UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DIALOGUE AS A FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: SYRIAN COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND MEMORY, ACTOR MAPPING, AND PERSPECTIVES ON SYRIA

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2017

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DIALOGUE AS A FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: SYRIAN COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND MEMORY, ACTOR MAPPING, AND PERSPECTIVES ON SYRIA

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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For George.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my advisor and chair, Dr. Paul Spicer, for his encouragement and guidance during this process. I would also like to thank my doctoral committee: Dr. Tassie Hirschfeld, Dr. David Sabatini, Dr. Lori Jervis, and Dr. KG Anderson for their support and insight. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Diane Warren and Dr. Robert Dreibelbis for their guidance and support throughout my time at OU. I also must thank the Sovereignty First team for their help during the process. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Eric Wolterstorff for the opportunity to work at Sovereignty First and introducing the field of trauma to my project. A huge thank you to Karen Dickman for her invaluable work during the interview process. This work would not have been possible without her and the rest of the interview and translation team, including Mohammad Samman, Souad Ajaan, Heather Payne, Hanan Romodan, and Craig Coletta. I also would like to thank Ambassador John W. McDonald, Colonial John Agoglia, Nancy Bearg, and Ambassador John Herbst for their support of Sovereignty First's work and this project. A special thank you to Ambassador Robert Orr for his advice to take the chance and move to Washington D.C. to work before finishing my degree.

And of course, I would also like to thank all of my family and friends for their support and encouragement. A huge thank you to Jim, my core support, helping me through every day of this process. To George and Karl, who helped me write on days when it was hard. To my sisters, Juliet and Nicole, for your unwavering support and love. And of course thank you to Stuliet for hosting me during my many trips back to Norman. You guys are the best. To all those who helped make my time in Oklahoma an

incredible experience, especially Qyle, Will, Stephen, and Andy, thank you. I also need to thank Karen and Duane Evans for their support during this process, particularly in the form of dinners and shelter. I would like to thank everyone who helped me get to this point, specifically my parents, my brother Chris, my grandmothers, Fran and Rita Rae, and my Aunt Cindy. I would be remiss if I did not thank Mrs. Martin, whose kitchen table I grew up at, for her support, love, and adequate prep for the ungodly amounts of caffeine graduate school required. Lastly, I would like to thank my mom, who showed me that "cannot" had no place in my vocabulary.

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Abstract

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman called upon the global North to aid the "underdeveloped" global South. With Truman's "Point Four" declaration, the United States sought to combat the rising threat of communism with democracy and free markets. However, the concept of modernization through Westernization is deeply rooted in colonial-imperial relations, and "development" has been the mechanism for transmission in the post-colonial world. Further, development discourse acts to create and control "underdeveloped" countries as incapable and "backwards." Anthropologists have been at the forefront of criticizing "development," and in particular the development discourse as it constructs "underdeveloped" countries. The development discourse is powerful, and has shaped development actions and methods, such as the pervasive "expert" model. The "expert" model and the technocratic elite frame poverty – and potential solutions – as technical that can be assuaged by "advanced" Western "experts." The "expert" model serves to reinforce "developed" countries as capable, while simultaneously constructing "underdeveloped" countries as the opposite. Worse still, those "underdeveloped" countries are not reaping benefits of "being developed," and in many cases, "being developed" has created more poverty, conflict, and strife.

Yet, human development is essential, and it not without its successes, particularly in access to medical care and the global decrease of infectious diseases. However, "developed" countries became wealthy and "advanced" by exploiting countries now described as "underdeveloped." The wealth accumulated by "developed" countries serves to insulate them and results in differential disease patterns. One of the main points of this research is to provide an alternative model for development

dialogue, which will hopefully lead to better development projects. This research applied an old method – the Delphi method – to a new field, in order to generate better development dialogue with a more diverse set of actors. With the inclusion of more diverse voices, the Delphi method levels the power imbalances at play by keeping the facilitated dialogue anonymous and weighing all participant equally. In addition, the generated dialogue provides insight into three components currently missing in development by examining Syrian collective trauma and memory, peer-assessment political actor mapping, and the political, economic, social, and cultural state of Syria.

