkhaz	0.901	0.222 ***	0.916	0.222 ***	0.895	0.222 ***	0.910	0.221 ***	0.916	0.222 ***	0.928	0.222 ***
Moldovan	-0.177	0.237	-0.109	0.229	-0.056	0.229	-0.117	0.223	-0.134	0.238	-0.164	0.225
Armenian (ABK)	-0.490	0.237 **	-0.467	0.237 **	-0.489	0.237 **	-0.472	0.236 **	-0.472	0.237 **	-0.437	0.238 +
Armenian (NKR)	-0.178	0.471	-0.283	0.480	-0.282	0.498	-0.286	0.492	-0.274	0.484	-0.261	0.472
Ukranian (PMR)	0.469	0.198 **	0.285	0.192	0.352	0.192 +	0.361	0.185 +	0.376	0.196 +	0.273	0.187
Georgian	0.472	0.275 +	0.405	0.271	0.420	0.272	0.383	0.270	0.402	0.272	0.236	0.274
N	2675		2740		2705		2797		2680		2772	
Random effects sig.	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
AIC	3279.4		3344.1		3295.3		3397.9		3264.1		3381.2	

Statistical significance levels: *** = $p \leq .01$; ** = $p \leq .05$; + = $p \leq .1$; Survey N changes because "don't knows" for each key indicator are dropped. Clustering is at the level of the *de facto* state.

Table 2: The effect of perceptions and observed sub-national level of violence upon preference for the status of the quasi-state (state legitimacy). M1 refers to model 1 etc.

The Effect of Perceptions and Observed Sub-National Level of Violence upon Views on the Future

	M1		M2		M3		M4		M5		M6	
	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr
(Intercept)	12.258	5.457 **	11.871	5.402 **	11.622	5.526 **	13.879	5.465 **	12.282	5.520 **	12.000	5.361 **
New war	-0.165	0.035 ***										
Crime			-0.237	0.041 ***								
Corruption					-0.391	0.041 ***						
Econ. dev./employment							-0.613	0.063 ***				
Democracy									-0.314	0.037 ***		
Patron trust											0.572	0.109 ***
Violence (5yr 50km)	-0.003	0.003	-0.002	0.003	-0.004	0.003	-0.003	0.003	-0.001	0.003	-0.003	0.003
Gender	-0.113	0.090	-0.106	0.090	-0.081	0.091	-0.079	0.090	-0.106	0.091	-0.102	0.089
Age	-0.005	0.003 +	-0.005	0.003 +	-0.005	0.003	-0.005	0.003 +	-0.005	0.003 +	-0.006	0.003 +
Material well-being	-0.477	0.062 ***	-0.481	0.062 ***	-0.448	0.063 ***	-0.442	0.062 ***	-0.467	0.063 ***	-0.529	0.061 ***
Victim of violence	0.040	0.095	0.064	0.094	0.064	0.096	0.118	0.095	-0.001	0.096	0.082	0.094
Likes outgroup	0.060	0.049	0.062	0.049	0.059	0.050	0.066	0.049	0.080	0.050	0.047	0.049
Ossetian	0.938	0.682	0.699	0.724	0.720	0.672	0.812	0.697	0.553	0.683	0.791	0.723
Abkhaz	0.964	0.256 ***	0.943	0.256 ***	0.934	0.259 ***	0.996	0.259 ***	0.912	0.260 ***	0.908	0.257 ***
Moldovan	-0.310	0.234	-0.470	0.237 **	-0.338	0.234	-0.328	0.229	-0.347	0.242	-0.396	0.228 +
Armenian (ABK)	0.596	0.289 **	0.582	0.289 **	0.526	0.292 +	0.622	0.293 **	0.554	0.293 +	0.510	0.289 +
Armenian (NKR)	0.439	0.626	0.188	0.671	0.046	0.611	-0.150	0.644	0.156	0.624	0.277	0.671
Ukranian (PMR)	-0.159	0.201	-0.295	0.196	-0.326	0.200	-0.277	0.194	-0.277	0.203	-0.253	0.192
Georgian	-0.611	0.284 **	-0.740	0.282 ***	-0.623	0.288 **	-0.689	0.286 **	-0.630	0.289 **	-0.588	0.286 **
N	2675		2740		2705		2797		2680		2772	
Random effects sig.	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
AIC	3029		3087.6		2982.5		3066.5		2978.8		3132.3	

Statistical significance levels: *** = $p \leq .01$; ** = $p \leq .05$; + = $p \leq .1$; Survey N changes because "don't knows" for each key indicator are dropped. Clustering is at the level of the *de facto* state.

