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The Effects of Foreign Aid on Rebel Governance: Evidence from a Large-Scale U.S. Aid Program in Syria

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Abstract

Most research underscores the inefficacy of foreign aid as an instrument for influencing local perceptions of governance in countries affected by conflict. In contrast, we argue that aid can improve public perceptions of governing institutions during civil wars when those institutions arise from popular uprisings against authoritarian regimes. To evaluate our theory, we analyze new perceptions-based data, both quantitative and qualitative, which was collected from residents of 27 opposition-held communities inside Syria from 2014 to 2016. We find a positive statistical relationship between aid and perceptions of local institutions, but only when the populace does not believe the institutions were imposed by an outside actor. These results are further supported by placebo tests and a case study of Raqqa City, in which we show that aid boosted citizens' views of the local councils until ISIS took over.

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Many Western donors deliver development aid based on the notion that improvements in public goods provision shore up political support for governing institutions, especially in countries marked by conflict and fragility. Empirical evidence for this supposition, however, remains thin. Most research on these types of interventions has occurred in transitional or post-conflict settings where aid is introduced on behalf of weak or besieged governments. In contrast, this paper examines the link between service provision and popular support for governing institutions in rebel-held territory. We consider whether donor support aimed at bolstering the service delivery capabilities of Syrian opposition councils improved public perceptions of these bodies. In other words: can foreign aid enable "good" rebel governance?

We theorize that aid has a positive impact on perceptions of governing institutions that are produced as part of a popular uprising. We argue that hearts and minds are more easily won when public goods are provided by institutions that derive from and align with a revolutionary cause. In such cases, aid can not only assist these institutions with providing public goods but also increase political support for them in the public's eyes. If rebels do not embed themselves within the surrounding community and align themselves with local objectives and practices of resistance, however, aid cannot compensate for their "outsideness." They will not be embraced by the communities they govern as rightful rulers, and often must turn to coercion to ensure obedience. In such cases, aid could have the perverse consequence of amplifying their unwelcome presence in society, thereby diminishing popular opinion towards them.

We evaluate our theory in an analysis of the Syrian civil war, one of today's most complex and intractable conflicts. This context provides an opportunity to examine a set of organic local institutions that emerged through a popular uprising and came to constitute agents of rebel governance. Syria became the setting, moreover, of a major Western effort to employ soft interventions – namely humanitarian assistance and non-lethal material and political support – to promote a "good" brand of rebel governance. While Western donors have pursued externally-driven governance promotion for several decades around the world, they generally employed these efforts in support of existing state or state-affiliated institutions meant to bolster a government's authority in the face of insurgent threats. Research on cases as far-ranging as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone has cast doubt on the degree to which

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development aid engenders sustained improvements in governance in these contexts.[1]

To examine the relationship between foreign aid and rebel governance, we use new quantitative and qualitative data on citizen perceptions of rebel governance in Syria along with original archival research and qualitative fieldwork conducted both in Syria and along the Turkey-Syria border between 2013 and 2019. We gained access to a trove of data collected as part of a USAID project that has yet to be analyzed for scholarly purposes. This material provides a rare opportunity to understand how civilians perceive governance in the midst of civil war. Furthermore, the data is detailed enough to track aid disbursements over time, allowing us to match changes in assistance with spatial and temporal trends in civilian perceptions of the institutions receiving this assistance. This data therefore provides a unique glimpse into civilian life in 27 opposition-controlled Syrian communities between 2014 and 2016.

We show that the greater the flow of aid to communities with organic local institutions, the more positive the overall perception of local opposition bodies. This finding is highly robust to a variety of alternative specifications. However, in communities dominated by a foreign entity – the Islamic State (ISIS) – we find a statistically significant negative relationship between cumulative aid and political support. Moreover, we provide support for our theoretical mechanism in three ways. First, we demonstrate that these negative effects do not hold in Syrian communities dominated by other Islamist groups that are not disconnected from the populace under their writ. In particular, we do not find comparable negative associations between aid flows and political support for communities governed by the al Qaeda Syrian affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (now Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham) or the Islamist faction Ahrar Al-Sham. Second, we find evidence for our mechanism in citizens' stated reasons for their attitudes based on responses to a series of open-ended survey questions. Third, we employ a qualitative case study of Raqqa City, which features within case variation due to its takeover by ISIS in the fall of 2014, in the midst of the period under study. We show that once ISIS took control, the group's commitment to service provision – enabled by its cooptation of accrued benefits from preceding aid flows and its own revenue generation strategies – failed to win hearts and minds in Raqqa City. On the contrary, our qualitative analysis, in line with our quantitative findings, suggests that the city's residents rejected the Islamic State's rule as an unwelcome imposition on account of its composition, methods, and politics.

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[1]We review this literature subsequently.

This study makes several contributions. Empirically, we employ an innovative multi-method approach using a new dataset that combines detailed information about U.S. foreign aid flows with citizen perceptions in the midst of civil war. Theoretically, we contribute to the rich literature on aid effectiveness, demonstrating both the potential and the limits that Western aid has in cultivating sub-national governing authority in the midst of war.[2] We also advance the burgeoning literature on rebel governance, which examines the complex relationship between violent contestation and political order. In this paper, we interrogate one of the main presumed mechanisms – service delivery – by which credible governing authority arises in the midst of violent conflict (Wickham-Crowley, 1987). In doing so, we not only refine and advance theoretical understandings of rebel governance, but also those on emergent political authority as it relates to state-building more generally.

Finally, because service delivery remains at the heart of Western approaches to democracy promotion, counterinsurgency, and counter-extremism campaigns across the developing world, our findings have important policy implications. In 2012 alone, 12% of development aid ($127 billion) went to fragile and conflict-affected countries (Justino, 2018). Even as more ambitious state-building interventions fall out of favor, the presumed relationship between public goods provision and "good governance" continues to inspire more limited efforts like those in Syria. Given the degree to which these interventions impose "limited liabilities" on those doing the intervening, we might anticipate more of them in the future (Dueck, 2008). Our findings provide a nuanced assessment of such efforts, and may therefore assist policy-makers in anticipating where such programs can improve opinions of local institutions – and where they cannot.

Theory

There has long been a presumed relationship between governing authority and public service provision. Indeed, the very notion of a social contract between ruler and ruled implies "a state that provides collective security in return for the monopoly over the means of violence and the right to regulate social interaction." This contract has grown more elaborate in terms of "the list of collective goods to be provided" over time (Lee, Walter-Drop and Wiesel, 2014). A logical corollary of the idea

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[2]See Wright and Winters (2010) for a review.

of governance as social contract suggests that the provision of public goods and services could be a vehicle for strengthening governing authority in sites of so-called weak, failing, or failed statehood.