With many societies experiencing dislocations, dialogue centered on collective trauma and memory is an essential component to understanding group identity and narratives. Collective (cultural) traumas are traumatic events that are experienced and internalized by a group. Social life is interrupted, and in some way, social bonds and norms are damaged to make social life more unpredictable and chaotic. Collective traumas can act as cohesive agents for the in-group, while disrupt bonds and trust with the constructed out-group. Memories of cultural traumas are internalized collective narratives, and are often critical components of understanding group identity. The generated dialogue on Syrian collective trauma and memory provide insight into Syrian identity and constructed narratives of Syria acting as a hero, victim, bystander, and perpetrator – necessary context when planning and implementing national development initiatives, particularly in a country currently experiencing a chronic trauma.

Additionally, peer-assessment of local, regional, and international actors contextualizes political relations, power dynamics, and intentions of each actor. An understanding of the political context better precludes development agencies from

imperceptibly acting politically, while also enabling less powerful actors to find common ground. Lastly, the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions in this research provide a glimpse into the current situation and priorities of the actors, which must be used to avoid the critical (and common) development mistake of Western "experts" deciding for the rest. These dimensions provide *a* starting point in the conversation about priorities, which should inform any development initiative. Layered together, these components provide the foundation for more comprehensive and productive dialogue. Ultimately, the goal is to change the conversation in development and provide a foundation for better development and post-conflict reconstruction *for Syria by Syrians.*

Chapter 1: Anthropology and the History of "Development"

From the start, development's hidden agenda was nothing else than the Westernization of the world.
Wolfgang Sachs (2010, 4)

Harry S. Truman's 1949 inauguration speech, also known as the "Point Four" declaration, called upon the global North to aid the "underdeveloped"[1] South (Sachs 2010, Escobar 1984, 1995, Ekbladh 2006). Suddenly, the global North had a tangible problem to solve: those countries named as "underdeveloped" could be "advanced" to become more like the West. In the minds of many "development" scholars, this speech was the start of "development" discourse and the "development apparatus" (Sachs 2010, Escobar 1984, 1995). However, the ideas of development go back much further – development is deeply rooted in colonialism and the conceptualization of "progress." Discourse surrounding "progress" arose from the European "Enlightenment" – comparing those who were "civilized," "scientific," and "advanced," to those deemed still in the "Dark Ages," who were considered "primitive," "superstitious," and "backward." Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 further played into the ideas of human advancement, influencing many philosophers, including Durkheim, Marx, and Engels, to imagine societies moving through an evolution from "backward" to "advanced" (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

Ideas of "progress" and societal evolution are closely associated with colonialism – native populations were described as "primitive" and "backwards," having "superstitions" instead of religion (Said 1978). The discourse around "progress" post-"Enlightenment" is eerily similar to the development discourse appearing post-

[1] This is the first documented use of "underdeveloped" (Neal 1998, Gardner and Lewis 1996).

WWII (Gardner and Lewis 1996). However, at the time of Truman's speech, most Westerners viewed the "Point Four" declaration not as neo-colonialism, but as an extension of the New Deal into the international realm (Ekbladh 2006). In fact, Truman wanted to simultaneously distance himself from colonialism and imperialism (Gardner and Lewis 1996) while using aid to combat the rising threat of communism with the idea of Westernization through modernization (Sachs 2010). Modernization theory dominated development during the height of the Cold War in the 1950's and 1960's as many former colonies gained independence (Gardner and Lewis 2015), and many development theories, models, and best practices are still based on the idea that the United States is the "beacon on the hill"[2] (Sachs 2010). Westernization, through the spread of technology and knowledge, was to "modernize" the "Third World," ensuring they would turn away from communism and the Soviet Union, and remain firmly within the United States' control. Development could simultaneously act to "modernize" the world and in effect halt communism by imposing democracy and free markets (Sachs 2010).

'Big-D' Development – or the intervention on previously named "Third World" countries –then, became the mechanism for colonial transmission in the post-colonial world. Big-D Development "emerged in the context of decolonialization and the cold war," with 'little d' development describing "the development of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes" (Hart 2001, 650). In the 1970's, the neo-Marxist dependency theory gained popularity in development and among academics. The foundation of dependency theory is the

[2] Originally suggested by the Founding Fathers, and now applied to the U.S. as the goal of development (Sachs 2010).