Table 3: The effect of perceptions and observed sub-national level of violence upon beliefs about the future trajectory of the quasi-state (state legitimacy).

The Effect of Perceptions and Observed Sub-National Level of Violence upon Trust in President

	M1		M2		M3		M4		M5		M6	
	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr	Est	StdEr
(Intercept)	10.758	6.198 +	11.461	6.130 +	8.912	6.226	13.057	6.073 **	11.633	6.276 +	10.448	6.095 +
New war	-0.133	0.036 ***										
Crime			-0.320	0.046 ***								
Corruption					-0.367	0.042 ***						
Econ. dev./employment							-0.450	0.068 ***				
Democracy									-0.290	0.037 ***		
Patron trust											1.050	0.121 ***
Violence (5yr 50km)	0.008	0.004 **	0.010	0.004 **	0.009	0.004 **	0.008	0.004 **	0.009	0.004 **	0.009	0.004 **
Gender	-0.123	0.103	-0.133	0.103	-0.127	0.104	-0.111	0.101	-0.119	0.104	-0.115	0.102
Age	-0.005	0.003	-0.005	0.003	-0.003	0.003	-0.005	0.003	-0.005	0.003	-0.005	0.003
Material well-being	-0.457	0.070 ***	-0.441	0.070 ***	-0.434	0.070 ***	-0.435	0.069 ***	-0.449	0.070 ***	-0.497	0.069 ***
Victim of violence	0.007	0.108	-0.075	0.107	-0.078	0.109	0.052	0.106	-0.104	0.110	-0.033	0.107
Likes outgroup	0.074	0.056	0.072	0.056	0.099	0.057 +	0.054	0.055	0.088	0.057	0.068	0.056
Ossetian	-0.457	0.771 +	-0.779	0.823	-0.823	0.755	-0.549	0.788	-0.720	0.800	-0.690	0.816
Abkhaz	0.829	0.284 ***	0.823	0.286 ***	0.823	0.287 ***	0.853	0.285 ***	0.797	0.287 ***	0.759	0.288 ***
Moldovan	-0.303	0.223	-0.111	0.220	-0.199	0.220	-0.195	0.214	-0.168	0.230	-0.213	0.217
Armenian (ABK)	1.218	0.365 ***	1.230	0.369 ***	1.199	0.369 ***	1.260	0.369 ***	1.180	0.369 ***	1.053	0.369 ***
Armenian (NKR)	1.350	0.705 +	1.176	0.761	0.997	0.682	1.011	0.728	1.215	0.733 +	1.264	0.754 +
Ukrainian (PMR)	-0.273	0.196	-0.310	0.192	-0.396	0.194 **	-0.319	0.187 +	-0.343	0.199 +	-0.344	0.189 +
Georgian	0.087	0.332	-0.011	0.331	0.245	0.342	0.013	0.329	0.203	0.340	0.237	0.337
N	2675		2740		2705		2797		2680		2772	
Random effects sig.	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
AIC	2444.3		2486.8		2421.1		2547.5		2395.9		2513.7	

Statistical significance levels: *** = $p \leq .01$; ** = $p \leq .05$; + = $p \leq .1$; Survey N changes because "don't knows" for each key indicator are dropped. Clustering is at the level of the *de facto* state.

Table 4: The effect of perceptions and observed sub-national level of violence upon trust in the president of the quasi-state (regime legitimacy).

Consistent with our previous work on Abkhazia, in this comparative study, we find that resident perceptions of public goods provision shape internal legitimacy. People's concerns about economic development and democracy do not seem to shape their views on the status of their *de facto* state (Table 2, models 4 and 5), but it affects their views on the future and trust in the president (Table 3 and 4, models 4 and 5, respectively). Respondents who view lack of economic development and lack of democracy as big problems are less likely to trust the president or have a positive outlook on the future. Similarly, concerns about crime do not seem to influence whether people think their entity should be independent (Table 2, model 2), but it does sway their outlook on the direction of the state and trust in the president (Table 3 and 4, model 2). Perceptions of corruption have a negative impact on all types of internal legitimacy, as is clear across the results (model 3). It is also true that an expressed fear of renewed conflict significantly predicts negative views on internal legitimacy for all three measures (model 1).