In fact, donors with a range of agendas – from peace-building to development and stabilization to countering violent extremism – have attached their funds to this premise, drawing a causal line between the provision of services through aid, the legitimation of governance, and state stability.[3] Indeed, Brown (2018) refers to "the dominant practice in liberal state-building models and 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency theories," as one "where effective service delivery is seen as key to securing popular support and legitimacy." For example, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development describes a "virtuous circle" of state-building whereby states "maintain legitimacy and stability" with "jobs and growth, delivery of basic services (including security and justice), human rights and democratic processes" (DIFID, 2010). Other organizations view aid similarly, including USAID, the OECD, the United Nations, and the World Bank.[4]

However, while the aim of enhancing service delivery has become central to many international development programs, scholars have found little empirical evidence for a link between development aid and improved governance. For example, Mansuri and Rao (2004) consider 500 studies of "participatory development or decentralization programs" and finds that these programs "fail to live up to their promise in contributing to long-lasting social and institutional change." Similarly, Wong (2012) examines a number of World Bank-funded programs and finds that "the evidence on social or institutional effects is much less consistent and often lacking." Indeed, the vast majority of scholars find either no relationship or a negative relationship between aid-driven service provision and government legitimacy in a variety of contexts.[5] Moreover, scholars have identified an inhibitive relationship between foreign aid and rebel institution-building. For example, Weinstein (2007) argues that rebel groups able to draw on foreign support face little imperative to cultivate

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[3]For reviews of the literature examining whether foreign aid leads to peace and development, see Findley 2018; Justino 2018. For a review of stabilization initiatives in Afghanistan in particular, see Iyengar, Shapiro and Hegarty N.d.. On the limits of the "hearts and minds" approach in the realm of counterinsurgency, see Hazelton 2017. For an account of development that benefits donors, see Bermeo 2017. For peace-building and civilian outcomes, see, e.g. Carnegie and Mikulaschek 2017.

[4]See, for example, Peters (1996, xxiii), OECD (2011), and "USAID Fragile States Strategy," January 2005 (`http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACA999.pdf`).

[5]See Blair and Roessler 2018; Brown 2018, 2014; Carpenter, Slater and Mallett 2012; Dietrich and Winters 2015; Fishstein and Wilder 2012; Humphreys, de la Sierra and Van der Windt 2015; King and Samii 2014; McLoughlin 2015. Even Beath, Christia and Enikolopov (2015) find reduced satisfaction with local leadership. Though see Dietrich, Mahmud and Winters 2018.

productive ties with surrounding civilians and, instead, tend to treat those civilians in violently abusive and extractive ways. Similarly, Huang (2016a, 83) finds that rebels that draw materially from surrounding civilian populations "build 2.3 more institutions than do rebels without civilian aid, all else equal" (Huang, 2016a, 89).

Despite these findings, we contend that foreign aid can help build the political authority of local institutions associated with a popular rebellion. Unlike beleaguered government institutions struggling to establish a foothold in peripheral communities, many insurgent institutions emerge from within the communities they come to govern. The acute deprivation that civilians typically face in wartime should, moreover, make public goods provision – and the institutional capacity it reflects – particularly salient. In fact, many scholars of rebel governance anchor their conceptions of political authority to "an implicit social contract" (Wickham-Crowley, 1990) marked by the provision of "collective goods in exchange for civilian consent to rebel rule" (Mampilly, 2011).[6] For instance, Wickham-Crowley (1987, 473) characterizes the establishment of credible authority as contingent, in part, on "contributions to the material security of the populace...by increasing peasant incomes and by providing health services, literacy training and sometimes land to rural cultivators." Aid channeled through rebel institutions that mimics service delivery could, therefore, enhance popular perceptions of these institutions.

We posit that the effect of aid on rebel institutional authority depends on whether such institutions are locally embedded. Embedded institutions, we argue, are those that anchor themselves within the demographic, ideational, and experiential solidarities that comprise the communities they govern.[7] We claim that institutions perceived by civilians as dominated by actors whose identities, ideas, and experiences are distant from their own are typically incapable of translating improved service delivery, foreign-supported or otherwise, into political authority. Not only do citizens question their right to rule, but disembedded rebel governors often must turn to coercion to achieve their ends. In such settings, aid merely amplifies the unpopular work of these institutions. Public goods provision is distributed unequally and comes from an oppressive foreign entity; thus, the institutions' increased ability to impose an alien brand of insurgent politics results in more

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[6]See also Arjona 2016; Huang 2016b; Stewart 2018; Suykens 2015.

[7]See Mukhopadhyay and Howe 2018. We are inspired by Ibn Khaldun's 14th century concept of solidarity as articulated in Khaldun 1967. See also Daly 2016; Mansuri and Rao 2012.

negative attitudes toward them.

Our supposition – that institutional embeddedness matters for the effectiveness of aid on rebel governance – builds on the proposition that rebel governing authority derives not only from access to coercion and capital, but also from non-material forms of politics and power (Mampilly, 2011). This argument draws on recent literature that shows that a group that emerges "endogenous to the political order within which it rebels," will exploit "common cultural and political values" to shore up its authority (Hoffmann, 2015). For example, northern Ivoirian rebels employed "shared norms and values" to produce governing institutions anchored in popular engagement and exchange (Förster, 1998) and Colombians were less likely to embrace an interventionist armed group's authority (Arjona, 2015).

The Syrian Context

We apply these insights to the context of the Syrian civil war both for empirical tractability and due to the substantive importance of the conflict. We first describe the local councils – the focus of our study – and then turn to the differences between the extremist groups that we exploit in our empirical analysis. Throughout, we draw on interviews that we conducted during qualitative fieldwork that occurred between 2013 and 2019 both in Syria and along the Turkey-Syrian border. Because the individuals we interviewed requested anonymity, we refer to each by number.

We focus on the period beginning in mid-2011, when a popular uprising erupted against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria and developed into a violent insurgency waged by a diffuse set of moderate, Islamist, and Kurdish armed groups. As the rebels overran government positions throughout the provinces of Aleppo, Idlib, Rural Damascus, Raqqa, Hama, and Homs, local councils (LCs) emerged in hundreds of towns and villages in 2012 and 2013. The LCs aimed to fill the void left by the regime in opposition-controlled areas and to deliver relief and basic services within them. While some councils held elections for their members, many were comprised of individuals appointed by local elites – including rebel fighters, tribal leaders, revolutionary activists, influential families, and other notables – to oversee civilian affairs. Indeed, "the thinking behind the idea of local councils was that the revolutionary society should organize itself independently of the state. These self-managed local councils would serve as local alternatives to the state, and by breaking the state's monopoly in providing public services, they have been perceived as a major threat to

the regime's legitimacy" (Favier, 2016, 7,9).

For international donors, the LCs quickly became the vanguard of the moderate opposition – the civilian equivalent of the Free Syrian Army. Western NGOs and aid agencies, along with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the U.A.E., and Turkey, began pledging millions of dollars in humanitarian and military assistance to the Syrian National Coalition, the internationally recognized representative of the opposition. The Syrian National Coalition established the Assistance Coordination Unit in Turkey in 2012 to coordinate and monitor international aid to rebel-held Syria. In 2013, donor countries, realizing the Coalition's disconnect from many communities inside Syria, began to bypass the Assistance Coordination Unit and support the LCs directly, sometimes channeling assistance through provincial-level councils. The councils became the primary link between donors and local populations in opposition areas. The U.S. government invested "hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars" in these local and provincial councils which, according to one American aid official, was tied to a belief that "these councils represent the communities they come from" and therefore might have a role in "amplifying the voice on the street" in the larger context of negotiations. The official described how aid was branded with the insignia of the opposition leadership in order to convey to recipients that the opposition was "actually relevant inside Syria."[8] A Syrian informant concurred, indicating that Western donors believed that local councils' role in service delivery was a vehicle toward "legitimizing the political opposition."[9] One European official, when asked if Western donor support to local governing bodies was aimed at amplifying the legitimacy of the national political opposition, replied: "Oh absolutely. No question about that....We need to help them not only by recognizing [them] politically but also giving them tools to get more legitimacy inside the country."[10] Although the councils varied in their independence and capacity, this assistance helped many to become essential providers of services ranging from water and electricity to food stuff, medicine, and transportation. In some cases the councils acted as implementers and in others they served as coordinators or intermediaries in service delivery, often co-existing or competing with hardline Islamist military factions, such as Ahrar al-Sham and Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, which established their own local administrative structures.

