De facto states (e.g., Somaliland) are separatist enclaves that display many characteristics of statehood but lack an international legal status. To gain domestic and external legitimacy, these actors engage in a range of governance practices: they set up separate military and police forces, separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches, separate hospitals, schools, banks, or social security networks. Despite obvious gains that can be accrued through the establishment of a complex governance architecture, de facto states exhibit great variation in the range of state-like institutions that they build. Using original data, this study offers an empirical examination of several environmental and organizational factors that shape de facto state leaders’ incentives to supply governance. The findings reveal that separatists in de facto states are less likely to provide governance when they have access to lootable natural resources and when warfare is ongoing, but are more likely to do so when they control relatively immobile assets and when they receive substantial external military support.

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Cookies and coffee will be provided. For questions, or to become affiliated with the working group, please contact Cyanne E. Loyle (cloye@indiana.edu), Interim Director of the PELIO Program.