We report an important and unanticipated effect for our objective measure for the level of violence in a respondent's region (not the subjective perceptions of respondents in the survey). For preferences about the status of the *de facto* state, more violence in a survey respondent's immediate area in the recent past is associated with a greater likelihood that he or she will support the independence of the territory from the parent state. Tellingly, this is true even after controlling for the respondent's personal level of trust in a patron state (which could be related to their views about the viability of an altered—independent—status). Violence in a respondent's area has no statistically significant influence on the view that he or she has regarding the future direction of their territory (heading in a right or wrong direction). Finally, we find that more violence in the respondent's locality increases the likelihood that he or she will trust the territory's president. This is not what we expected and goes contrary to what we find for perceptions of the danger of new war, crime, and corruption. We speculate that it might be that in areas of post-war violence, there is an

expectation that state leaders, whatever their democratic credentials, have a duty to supply security for its residents.

With respect to the *de facto* state’s relationship to its respective patron state, the findings provide a divergent picture. As Table 2 (model 6) shows, trust in the patron state has a *negative* influence on support for independence—as opposed to a preference for being part of the parent state, patron state, or any other state. As expected, more trust in the patron has a positive impact on whether people think “things are moving in the right direction” (Table 3, model 6) and trust their own president (Table 4, model 6). Our expectation was that, given the *de facto* states’ and their regimes’ dependence on their patron states, trust in the patron would reflect positively on all indicators of internal legitimacy. It might be that our measures for outlook on the future and trust in the president more closely capture what we intend to assess, namely that trust in the patron, on whom the regime and *de facto* state in many ways depend, will shape internal legitimacy. Indeed, given our rather strict measure for people’s view on final status, that of independence, it is perhaps not that surprising that we find a negative relationship, as it might be that people who trust the patron are more likely to want the entity to become part of the patron state. In future research, we will explore whether trust in the external patron’s leadership has different effects across the four entities.

	<i>Effect on View on Independent Status</i>	<i>Effect on View on the state’s direction</i>	<i>Effect on Trust in the state’s President</i>
<i>Concerns about new war</i>	Yes (-)	Yes (-)	Yes (-)
<i>Concerns about crime</i>	No	Yes (-)	Yes (-)
<i>Concerns about corruption</i>	Yes (-)	Yes (-)	Yes (-)
<i>Concerns about economic development</i>	No	Yes (-)	Yes (-)
<i>Concerns about democracy</i>	No	Yes (-)	Yes (-)
<i>Trust in external patron</i>	Yes (-)	Yes (+)	Yes (+)
<i>Observed local violence</i>	Yes (+)	No	Yes (+)

Yes= significant effect identified; No = variable not significant in the multilevel model.

Table 5: Summary of statistical findings on key variables of interest.

With respect to the controls, we note that the age, gender, and material well-being are not significant in the preferences for independence, the final status, in Table 2 but higher material well-being is related to the respondent’s belief that the state is going in the wrong direction of the state and lowered trust in the state leadership. We direct the reader’s attention to the variable measuring whether people like the war-time out-group and the nationality variable. Recall that the variable for whether the respondents like members of the out-group is coded so that a higher score means that they feel worse about the out-group. The indicator is meant to measure polarized in-group/out-group dynamics in the former warzones that make up the *de facto* states. As expected, we see that more dislike of members of the out-group (e.g. Azeris for residents of Nagorno-Karabakh) seem to bolster respondent views that their *de facto* state should be independent (Table 2, models 1-6), but it has no significant effect on the other indicators for internal legitimacy (Tables 3 and 4).

With respect to the individual nationalities, we see that the Abkhaz respondents consistently favor independence for Abkhazia (Table 2, model 1). The nationality predictor must be interpreted in generalized terms because for some models, the direction of the relationship changes when the key independent variable is changed. Somewhat surprisingly but consistent with our previous study, the Georgian respondents in Abkhazia also prefer independence, but this finding should be considered in relation to the other realistic option, annexation to Russia (see Bakke et al. 2014 for a discussion of this subject). Residence in South Ossetia is negatively associated with favoring independence for their entity; this is not a very surprising finding, given that over 80 percent of South Ossetians would rather be part of North Ossetia and/or joined with the Russian Federation. In terms of outlook on the future, as measured by the perceived direction of the state, the Abkhaz and Armenians in Abkhazia have a more positive outlook, whereas the Georgians (and, for one model, Moldovans in Transdnistria) are more pessimistic. The Abkhaz and Armenians in Abkhazia have a significantly more positive view of their president (Sergey Bagapsh at the time of the survey), relative to other groups. In some models, the Ukrainians in Transdnistria seem to have been skeptical of then (2010) President Igor Smirnov, who at the time was in a public power struggle with the Speaker of the Parliament, Evgeny Shevchuk, an ethnic Ukrainian. Forced to resign, Shevchuk later made a political comeback and is now the President of PMR.