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[8]Interview 14, 2016.

[9]Interview 6, 2016.

[10]Interview 20, 2016.

USAID's Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI) was at the forefront of these efforts to bolster civilian institutions within the Syrian opposition. Part of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, OTI is charged with helping to stabilize fragile and conflict-affected countries and laying the foundation for long-term development "by promoting reconciliation, jumpstarting local economies, supporting nascent independent media, and fostering peace and democracy through innovative programming."[11] OTI launched its first program in Syria in March 2013 and, up to July 2016, disbursed a total of $17.58 million in support to LCs, civil society organizations, and other entities, such as the Syrian Civil Defense, a group of emergency responders, in rebel-held areas. OTI aid provided equipment, supplies, stipends, and training for services such as rubble removal, waste disposal, medical care, bakery support, water, and electricity, along with support for public outreach, media, and civil society development with the aim of increasing the local oppositional structures' capacity to provide services to residents. Underpinning this objective was a desire to improve popular support for moderate, inclusive democratic structures by simultaneously providing a foundation for post-war reconstruction, filling the gaps left by the retreat of the central government, and creating a bulwark against the rise of Islamic extremism.[12]

Despite these efforts, a foreign entity – the Islamic State – established its so-called caliphate centered in the city of Raqqa in 2014 and "built a holistic system of governance that [included] religious, educational, judicial, security, humanitarian, and infrastructure projects" (Caris and Reynolds, 2014). ISIS's Islamic Services Administration provided public services, bankrolled by looted resources including aid, control over oil fields and flour mills, and the imposition of taxes (zakat) on the local population.[13] ISIS established itself as an unapologetic imposition on the people it sought to govern, producing a disembedded kind of rebel politics that precluded genuine popular uptake on the part of those living under its authority. While observers noted, and even appreciated, ISIS's ability to develop and maintain a complex, functioning administration in territories it ruled in Syria, neither ISIS leadership nor foot soldiers came from within the communities the group controlled. On the contrary, the Islamic State filled its ranks with predominantly non-Syrian

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[11]See USAID/OTI.https://www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/where-we-work.

[12]On the evolving logic of the U.S. aid effort in Syria, see Brown 2018.

[13]See Revkin 2019. Theft of aid by foreign entities is well documented in a variety of contexts. See, for example, Dube and Naidu 2015; Nunn and Qian 2014. More generally, scholars have noted strategic responses to aid, e.g. Sexton 2016.

recruits, and as such, its fighting and ruling faces were foreign ones (Byman, 2016) with a very different political and military orientation from those they governed.

In particular, ISIS focused on a global jihad and the creation of a caliphate.[14] Driving a wedge between rulers (outsiders) and ruled (insiders), ISIS foreign fighters received privileges well above those of civilians, creating a type of "two-tiered society, where daily life [wa]s starkly different for the occupiers and the occupied" (Sullivan, 2015). While "foreign fighters and their families [wer]e provided free housing, medical care, religious education and even a sort of militant meals-on-wheels service...local people interviewed said their daily lives [wer]e filled with fear and deprivation in the Islamic State 'caliphate,' governed by the militants extreme version of Islamic sharia law" (Sullivan, 2015). ISIS spent considerable funds on "attracting foreign recruits," paying them "higher salaries than local recruits" (Khatib, 2015). The group also showed a general intolerance for the existence of other armed and civilian institutions in its midst, often supplanting the pre-existing, locally-established Local Council with its own Islamic Services Administration. To quell any resistance that this disembodied approach garnered, ISIS demonstrated a willingness to employ violent brutality to force local populations into submission (Byman, 2016).

However, two other Salafi jihadist groups, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham, also achieved dominance in a number of communities, and the former descended from the same movement as ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq. Like ISIS, these groups engaged in sustained and elaborate projects of state-building alongside their military campaigns, including service provision, but the means by which they pursued their ideological goals in Syria diverged. In particular, Al-Nusra staffed key leadership and rank-and-file positions with members of the local community (Lister, 2016), and implicated itself within pre-existing social networks including secular, moderate, and extreme groups (Weiss and Hassan, 2016). Nusra also created its own General Administration to engage in service provision, which often co-existed alongside local councils.[15] Moreover, Al-Nusra's stated enemy was Bashar Al-Assad and his regime, allowing the group to stay aligned with the popular ambitions of the revolution – the overthrow of Assad – and even to recruit forces that did not

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[14]The Islamic State and the regime adopted a mutually beneficial posture of muted antagonism, avoiding direct military confrontation with one another (Khatib, 2015).

[15]For example, in Aleppo City, the General Administration operated alongside the Aleppo Local Council, one of the most prominent recipients of Western aid. As one Aleppo resident explained, "The amount of destruction is huge so there is plenty of work for both. The General Administration is specialized in the same services as the local councils but it belongs to Jabhat al-Nusra" (2015).

share Islamist aspirations (Cafarella, 2014). Al-Nusra leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani maintained a strategic pragmatism "by remaining embedded within Syrian revolutionary dynamics" (Lister, 2016).

This indigenization campaign bore fruit. By late 2012, Nusra came to be seen as "something close to an accepted or even leading member of the Syrian revolutionary opposition from late 2012 onwards." Syrians even took to the street "around the theme of 'We are all Jabhat al-Nusra'" when the Americans labeled the group an Al Qaeda affiliate in December of that year (Lister, 2016, 5,12). Finally, Al-Nusra's campaign to garner popular acceptance involved the avoidance of overt violence against civilians, attention to humanitarian and social needs, and cooperation with multiple civilian and militarized elements of society (Byman, 2016; Cafarella, 2014; Hassan, 2013; Turner, 2015). Al-Qaeda leadership had expressly called on "fighters to exercise restraint and not to harm civilians, including those from 'deviant sects'" (Byman, 2016, 150) and thus used a more tempered approach that integrated the people, ideas, and institutions that surrounded them.[16]

Empirical Analysis

What impact did OTI-administered aid have on public perceptions of local opposition institutions in Syria? To examine this question, we assembled an original dataset from public opinion surveys that were collected by an independent research firm contracted by USAID/OTI. Over five data collection periods from 2014 to 2016, between 50 and 250 residents in 27 communities were surveyed for a total of 13,657 respondents. The surveys were supplemented with in-depth interviews with approximately 1,100 residents across sampled communities. This data provides novel, richly detailed information about social and political life in the midst of an active conflict in a part of the world that has become largely inaccessible for academic researchers. We obtained all original interview transcripts (based on recordings in Arabic, translated into English) along with the raw survey data, which allowed us to triangulate responses and offered multiple forms of insight into Syrians' opinions and beliefs about a variety of important issues related to the emergence and

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[16]The Islamic State's use of violent repression led to al-Qaeda to renounce its affiliation with ISIS in February of 2014 (Turner, 2015). While Al-Nusra regularly tortured media activists and journalists and engaged in summary killings in Idlib and Aleppo provinces starting in 2014, it largely refrained from coercion of the civilian population, unlike ISIS. See Amnesty International, 2015.

evolution of rebel governance.