inherently exploitative nature of capitalism, and the theory "understands underdevelopment as embedded within particular political structures" (Gardner and Lewis 2015, 24) Dependency theory depicts the global North as the centre (or the core of capitalism) and the global South as the periphery. When the centre incorporated the periphery into capitalism, it did so unequally. The exploitation of the periphery by the centre for raw goods created their dependency on the centre's foreign markets. Importantly, unlike modernization theory, dependency theory asks "who gets what from development?" (Gardner and Lewis 2015). However, the lingering conceptualization of societal evolution influenced dependency and modernization theories, as both assume a passive population "being developed," and are dependent upon an evolution from capitalism to communism, or as capitalism as the end-goal, respectively (Gardner and Lewis 2015). However, dependency theory, with other neo-Marxist analyses, promptly lost favor among academics and practitioners with the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1980's. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama declared that the ideas of the West had won, and that liberal democracies were the "final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1989, 4). The backlash against statist models paralleled the shift away from neo-Marxist analyses, and led to the post-modern critiques of the 1990's. Still, despite the feeling that neo-Marxist critiques are now passé, the politicization of Development remains a lasting impact of dependency theory: the development apparatus has never again been perceived as acting neutrally (Gardner and Lewis 2015).

Creation of the Development Apparatus

The first arms of the development apparatus (Ferguson 1990) were created in 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Bretton Woods was the first international monetary conference post-WWII and sought to begin the institutions and agreements required to rebuild war-torn countries. However, despite the invitation to delegates from forty-four countries, proposals from delegates representing the global South were not seriously considered, and the major players at the event were the United States and the United Kingdom (Goldman 2005). And still, despite objections from the UK, the biggest "accomplishments" of the conference were the creation of two major institutions – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), now more commonly known as the World Bank (U.S. Department of State Archive). In the beginning, the World Bank's focus was lending to Europe and Japan; however, shortly after its inception, in 1947, the United States Government drafted a reconstruction plan for those war-torn countries. The Marshall Plan was a multi-billion dollar "gift" to Western European countries to help them recover post-WWII, and was a smashing success. This created a need for the World Bank to reinvent itself as lending to Western European countries was no longer a viable option. The Bank then turned to non-Western – "underdeveloped" – countries (Goldman 2005), shifting from reconstruction to Development. (Gardner and Lewis 2015).

> In sum, after its inception, the Bank's mission shifted from reconstruction of Europe to development of Europe's remaining and former colonies, and from intervention not as bilateral representatives of eroding empires but as a multilateral apolitical doyen of the new global economy. The odds of success were not good. (Goldman 2005, 60)

The World Bank is controlled by the "Big Five" – the United States, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, and France – hence, all decisions are ultimately made to benefit them. With the "Big Five" in control, the shift in lending from Western to non-Western countries created an all too familiar colonial-imperial power dynamic between borrower and lender. The World Bank increased regulation and altered the standards by which they lent – yet, no red flags were raised as this dynamic was the norm between Western and non-Western countries (Goldman 2005).

Additionally, much of the success of the Marshall Plan was the hands-off approach by the United States —it was *for Europe by Europeans*.

> It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this government to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. (Dean Acheson "My Years in the State Department" in Ghani and Lockhart 2008, 88)

In General Marshall's famous speech at Harvard University in 1947, he provided vague details of the forthcoming plan, but emphasized that America's role was to provide aid and support for an economic plan that must be created through European agreements and initiatives. Despite the subtle anti-Soviet underpinnings of the speech, the Euro-centric plan hoped to include the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe. The Soviets remained cautious, but open, leading up to talks at the Paris Conference on the Marshall Plan (Parrish and Narinsky 1994). But, as details of the plan emerged during the conference, the Marshall Plan "appeared as an attempt to use American economic power to undermine the newly established Soviet buffer zone in Eastern Europe" and the Soviet Union, with the other Eastern European states, quickly removed themselves

from participation (Parrish and Narinsky 1994, 26) The reaction of the Soviet Union to aid money offered by the United States helped construct (and confirm) narratives of their intrinsic hostility and aggression. To some, the Soviet Union declining the Marshall Plan was an act of war, and an explicit statement of their desire to control Europe. Within this context, the Marshall Plan was defensive. However, the Marshall Plan is easily constructed as an aggressive step towards integrating all non-capitalist states into capitalism, and the Soviet Union's rejection of the plan an obvious rejection of global capitalism and an implicit subservience to the West. The Marshall Plan and the Soviet's reaction transformed Soviet policy and strategy, ultimately helping to trigger the Cold War (Parrish and Narinsky 1994).