4. Conclusion

To our knowledge, this is the first survey-based comparative study of post-war societies that seeks to assess both how people's perceptions and a fundamental contextual variable likely to be shaping their lives—continued local violence—influence internal legitimacy. As far as the contextual variable goes, we find that in areas with greater levels of violence prior to the survey, respondents are more likely to support independence for their territory. To speculate about the possible explanation for the relationship, it could be that respondents believe violence—which in our analysis does not distinguish among the perpetrating actors—might be most appropriately avoided without either the patron or parent state, who might both be viewed as responsible for the violence that took place at different times during the past; instead, it is possible that a certain sentiment of self-reliance and institutional self-sufficiency leads to a view that a territory's problems are solved most efficiently by residents/citizens of the territory, and from within that territory. This could prove to be a fruitful avenue of future research. We also find that for increased numbers of violent events taking place in a respondent's area raises the likelihood of trust of the president of the *de facto* state. This finding stands out from other variables capturing perceptions related to physical safety and security, such as crime and corruption. These divergent findings merit further attention, but we note here that it is important to keep in mind that these other predictors are self-reported, perceptual indicators, and that the violence data are "objective," gathered from other sources.

Our empirical focus in this study is on a particular type of post-war societies and institutional entities, *de facto* states, but the findings speak to challenges facing post-war scenarios more generally. As we would expect, measures for internal legitimacy—whether people believe in the foundational myth of their entity as independent, whether they think it is moving in the right direction, and whether they trust the president—are, to varying degrees, shaped by people's perceptions of how good these entities are at providing public goods, importantly safety and security from internal and external violence.

The relationship and attitudes of residents in *de facto* states to external actors also matter a great deal. Indeed, we find that trust in the entities' patron state has a significant and

positive impact on people's outlook on the future and their level of trust in the own president, while it negatively shapes their view on whether the entity should be independent as a final political outcome. From the perspective of these *de facto* states born out of violent struggles, this is both good and bad news. The good news is that to the degree that they can provide public goods to their citizens and have a trustworthy patron, there is a clear recipe for fostering internal legitimacy and therefore, longer term stability. The bad news is that part of that recipe, the role of the patron state, is beyond the control of the *de facto* state's authorities, certainly when the patron state is a geo-political powerhouse like Russia with its own interests and broader global perspectives.

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Appendix

Survey Data Descriptive Statistics					
	<u>Max</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>StdDev</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>AnalysisN</u>
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>					
New war	9	2.364	1.368	1	2675
Crime	9	2.565	1.131	1	2740
Corruption	9	2.801	1.299	1	2705
Econ. Dev./employment	9	3.279	0.911	1	2705
Democracy	9	2.435	1.394	1	2680
Patron trust	1	0.8	0.4	0	2772
Vio. event count (5yr 50km)	102	33.35	32.65	0	2823
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
President	1	0.725	0.446	0	2823
Future	1	0.613	0.487	0	2823
Status	1	0.473	0.499	0	2823
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Gender	1	0.442	0.497	0	2823
Age	1998	1966.591	16.843	1921	2823
Material well-being	4	2.155	0.751	1	2823
Victim of violence	1	0.593	0.491	0	2823
Like outgroup	5	3.117	1.384	1	2823
Ossetian	1	0.142	0.35	0	2823
Abkhaz	1	0.147	0.354	0	2823
Moldovan	1	0.054	0.226	0	2823
Armenian (ABK)	1	0.064	0.245	0	2823
Armenian (NKR)	1	0.272	0.445	0	2823
Ukrainian (PMR)	1	0.085	0.278	0	2823
Georgian	1	0.072	0.259	0	2823

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (maximum, mean, standard deviation, minimum, and N for the analysis) for each variable used in our model.