Two potential limitations to the data bear note. The first is a possible sampling bias. We gathered as much information as possible about the sampling process, including careful reviews of methodological documents and subsequent communications with OTI. Records indicate that sampling was conducted through a mixture of "man on the street" interviews, where the researcher would approach every nth person in a central area, and snowball sampling. The latter was utilized, in particular, in the most insecure communities. Due to the lack of updated, reliable population data on Syria, likely attrition due to death and displacement, and security concerns, collecting a random sample of respondents was often infeasible. We therefore cannot claim that our sample is representative of each community.

A second possible limitation is response bias. Respondents may have been aware that the data collection company was working on behalf of the U.S. government, and the promise or hope of aid could have therefore biased their responses due to social desirability issues. Communications with OTI and its implementing partners confirmed, however, that enumerators were residents of the communities sampled and made no mention of a possible connection between foreign donors, aid organizations, and the data collection process. Enumerators were independent of programming staff working on the ground in Syria on behalf of OTI and other foreign donors, and the research firm maintained a strict firewall between its research network and the individuals responsible for designing and implementing OTI projects. Moreover, both the survey and interview responses demonstrated wide variability and were neither uniformly positive nor uniformly negative. The interviews provided rich, detailed descriptions of local conditions that we could triangulate with other primary and secondary sources in order to confirm their veracity.

Given our research question and theoretical framework, our main dependent variable measures popular support for local councils (LC Support). Eight survey questions were asked about different aspects of this concept; we thus created a composite variable using all of them. These questions reflect the degree to which (1) people in the area support the local council and believe that it (2) supports the needs of people in the area; (3) prioritizes the needs of people in the area; (4) listens to the people who visit its offices or contact the local council; (5) should play a role in governing in Syria if Assad leaves power; (6) is (not) corrupt; (7) is the best option despite its shortcomings; and (8) communicates its activities to people in the area. Each component ranges

from one to five, from lowest to highest levels of support. We display results using averaged values of the component responses to construct this variable, rescaling it to range from zero to one, but note that both additive and averaged values produce substantively similar results.

Our first key independent variable is the amount of aid provided by OTI programming in these Syrian communities. This variable is cumulative, reflecting the total amount of aid, in U.S. dollars (USD), that a community received up to and including a given collection period. We hypothesize that aid, even if disbursed in an earlier time period, has compound effects, such that it continued to influence popular perceptions in subsequent data collection periods. The amount of aid disbursed to communities during a single data collection period ranged from 0 to 1,712,283 USD, with a mean amount of 184,874 USD. The average cumulative amount of aid across communities was 501,776 USD with a range of 0 to 5,382,857 USD, as shown in Table 2 (where it is divided by 100,000). Figure 1 shows the distribution of OTI assistance across rebel-held subdistricts in Syria, demonstrating significant variation in the location and amount of aid provided between 2013 and 2016. Table 1 lists the amount of cumulative aid provided to each community.

Figure 1: USAID OTI Assistance by Sub-District, 2013-2016

Cumulative Aid Distributed

- $3,000,000+
- $1,000,000 - $3,000,000
- $500,000 - $1,000,000
- $100,000 - $500,000
- $25,000 - $100,000
- No Aid
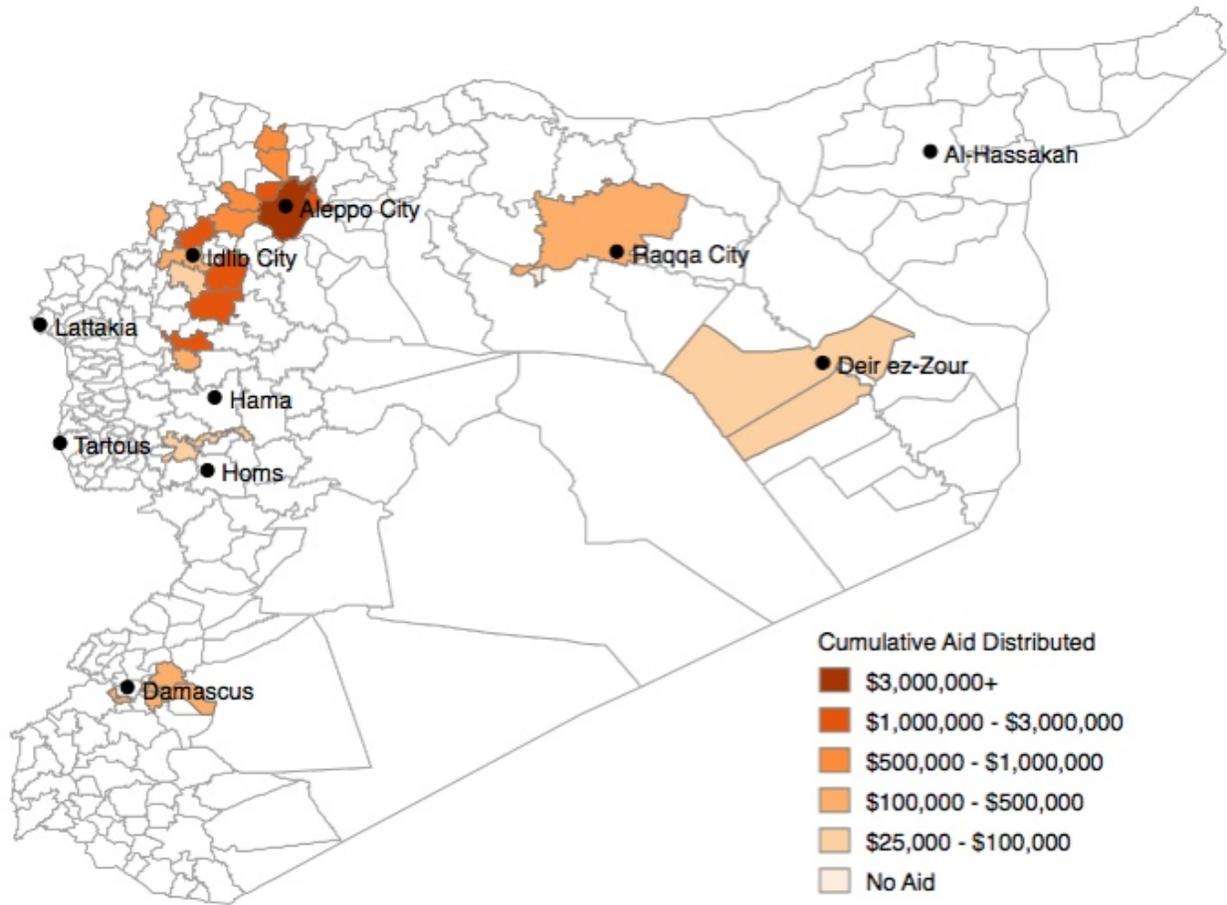
Table 1: USAID OTI Assistance by Community, 2013-2016

