

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

NETWORKS, INFORMAL GOVERNANCE, AND ETHNIC  
VIOLENCE IN A SYRIAN CITY

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## RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

### *Qualitative data*

This article draws on interviews with Homs residents; memoirs and secondary literature written by researchers and journalists specialized on Homs; local newspapers; oral histories collected by a Syrian non-governmental organization; and official documents composed by the Syrian government and international organizations. I interviewed over one hundred Syrians, thirty-five of whom were from or had spent significant time living and working in Homs. These interviews took place over the course of twelve months of fieldwork between 2013 and 2015, primarily in Lebanon. I gained access to interlocutors through personal connections made during previous stays in Syria and professional contacts in Lebanon. I followed a snowball technique, asking interlocutors to put me in touch with their contacts with experience and information relevant to the project.

I took care to ensure adequate representation of subjects with varied ethnic identity, class background, and neighborhood provenance. Twenty-eight of my interlocutors were born and raised in Homs. The remaining seven spent multiple years living and working in the city as students, journalists, or urban planners. In terms of ethnic background, eight of the Homs residents interviewed were 'Alawi, four were Christian, and sixteen were Sunni. They came from a variety of neighborhoods (nine from neighborhoods classified in this article as *spontaneous*, seven *cosmopolitan*, and twelve *old popular*) and had a variety of occupations, including commerce, manual labor, government service, and the liberal professions. I withhold the names of my interlocutors due to the sensitive nature of the topics discussed. Further demographic information, such as ethnic identity, occupation, and neighborhood provenance is given as it bears on the interlocutor's expertise and credibility.

Formal interviews lasted between thirty minutes and four hours. I met seventeen interlocutors multiple times; several became friends with whom I spent significant leisure time. Initial interviews followed a semi-structured format, covering the interlocutor's personal history (including class and family background, education, and neighborhood of upbringing), their understanding of intra- and inter-neighborhood relations, and their experience of the 2011 uprising. I added additional questions based upon the expertise of interview subjects (e.g., additional questions on urban fabric and social structure for urban planners, on detail of events for participants in and eyewitnesses to contentious events).

In spite of my best efforts to interview a wide range of Homs residents, I have less material on regime-connected businessmen and residents of informal 'Alawi quarters than other segments of the city's population; these populations tended to remain in Syria and be less willing to talk with a foreign researcher than other Homs residents. I was, however, able to interview several members of these groups who have left Syria. Their statements, coupled with secondary materials, provide suggestive evidence of the posited mechanisms. It also merits mention that my interlocutors were predominantly male (30 of 35); I would have liked to interview a greater number of women, but the conservative nature of many of the communities in the study made this difficult for a male researcher. For the same reason, however, most of the primary movers in the events under study were men; the conclusions drawn here, on patterns of short-term mobilization, should therefore not be as greatly affected by the gender of my interlocutors as if I were studying support of extended insurgency, changes in family structure, or the phenomenological experience of actors in conflict.

The article also relies extensively on local secondary sources. It draws on the independent newspaper *Zaman al-Wasl* and state-affiliated *al-Uruba* (which had, at the time of writing, searchable databases dating back to 2005 and 2006, respectively) and narratives written by local residents and journalists; these sources offer a variety of perspectives on social structure and contentious events, making triangulation and cross-checking across sources possible. I also employ government documents, obtained from technocrats who left the country and online repositories. These reports concern the formal legal status and levels of service provision in local communities the state considered anodyne (and ignore topics like ethnicity, which I broached in interviews and gleaned from published narratives). As such, the risk of bias in government documents, for the purposes to which they are put in this article, is less than it would be on more sensitive topics.

Basic data on consanguinity, state employment, and ethnic composition that could easily be obtained from a single survey are unavailable at the sub-city level. This reflects the reticence of the Syrian regime to broach any topic relating to ethnic identity, as well as the limited capacity of the state to collect this information. A UN agency report noted that more than half of municipal level Syrian government employees have a primary education or less, and fewer than a fifth have any post-secondary education. The report also noted that, “Maintaining statistics and data is not a regular part of municipal work: data is often collected on an ad hoc basis, as requested by higher authorities.”<sup>1</sup> As a substitute for these data, I asked interlocutors about their impressions of the ethnic, kinship, and occupational characteristics of their neighborhoods; because the impressions of individuals absent proper surveys offer an inherently limited perspective, I employ documented sequences of events to illustrate the relationships of interest, rather than a correlational analysis based upon discrete coding of neighborhoods.

### *Quantitative data*

Data on challenger and civilian fatalities provide the one form of systematic quantitative evidence available on Homs. Data used in figure 3 are taken from the database of the Violations Documentation Center (VDC).<sup>2</sup> This project is a European-funded initiative of Syrian activists that grew out of pre-uprising civil society networks and civic organizations founded in the uprising’s early years. One important feature of this data is that it reports individuals’ home neighborhood, which is the variable by which they are classified in the main text. An alternate database, from the Syrian Shuhada project, lists where they were killed (see figure A1).<sup>3</sup> Syrian Shuhada merges data from VDC and another internationally-recognized NGO, the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies (DCHRS), and adds further information on neighborhood-level death locations. VDC and DCHRS are both affiliated with international human rights networks and a UN-commissioned analysis of several Syria fatality databases notes that both are consistent with the best available sources and limit duplication of records.<sup>4</sup> Neighborhood boundaries are taken from the United Nations Cartographic Section<sup>5</sup>; population data come from the 2004 Syrian national census<sup>6</sup>; the extent of urban development in 2010 is taken from archived satellite

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<sup>1</sup> UN ESCWA 2001: 12.