Despite the rising tensions with the Soviet Union, the Marshall Plan was successful in rebuilding Western Europe. But, when the World Bank shifted from reconstruction to development, they took a new approach was taken to dealing with the remaining and former colonies. In addition to new standards for borrowing money, a practice of prescriptive planning by Western "experts" replaced the more hands-off *for the people by the people* approach. Any lessons learned from the Marshall Plan were promptly ignored, including the fact that the European Cooperation Administration had rejected four alternatives to the plan. These rejected plans, which included bilateral agreements, commodity screening, the project approach, and the direct management of policy, are now predominately used for "development" practices in the former colonies (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). These uncritical development standards, with prescriptive planning and "unworkable" models (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, 88), which emerged from the colonial-imperial relations, was swiftly institutionalized by multilateral

organizations. Further, the World Bank – and other such institutions – then stood strong on their resolve to be "apolitical," with no direct control over policy, a feat that no doubt could have never been possible (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

Between the late 1940s and early 1970s, the field of international development was mostly concerned with technology transfer and infrastructure (Ingersoll 1977). Development agencies called on some anthropologists to use local knowledge to increase the efficacy of this technology adoption (Singer and Baer 2008, Wiley and Allen 2013, Escobar 1991). However, there was little overall consideration of local knowledge and context. The development apparatus existed to "gift" the "underdeveloped" global South with the knowledge and technology of the North (Goldman 2005). Overall, the support for this development in the United States remained large; despite a changing of the guard in the 1950s with the Eisenhower administration solidly in the "trade, not aid" camp, and grew to its peak in the early 1960s after Kennedy was elected. President Kennedy began the decade by forming the United Sates Agency for International Development (USAID)[3] from its preceding development agencies and throwing the full support of his administration behind its efforts.

Halfway through the "Decade of Development," however, support began declining financially,[4] and many Americans became increasingly disillusioned with the concept of development. One of the main reasons for this disillusionment was the Vietnam War, in which development and military endeavors became tightly entangled with the goal modernizing the Vietnamese. The Strategic Hamlet Programs (1961-1963)

[3] USAID was formed in 1961 through executive order (Executive order No. 10973, 1961)
[4] When considering inflation, the total funding for US foreign aid decreased over the "Decade of Development" (Ekbladh 2006).

illustrates the depths of this entanglement. These programs focused on fighting communism through social engineering[5] in rural South Vietnam. In essence, the Strategic Hamlets Programs sought to modernize villages through education, technology, and infrastructure, which would not only ensure the villagers "progress," but also their loyalty. In retrospect, it is unsurprising that these programs were a complete failure, but despite these failures, the ideas from the project, particularly modernization, continue to live on (Ekbladh 2006, Scott 1998). In fact, the international development industry so shamelessly tried to "modernize" and "Westernize" those countries considered "underdeveloped" that the lack of anthological critique of the field is surprising; and, in 1969, Dell Hymes publicly questioned anthropologists for just that:

> The common coin has been "developed" vs. "underdeveloped," or "modern" vs. "traditional." I submit that these are equivalents to the "civilized" and "primitive" of a preceding era, still a polar evolutionary mode, combined often enough with the notion of a center of diffusion to less fortunate peoples…Why is it that anthropologists, so well equipped to expose the error of such thinking in Englishman and Marxists, have been so little heard from as such thinking proliferated all about them? (Hymes 1969, 28-29)

Anthropologists, who have liberally critiqued the use of "primitive" or "uncivilized," had thus far been mysteriously uncritical of the euphemisms used to describe those sentiments – "underdeveloped" or "traditional" – which perpetuate the ideas of modernization with linear movement towards being "developed." However, when anthropologists finally arrived at the conclusion that this discourse was harmful, they launched a full-scale attack on the field, development agencies, and on those anthropologists working as practitioners. However, not only anthropologists answered the call. The disillusionment with development as a concept resulted in critiques from across academic fields – including from feminists and dependency theorists, from the

[5] Identical houses arranged in lines and the population was "strictly monitored" (Scott 1998, 188)

Government, and from the public (Gardner and Lewis 1996, Ekbladh 2006). This disillusionment coincided with calls to end the United States involvement in the Vietnam War, and the Nixon Doctrine, in which President Nixon declared that the United States could no longer act as the defender of all nations, and would now only go to war to protect the their allies. The sentiments of the Nixon Doctrine reflected the disappointment and growing unrest with all foreign affairs, but specifically the war and development (Ekbladh 2006).

Development was attacked from all sides, shifting views and policies surrounding development practices. For example, in 1971, shortly after the Nixon Doctrine, the Senate did not pass the foreign aid assistance the president requested for the first time in history (Ekbladh 2006). Yet, despite the shock the Vietnam War provided to the modernization theory, it was not enough to erase the ideas of modernization and the hierarchy of "civilized" societies (Ekbladh 2006, Scott 1998). This theory of modernization still has some footing in the pro-development community (Goldman 2005, Scott 1998); however, not all scholars agree that modernization was the only cause of instability and the subsequent violence in "underdeveloped" countries (Huntington 1968). For instance, Fukuyama (2014) maintains that instability in these countries would have resulted regardless, because of the lack of strong institutions, which engender stability by organizing behaviors.