Province	Sub-District	Community	Cumulative Aid
Aleppo	Aleppo City	Jebel Saman	$5,382,857.00
Aleppo	A'zaz	A'zaz	$561,315.94
Aleppo	Atarib	Atarib	$789,876.38
Aleppo	Daret Azza	Daret Azza	$709,229.31
Aleppo	Haritan	Anadan	$793,568.75
Aleppo	Haritan	Haritan	$652,330.25
Aleppo	Tall Refaat	Tall Refaat	$713,426.38
Deir-ez-Zor	Deir-ez-Zor	Deir-ez-Zor City	$66,306.00
Deir-ez-Zor	Muhasan	Muhasan	$41,773.58
Homs	Ar-Rastan/Taldu	Al-Houla	$44,877.00
Hama	Kafr Zeita	Kafr Zeita	$716,015.56
Hama	Kafr Zeita	Latmana	$205,639.45
Idlib	Ariha	Ariha	$88,909.98
Idlib	Idlib	Idlib City	$215,427.63
Idlib	Maaret Tamsrin	Kafr Nabl	$1,092,731.00
Idlib	Khan Shaykun	Khan Shaykun	$1,234,552.50
Idlib	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	$1,007,315.44
Idlib	Salqin	Salqin	$245,207.83
Idlib	Saraqab	Saraqab	$1,608,787.63
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	Raqqa City	$249,268.45
Ar-Raqqa	Taqba	Taqba	None
Rural Damascus	Arbin	Arbin	$93,888.80
Rural Damascus	Markaz Darayya	Darayya	$138,424.00
Rural Damascus	Duma	Duma	$410,378.94
Rural Damascus	Maliha	Deir Elasafir	$106,883.08
Rural Damascus	Nashabiyeh	Al-Marj	$305,322.38
Rural Damascus	Kafr Batna	Saqba	$105,603.46
Total			$17,579,916.72

Our second key independent variable captures the degree of local council embeddedness, or the means by which these councils originated from and evolved within the communities they aim to govern. Recall that we hypothesize that councils that are aligned with the local revolutionary project are most likely to earn popular support. When the population sees the governing body as an imposition, an institutional manifestation of individuals, ideas, and experiences that are foreign, the provision of services is not sufficient to earn the community's faith and respect, and brutality may be used to quell resulting unrest. To operationalize this concept, we use an indicator of areas controlled by ISIS. ISIS, a largely Iraqi-led jihadi group populated mainly by non-Syrians, imposed its ideology in total and comprehensive terms that map well onto our theoretical conception of a

group that does not align with local kinship ties, customs, and beliefs.

We thus created an indicator variable for whether ISIS constituted the dominant armed actor in a community during a given collection period.[17] While armed actors established local dominance as well – including Jabhat al-Nusra or Ahrar al-Sham, the Free Syrian Army and affiliates, the People's Protection Units representing Kurdish areas, other local brigades, and the Syrian regime – ISIS was the only one that was demographically and ideologically disembedded from the communities they governed, as we described previously. During just over half (52%) of the data collection periods, the Free Syrian Army or affiliates dominated the communities of concern, while ISIS was the dominant armed actor in 21% of the communities across data collection periods, and either Jahbat al-Nusra or Ahrar al Sham dominated 17% of the communities. Other local brigades were dominant around 10% of the time and the regime and Kurdish army each were in control less than 1% of the time during the period of study.

In our first model specification, we show the results without any additional control variables. In the second column, we also include basic characteristics of the respondents as control variables. First, we include indicators of whether a respondent is Male and Employed. We also add variables indicating whether a respondent was a Muslim Sunni Kurd,[18] and the respondent's Age, Income, and level of Education. Finally, we include an indicator of whether either Jabhat al-Nusra or Ahrar al-Sham (which were commonly co-located) was the dominant armed actor in a given community JAN/AAS Control. We use an Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) model with community and data collection period fixed effects, as fixed effects are robust to many kinds of endogeneity and misspecification. Standard errors are clustered at the community level. Summary statistics are displayed in Table 2, and the model results are provided in Table 3.

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[17]We identified the predominant armed actor in each community and each data collection period through an analysis of news sources, community profiles generated by OTI, and interviews with researchers, journalists, humanitarian practitioners, and other experts on the Syrian conflict. We relied on three coders to ensure inter-coder reliability.

[18]The vast majority of respondents were Muslim Sunni Arab, with Muslim Sunni Kurd representing only about 1% of the sample, and a negligible number of respondents who were Muslim Alawite, Muslim Druze, Christian, or Other.

Table 2: Summary Statistics

	Obs	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
LC Support	13007	0.49	0.29	0.00	1.00
Aid	13605	5.02	8.94	0.00	53.83
ISIS Control	13657	0.21	0.40	0.00	1.00
JAN/AAS Control	13657	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00
Male	13605	0.43	0.49	0.00	1.00
Age	13605	35.64	14.63	16.00	98.00
Income (pre-war)	12405	1.40	0.61	1.00	3.00
Muslim Sunni Kurd	13605	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Employed	13605	0.12	0.33	0.00	1.00
Education	13605	2.44	0.81	1.00	5.00

Table 3: OLS Regression Results

	Model 1	Model 2
Aid	$0.005***$	$0.007***$
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Aid X ISIS Control	$-0.036**$	$-0.037**$
	(0.017)	(0.017)
ISIS	$-0.106**$	$-0.102**$
	(0.043)	(0.036)
JAN/AAS Control		-0.024
		(0.017)
Male		-0.000
		(0.006)
Age		-0.000
		(0.000)
Income		-0.001
		(0.003)
MuslimSunniKurd		$0.075*$
		(0.041)
Employed		$-0.022***$
		(0.005)
Education		$0.042***$
		(0.003)
Constant	$0.306***$	$0.317***$
	(0.028)	(0.025)
Observations	13007	11807

Clustered standard errors at the community level in parentheses
Community and data collection period fixed effects are included in all models
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.010