<sup>2</sup> VDC 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Syrian Shuhada 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Price et al. 2013.

<sup>5</sup> UNCS 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics 2004.

images<sup>7</sup>; the boundaries of neighborhood types are taken from print sources<sup>8</sup> and my interviews with Homs residents; and sectarian geography is taken from a recent report by a researcher specialized in the demography of Homs.<sup>9</sup> City-level fatality data mentioned in the text are taken from the Syria Tracker database, which offers a geolocated version of the Syrian Shuhada data.<sup>10</sup> The cross-city comparison of fatality rates defines urban areas as those within a ten-kilometer radius of the city's geographic center, as defined in the aforementioned UN maps. Neighborhood-level population density and family size figures are calculated from the 2004 census.

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<sup>7</sup> Google Earth Pro 2017.

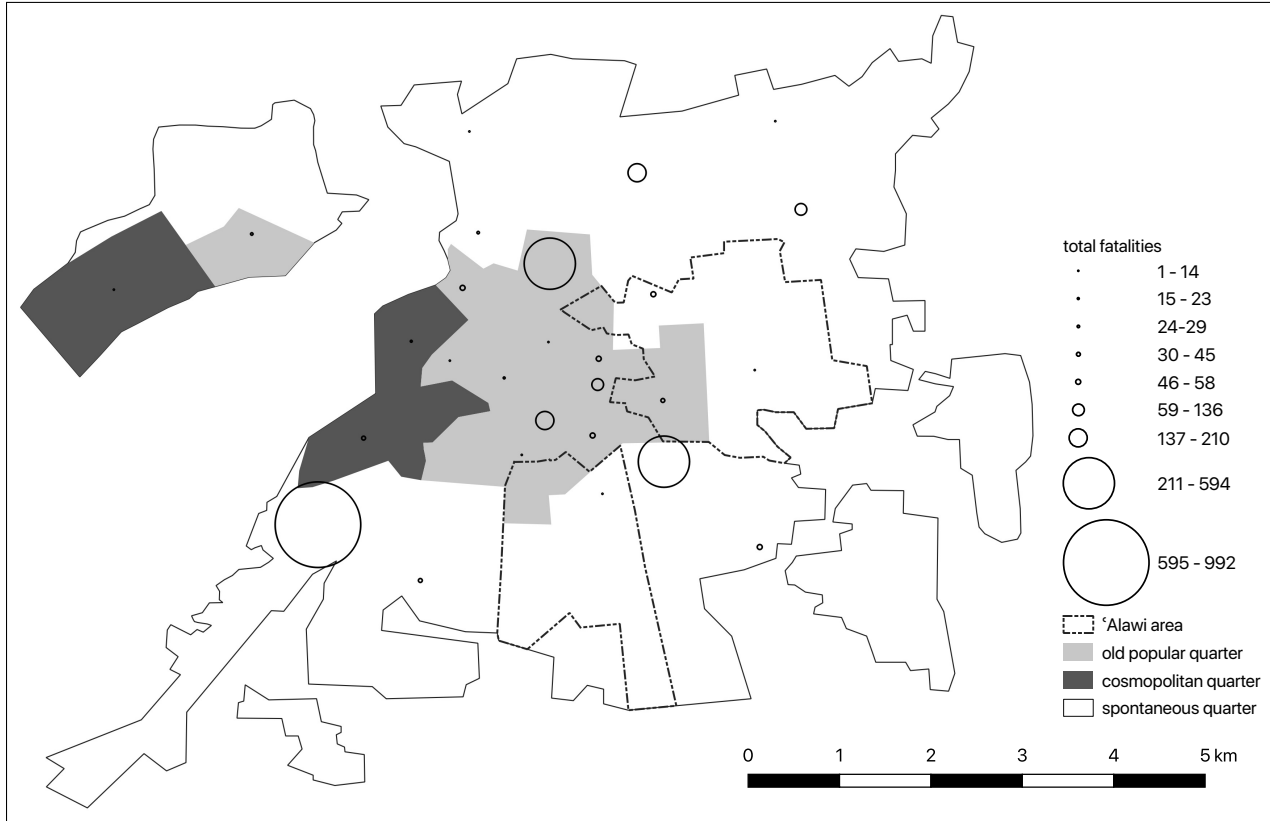
<sup>8</sup> Al-Dbiyat 1995; al-Sabouni, Marwa. 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Nakkash 2013: 5.

<sup>10</sup> Kass-Hout 2016.

Figure A1: Deaths over time in Homs, by place of death

(a) cumulative fatalities, March 15, 2011 - March 15, 2012



(b) by neighborhood type (column percentages)

	Mar. '11 - Apr. '11	May '11- Sept. '11	Oct. '11 - Mar. '12	<i>all</i> <i>periods</i>	city pop.
cosmopolitan	0	4	2	<i>2</i>	8
old popular	38	52	35	<i>37</i>	30
spontaneous	62	44	63	<i>61</i>	62
	100	100	100	<i>100</i>	100
total count	58	348	2610	<i>3016</i>	

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