> The policies undertaken by the colonial powers, the length of time they remained in control, and the kinds of resources they invested in their colonies all had important consequences for postcolonial institutions… most successful non-Western countries are those that had the most established/developed institutions before Western contact. (Fukuyama 2014, 31-32)

Colonialism, and the impact of the European model (even when physical force was not the problem) undermined traditional institutions, and societies became neither here nor there – neither fully westernized nor wholly traditional. Colonialism crushed traditional institutions, and then was unable to establish western institutions (Fukuyama 2014).

But, the failures of Vietnam and the critiques of the development community did shift policies, namely, towards a new framing of poverty, neoliberalism, and the addition of "culture" to development projects. Poverty was now described as a combination of education, health, food, and jobs, a sharp break from the previously accepted meaning of poverty – an analysis of GNP growth (Ekbladh 2006, Nolan 2002). However, this shift still prioritized economic growth. The new framing simply assumed that poverty would be reduced as economies improved (Gardner and Lewis 1996). Finally, this shift also changed the way foreign aid functioned. Foreign aid was now to be funneled through multilateral institutions, which ultimately resulted in the dominance of the World Bank[6] in the field (Ekbladh 2006). To ensure these changes took hold, the United States Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act in 1973, which outlined the "New Directions" (mandated by USAID) for development and included prioritizing the involvement and participation of local actors in the process (Ingersoll 1977, Nolan 2002). Development agencies, then, began trying to plan projects on more than just economic and technical components by bringing in environmental, institutional, and social safeguards and checks – essentially, trying to account for "culture" (Ingersoll 1977, Escobar 1991). USAID began requiring a "social soundness analysis" (SSA) and "knowledge, attitude, and practices" (KAP) studies – for which

[6] In 1969, the World Bank's total portfolio was $800 million. By 1981, when McNarma stepped down, their portfolio was $12 billion (Ekbladh 2006).

anthropologists where well positioned to be tapped for jobs. Although some anthropologists had already been called upon to tap into the local knowledge systems in the past to increase adoption of technologies (Singer and Baer 2008, Wiley and Allen 2013, Escobar 1991), the new emphasis on "culture" resulted in the rise of 'development Anthropology' and brought anthropological criticisms to the forefront (Escobar 1991, Almy 1977). However, perhaps because of the fragmentation of the field – applied development anthropologists in contrast to academic anthropologists of Development – these criticisms were not enough to stop economists, who continue to control the dominant multilateral institutions, from solidifying their neoliberal positions as not only the development norm, but as the gold-standard.

Neoliberalism

Dependent upon continued international financial sponsorship, such states enjoy little economic autonomy and must prioritise the needs of international investors over those of their own citizens, further undermining and complicating prospects for building state legitimacy.
Julian Barbara (2008, 308)

The Reagan-Thatcher era gave birth to the concept of neoliberalism, in which privatization, fiscal austerity, financial liberalization, and deregulation reigned supreme (Goldman 2005, Barbara 2008). In the mid-1980s, neoliberal policies were perpetuated and institutionalized as the 'Washington Consensus' (hereafter WC). John Williamson,[7] who coined the term, suggested any challenges to this consensus was a fool's errand for "cranks:" "The proof may not be quite as conclusive as the proof that the Earth is not flat, but it is sufficiently well established as to give sensible people better things to do

[7] Shortly after coining the term the 'Washington Consensus,' Williamson was hired by the World Bank

with their time than to challenge its veracity" (Williamson 1993, 1331). Neoliberalism quickly become institutionalized by the Bretton Woods Institutions – the IMF and World Bank – and so deeply internalized that it has "now become a frame of mind, a cultural dynamic, an entrepreneurial personality type, and a rule of law that penetrates the most intimate relations people have with each other, state apparatuses and their natural environments" (Goldman 2005, 8). And, despite the pushback from critics in the 1990s, neoliberalism still defines good development practices. The World Bank, for instance, keen on reinventing itself in the face of harsh criticism following the WC,[8] has now normalized 'green neoliberalism' as the gold-standard development practice.