Figure 2: Marginal Effects
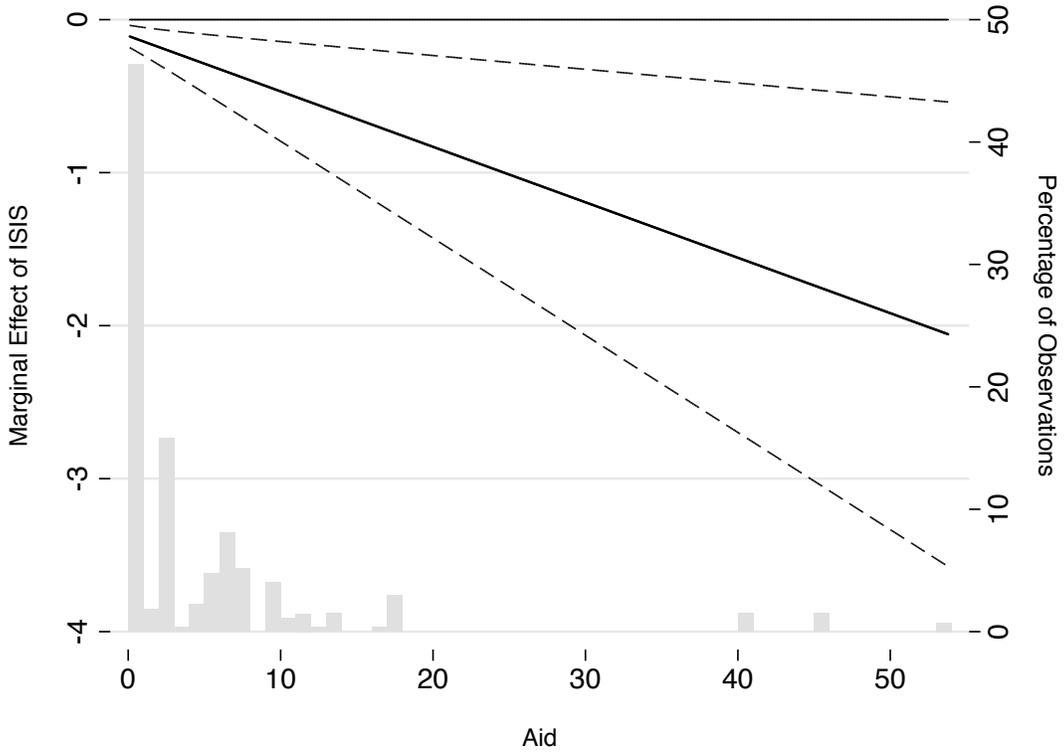
The results shown in Table 3 suggest that aid has a positive and highly statistically significant effect on how people view their councils in areas in which ISIS was not the dominant actor. The more OTI provided assistance to a community, the higher the level of support expressed by survey respondents in that community, and the relationship is significant at the 0.001 level. However, when ISIS was the dominant armed group, the relationship between aid and support is reversed. The more aid that a local council had accumulated in an ISIS dominated area, the worse perceptions of it became, as shown in Figure 2. Substantively, aid has very modest effects on opinion. In particular, going from no aid to the mean amount of aid in our sample – $500,000 USD – increases support by 0.025 points on a scale of 0-1 in areas that were not dominated by ISIS, suggesting the limits of what aid can achieve. However, this same increase in aid has a negative effect on support of −0.155 in ISIS dominated areas. This comports with our contention that if local councils are not embedded within a community, they are not supported, and that aid amplifies these negative perceptions because it magnifies the modes and methods – and therefore prominence – of these

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unpopular bodies.

This finding is robust to a series of alternative specifications, which are displayed in Table 4 in the appendix. In particular, we add additional control variables describing both respondents' attributes and the broader political context. First, we add Armed Groups Cooperate with LC and Armed Groups and LC Coexist to control for the relationship between the local councils and dominant armed groups. Second, we include Ground Attacks from Regime to control for whether ground attacks were present. Third, we include indicators of whether a given respondent worked Part Time, as a Housewife, is a Muslim Alawite, is a Muslim Druze, or is a Christian to control for additional respondent employment and religious characteristics. These results are displayed in Column 1. Next, we include an alternative measure of our key independent variable, using the value of equipment purchased with aid, shown in Column 2. We then account for nonlinearities in our aid variable by using the log of aid instead. The results of this test are shown in Column 3. In each, the effect of aid in non-ISIS areas remains positive and significant, while the effect of aid in ISIS-areas remains negative and significant. Although we emphasize that our data remain observational, the robustness of our results gives us greater confidence in our findings.[19]

In Table 5, we also display the results of OLS models that use each component of our composite dependent variable, which correspond to the eight individual questions that comprise LC Support. These include questions that reflect the degree to which people in the area support the local council (Model 1); believe that it should play a role in governing in Syria if Assad leaves power (Model 2); believe that it listens to the people who visit its offices or contact its members (Model 3); believe that it supports the needs of people in the community (Model 4); believe that the LC is not corrupt (Model 5); believe that the LC supports and prioritizes the needs of people in the area (Model 6); believe that the LC is the best option despite its shortcomings (Model 7); and believe that it communicates with the people in the area (Model 8). Each is scored on a scale from 1-5, which we again recode between 0-1. We find that our results are largely driven by the second, third, fifth, and seventh components. The effects of aid in ISIS-controlled areas are not significant at conventional levels on the remaining questions. Thus, in line with our theory,

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[19]Our data indicate that a greater proportion of respondents felt that service provision increased under ISIS dominated communities, so our effect is not likely driven in changes in service provision due to reductions in the flow of aid.

aid in ISIS-controlled areas makes respondents less likely to believe that the councils listen to the people and more likely to believe that they are corrupt. Moreover, any popular recognition that a council prioritizes service delivery ("the needs of people in the area") does not correspond with a recognition that this rebel organization reflects a politics aligned with local backgrounds, values, and aspirations. On the contrary, people are less likely to think it is the best option in the midst of the current conflict or that it should play a role after Assad leaves power.

Sentiment Analysis

As a supplement to our main results, we also used our qualitative data to assess attitudes related to foreign aid in ISIS versus non-ISIS areas. We focused on the question, "Do people in your area support the Local Council? Why/Why not?" This was followed by a prompt stating, "Consider legitimacy, responsiveness, transparency, effectiveness, fairness, accessibility, etc." Looking at sentences containing the word "aid," we compared the sentiment of surrounding words in ISIS versus non-ISIS territories. We used Senti-WordNet – a database that scores how positive or negative various words are – to assign a sentiment score to each adverb, adjective, and verb.[20] We then divided the total sentiment score by the number of sentences containing the word to control for the size of the document.

The total sentiment score for Non-ISIS controlled areas was 61.078, and the total number of words was 1,282, providing a score of 0.048 (61.078/1282). In contrast, in ISIS-controlled areas, the total sentiment score was -9.125 while the number of words was 80, resulting in a score of -0.114, and the difference between the two scores is statistically significant ($p < .01$). We thus find an overall negative score for aid in relationship with the local councils in ISIS controlled areas, whereas we find a positive relationship elsewhere. This strongly supports the findings from our main analysis, giving us increased confidence in our results.

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[20]This process first consists of a semi-supervised learning step, followed by a random walk step. This generates sentiment classification that scores how positive, negative, and objective a given term is. For example, the top-ranked positive "synsets" are "good," "better-off," and "divine," while the top negative ones are "abject," "deplorable," and "bad." See Baccianella, Esuli and Sebastiani (2010) for a description of this process.

Mechanism

We have shown a positive and statistically significant effect of aid on perceptions of local council authority in Syria, and a negative effect in ISIS-controlled areas. According to our theory, the mechanism driving these results is the degree to which the local councils originate from and evolve within the communities they aim to govern. When the population sees the governing body as an imposition – an institutional manifestation of individuals and ideas that are not their own – the provision of services is not sufficient to earn the community's faith and respect, and the group often must resort to brutality to control the population. In such cases, aid serves to magnify the foreignness of the Council: not only do foreign actors use the aid to their own benefit but also to boost their capacity to impose themselves and their agendas on others, amplifying their unwelcome presence in the community. We now investigate the mechanism driving our results using both additional statistical tests and a qualitative case study analysis.

Placebo Test

We first test whether our proposed mechanism – a group's disembeddedness from the community it governs – explains the negative relationship between aid and popular support in ISIS-controlled territories versus an alternate explanation that emphasizes its Islamist orientation. Political organizations of an Islamist persuasion have long been associated with an inclination and aptitude for service delivery (Brooke, 2019; Cammett and Issar, 2010; Cammett and Luong, 2014), and a number of Islamist armed groups operating in Syria prioritized the provision of public goods. However, these groups anchored their militancy in Salafist and Wahhabist traditions that involved a radical religio-legal platform and an abiding anti-Western posture. If these latter features of political life drove aid's poor reception in ISIS-controlled areas, we would expect a comparable negative relationship to arise in areas dominated by groups of the same ideology. To test this possibility, we interact our Aid variable with an armed actor dummy variable (JAN/AAS Control) that denotes when either Jabhat al-Nusra or Ahrar al-Sham (which were commonly co-located) was the dominant armed actor in a given community. In our sample, this covers 17% of our observations.

As shown in Column 4 of Table 4, we find no distinction between the impact of aid on support in communities dominated by these two groups versus those affiliated with the so-called

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"moderate" opposition, such as the Free Syrian Army. This suggests that the Salafist ideology alone cannot explain differences in the effect of aid on public perceptions of opposition governance.

Case Study: ISIS in Raqqa City

We further probe the mechanism driving our results with a case study on Raqqa City, which features variation in our key independent variables and constitutes an important city substantively. In particular, Raqqa was the first provincial capital liberated from the Assad regime through the combined efforts of two Free Syrian Army brigades, alongside the forces of Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat-al-Nusra in March 2013. It was subsequently captured and declared the capital of the Islamic State in 2014. Our analysis of Raqqa relies on fifteen in-depth interviews of local residents administered by the independent research firm contracted by USAID/OTI, which represent unique new perspectives from people living in Raqqa under ISIS. The interviews solicited information about why people did or did not support local institutions and about how they perceived institutional accessibility, visibility, representativeness, accountability, transparency, and civil-military relations. We show that because the Local Council membership was composed of people native to Raqqa and oriented toward the larger revolutionary project, aid translated into improved perceptions of its authority as a governing institution, but that this was not true after ISIS took power.

The population of Raqqa City elected a civilian local council in February 2014, which became a recipient of U.S. assistance. ISIS forces entered Raqqa City in January 2014 but allowed the council to continue its operations until the summer of that year. Thereafter, ISIS converted the council – both in name and membership – into the Islamic Services Administration and continued to operate through that administration in 2015 and 2016. Our data indicates that USAID was no longer providing support to Raqqa by late 2014; however, Raqqa City had received approximately 250,000 USD of cumulative aid through USAID-sponsored stabilization initiatives between 2013 and 2014 (before ISIS dissolved the LC). Aid was provided exclusively in the form of material support (rather than stipends or trainings) for waste management, infrastructure, emergency response and education sectors. Once ISIS consolidated control in Raqqa, the Islamic State was in a position to exploit the aid that had already accrued and to proceed with its own service delivery, using those means alongside other instruments of capital accumulation.

Prior to the ISIS takeover, the aid-enabled service delivery seems to have enhanced popular

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perceptions of the civilian council. Five of our fifteen interviews took place before ISIS had consolidated its control, and all five were very positive, citing the council's service provision – bolstered by OTI's aid – as a key reason for their support. Respondents reported receiving much-needed public services including electricity, water, food baskets, waste management, school supplies, stipends for teachers and medical care. One resident explained, "I think it is effective because I have seen sanitation workers and water tankers. Everybody knows they work hard."[21] Another said, "It was very effective. We saw its services, projects and assistance provided to us. Concerning my neighborhood, they used to send relief and clean the roads, and they maintained the sewerage system and sent vaccination campaigns."[22]

Moreover, residents made clear that this service provision increased their support of the Council because it was considered "legitimate" and "clear and transparent."[23] As another resident put it, "they are honest people."[24] Indeed, respondents indicated that the Local Council was emblematic of the revolution owing to a membership that hailed from within Raqqa. This Council was aligned with the principles of the revolution as conceived of by the people of Raqqa and staffed by them as well. Recalling the civilian provincial council after it had been supplanted by ISIS, one respondent described its welcome presence as an indigenous institution, as "they were from among us and not imposed on us."[25] Another resident explained, "It was fully legitimate. Because it had no foreign members, all its members were sons of the city and are revolutionists [revolutionaries]. It was the only place that was still raising the flag of the revolution."[26]

In contrast, the ISIS-imposed Islamic Services Administration (ISA) earned widespread antipathy among our respondents. All ten of those interviewed after ISIS's take-over reported learning about the work of the Islamic State through their own observations of its activities, and forming a negative opinion. Respondents made clear that the Islamic Services Administration did not reflect their community or their culture and, as such, came from a different place – literally and metaphorically. They expressed their sense that the Islamic State was a political, social, economic,

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[21]Interview 2. 2014.

[22]Interview 3. 2014.

[23]Interview 5. 2014

[24]Interview 4. 2014.

[25]Interview 8. 2015.

[26]Interview 3. 2014.

and ideological imposition, a project derived and managed from a place foreign to them. One respondent stated, "The province has become forced to wear a veil just like women have and this council wears a mask just like ISIS does ... There is no connection between the people and ISIS."[27] This political favoritism and extractive, even extortionist, approach bred resentment. For example, a respondent stated, "How can I support this ISIS organization?! ISIS is like a virus and we shouldn't support it or any other thing that belongs to this virus."[28] Moreover, several respondents stressed the degree to which popular engagement with the new administration on certain issues was impossible. For example, a respondent said, "You have to understand that we don't have a real council here at the moment. What we have is just a hand that belongs to the [ISIS] body. The owner of the body controls his hand – no one else can."[29]

As a result, while our respondents characterized the ISA as in control, visibly active, and effective in certain sectors, reporting a range of activities it had undertaken related to electricity, water, telecom, roads, sewage, garbage collection, street lights, and food baskets, they did not support the political project that undergirded this version of service delivery. Unlike the previous LC, ISIS channeled aid and other resources in the service of an aspiring counter-state anchored in a sharia-based framework and the promulgation of strict social codes related to dress, religious observance, entertainment, and socializing, reminiscent of Taliban rule in Afghanistan (Cole, 2003). One respondent explained, "they only give people crumbs. They even sometimes take money from people who are treated in hospitals that belong to people but which have been hijacked by ISIS." The resident added, "ISIS members refuse to give people money unless they have some connection with ISIS."[30] Even when much-needed services were provided, they did not assuage popular resentment; as one respondent stated, "The Islamic Services Administration provides people with all sorts of services such as electricity, water, health and all sectors, but we are against them because they have a different culture from ours."[31] Another resident said, "it doesn't provide anything that makes people accept them or like them."[32] A third respondent explained, "Last year before ISIL

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[27]Interview 11. May 2015.
[28]Interview 11. May 2015.
[29]Interview 9, May 2015.
[30]Interview 13. May 2015.
[31]Interview 7. May 2015.
[32]Interview 13. May 2015.

rule, we had a vibrant civil society...Today we have all black, despite the better services that come from the ideology of intimidation. But we know this is not what we want."[33]

Conclusion

Western governments, affiliated donor agencies, and non-governmental organizations have employed foreign aid for several decades in the developing world as part of an effort to encourage democratic politics and good governance. Western engagement with the Syrian opposition since 2011 represents the latest campaign in this effort. Significant scholarly evidence suggests a limited relationship between foreign aid, service delivery, and this kind of sustained political and institutional change. However, we have proposed that foreign support to local civilian institutions associated with a rebellion in the midst of a civil war can have a positive effect on residents' perceptions because these institutions and the people they serve are part of a larger opposition movement. In contrast, aid has a negative effect in areas without embedded institutions, since the services are delivered by disfavored institutions, magnifying their unpopular presence and practices.[34] Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of new data from Syria support our contention that people living amidst civil war make a distinction between their appreciation for organizations that deliver much-needed services and their bestowal of political authority on these organizations. This suggests that political authority cannot be coopted through the provision of public goods and depends, instead, on a kind of institutional embeddedness within the local articulation of revolutionary politics.

Our study helps to inform theories of foreign aid and rebel governance, as reviewed previously, as well as theories of international intervention more generally.[35] We have shown that existing theories of aid delivery may need to be modified when applied to an active war zone by acknowledging the complex relationship between public good provision and localized political and civil-military dynamics that we have exposed in the Syrian case. This research also raises new directions for future work. For example, while we analyze the impact of a particular type of aid

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[33]Interview 7. May 2015. On ISIS service provision, see Byman 2016; Sullivan 2015.

[34]For the negative effects of publicizing violations of norms on legitimacy see Carnegie and Carson 2018, 2019.

[35]On the limits of Western intervention on behalf of democracy promotion, see Abu-Lughod (2013); Bush (2017); Chandler (2006); Mamdani (2010); Posen (2014); Woodward (2017).

from a particular donor, these effects may differ depending on the source of foreign assistance and the form that it takes.[36]

More broadly, our findings suggest limits on the capacity of foreign forces – whether a transnational Islamist movement, the U.S. military, a regional organization, or a UN peace-building operation to ''win hearts and minds." The cultivation of governing authority on behalf of a beleaguered state or a rebel counter-state appears to be contingent on a set of non-material political associations that can neither be forced nor bought but must, instead, be embedded. Foreign interventions aimed at rebuilding relationships between governments, rebel or otherwise, and their citizens may therefore be limited in the kinds of political change they can generate as a function of the embeddedness of their partners and beneficiaries. At the same time, foreign interveners concerned with countering insurgency and extremism must also recognize the import of an aspiring rebel governor's position in the surrounding social context. Our findings reveal a comparative advantage on the part of Jabhat al-Nusra vis-a-vis the Islamic State in this regard: despite their shared jihadist ideology, the former proved not only capable of service delivery but also of situating itself within local solidarities. This kind of institutional and political agility may portend its resilience and reach as an insurgent force.

Finally, the dramatic transition we encountered in Raqqa, from a Western-funded Local Council to the ISIS-sponsored Islamic Services Administration, reflects the dynamism of civil war and popular attitudes therein. It also highlights the vulnerability of any aid effort to cooptation or collapse if the facts on the ground change. As the United States and other donors seek to reform their approaches to stabilizing and improving governance in conflict-affected states,[37] our findings suggest that the embeddedness of local partners may be a prerequisite for effective assistance.

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[36]The source of interference has been shown to matter in related contexts, e.g. Bush and Prather (2018).

[37]See, for example, the 2018 U.S. interagency Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR): `https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/283589.pdf`.

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Appendix

Contents

A   Robustness Checks

Table 4: OLS Regression Results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Aid	0.007∗∗∗	0.007∗∗∗	0.117∗∗∗	0.007∗∗∗
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.036)	(0.001)
Aid X ISIS Control	−0.028∗∗	−0.038∗∗	−0.158∗∗	−0.037∗∗
	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.055)	(0.017)
ISIS	−0.041	−0.103∗∗	−0.070∗	−0.098∗∗
	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.044)
Aid X JAN/AAS Control				−0.002
				(0.008)
JAN/AAS	−0.014	−0.024	−0.049∗∗	−0.009
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.062)
Male	0.003	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Age	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Income	−0.002	−0.001	−0.000	−0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Muslim Sunni Kurd	0.092∗∗	0.075∗	0.061	0.075∗
	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Employed	−0.022∗∗∗	−0.022∗∗∗	−0.020∗∗∗	−0.022∗∗∗
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Education	0.042∗∗∗	0.042∗∗∗	0.043∗∗∗	0.042∗∗∗
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Armed Groups Cooperate with LC	0.012			
	(0.022)			
Armed Groups Coexist with LC	0.136∗∗∗			
	(0.016)			
Ground Attacks from Regime	−0.006			
	(0.008)			
Part Time	0.011			
	(0.023)			
Housewife	−0.011			
	(0.009)			
Muslim Alawite	0.043∗			
	(0.020)			
Muslim Druze	0.019∗∗			
	(0.008)			
Christian	0.085∗∗∗			
	(0.016)			
Constant	0.255∗∗∗	0.318∗∗∗	0.205∗∗∗	0.316∗∗∗
	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.057)	(0.026)
Observations	11220	11807	11807	11807
Pseudo R^2				

Standard errors in parentheses

∗$p < 0.10$, ∗∗$p < 0.05$, ∗∗∗$p < 0.01$

B   DV Constituent Parts

Table 5: OLS Regression Results

	Model 1 (People Support LC)	Model 2 (Post Assad Role)	Model 3 (Listens)	Model 4 (Supports Needs)	Model 5 (Not Corrupt)	Model 6 (Prioritizes Needs)	Model 7 (Best Option)	Model 8 (Communicates)
Aid	0.005***	0.008***	0.008***	0.008***	0.007***	0.007***	0.008***	0.009***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Aid X ISIS Control	−0.001	−0.043**	−0.056**	0.006	−0.048**	0.026*	−0.040**	−0.042**
	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.019)
ISIS	−0.093**	−0.068	−0.091**	−0.132**	−0.073***	−0.087***	−0.107**	−0.119**
	(0.035)	(0.055)	(0.040)	(0.046)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.049)	(0.046)
JAN/AAS Control	−0.016	−0.018	−0.018	−0.025	−0.024*	−0.046***	0.000	−0.043
	(0.016)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.032)
Male	−0.002	−0.003	0.000	0.002	0.004	−0.001	0.004	−0.001
	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Age	−0.000	0.000	−0.000	0.000	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Income	−0.005	−0.002	−0.007	−0.000	0.007	0.000	−0.009*	−0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Muslim Sunni Kurd	0.067	0.084**	0.115**	0.061	0.080	0.084**	0.084*	0.059
	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.054)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.054)
Employed	−0.022***	−0.017**	−0.020***	−0.018**	−0.016**	−0.047***	−0.021***	−0.028***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Education	0.049***	0.052***	0.045***	0.047***	0.032***	0.060***	0.044***	0.043***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Constant	0.306***	0.281***	0.270***	0.247***	0.459***	0.301***	0.317***	0.262***
	(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.035)	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.029)
Observations	11234	11244	11302	11269	11461	8124	11301	11279

Clustered standard errors at the community level in parentheses

Community and data collection period fixed effects are included in all models

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.010