'Green neoliberalism' or 'green developmentalism' simply adds social and environmental components to the already established imposition of neoliberalism. First developed by the World Bank – but quickly followed by others – social and environmental safeguards were implemented to show their growth towards sustainable development: "That few development practices, beliefs, and truths can be expressed today outside the parameters of environmentally sustainable development, on the one hand, and neoliberalism, on the other, is a testament to the efficacy of the Bank's latest power/knowledge regime" (Goldman 2005, 6-7). Yet, while the World Bank and others publically praise their own "progress," these safeguards are often not enforced or outwardly ignored in favor of quick results, a downfall of the outcome-driven incentive structure and culture (Chavkin et al. 2015). The 'Post-Washington Consensus,' despite the illusion of moving past the WC and neoliberalism, is less of a consensus for anything; instead it is merely a consensus against the WC. However, prescriptive neoliberalism has hardly been impacted by the consensus against it. Further, not only

[8] 'Reform of die' of the 1980s (Goldman 2005)

has neoliberalism been ineffective and unsuccessful in promoting economic development, but it also enhances the illusion of "developing" countries as passive, who can only act as a "partner, catalyst, and facilitator" (World Bank 1997, 1). "Developing" countries, instead of being treated as economic actors, with their own agency, are used as pawns to ensure the success of the West's vision of globalization (Barbara 2008). The inability of the West to engage "developing" countries as political and economic actors, with agency and vision for their own country, is one of the main downfalls of the current development model. Pushing beyond the fact that quite simply neoliberalism does not work (Birdsall and Fukuyama 2011), any vision imposed by outsiders is likely doomed to fail.

Development and the Post-Structural Critique

This approach looks at development as an historically and culturally specific form of rationality which is inseparable form related regimes of practices and configurations of power.
Benedetta Rossi (2004, 1)

Starting in the 1970s, anthropologists began publishing harsh critiques of development (Everett 1997). Shortly after, stark lines were drawn between development anthropologists (those acting within the apparatus) and anthropologists of development (those critiquing development) (Lewis 2005, 2009). Up until that point, the development model focused on modernization – "traditional" societies in the process of becoming "modern" – where development was viewed as only for their benefit (Escobar 1991). The post-structural critique of development,[9] was led by Arturo Escobar, with Gustavo Esteva, Majid Rahewma, Vandana Shiva, and Wolfgang Sachs (Goldman

[9] At times, referred to as post-development

2005). These critiques focused on applying Michel Foucault's (1970) influential work to the field of development (Escobar 1984, Nustad 2001), which became an especially popular critique among anthropologists in the 1990s (Friedman 2006).

For many, international development post-WWII was merely an extension of colonialization (Escobar 1984, Nustad 2001). In particular, Escobar argued that development discourse,[10] which is created and controlled by "developed" countries, imposed certain economic (capitalistic), political (democratic), and cultural (Western) norms onto "developing" countries (Escobar 1984). Development, then, is "a historical construct that provides a space in which poor countries are known, specified, and intervened upon" (Escobar 1995, 45); and that the production of development discourse itself is used to control and exploit poor, "developing" countries (Friedman 2006). Development discourse is powerful (Rossi 2004, Ferguson 1990); and according to Ferguson (1990), the impacts of this discourse is increased bureaucratic power and the de-politicization of development. Ferguson's impactful study of the Thaba Tseka Project in Lesotho is one of the most well known applications of Foucault's theory in development. Ferguson contends that development has failed to reduce poverty in the same way prisons have failed to reform inmates; but while failing to reach their "objective" the development agencies succeed in development (Ferguson 1990)

Ferguson's critique is exceedingly structural – assigning blame to the development apparatus, which is external to any individual or collective group. In many post-structural critiques, development anthropologists are held accountable; for

[10] As defined by Grillo (1997, 12): "A discourse (for example, of development) identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it."

example, Escobar skewers development anthropologists for their role in creating and controlling this development discourse:

> The description of local realities by anthropologists for development purposes involves a positioning in the present and a use of categories and cultural totalities that are not as free of past conditioning as researchers might wish. In their studies, and in spite of themselves, development anthropologists impose upon local realities social and political analyses that have traveled well-known terrains. These types of analyses originate in theoretical traditions in both anthropology and development that are the product of accumulated scholarly and political action, not merely neutral frameworks through which "local knowledge" innocently shows itself. It is through these analyses that anthropologists constitute themselves as subjects capable of knowing and modifying the real. Their actions create a domain of experience – certainly related to real conditions – that opens up ways to intervene in, and to control, the Third World, thus placing anthropology at the service of power. (Escobar 1991, 659)

Development interventions and discourse entail the use of theories and analyses that are deeply rooted in Western knowledge systems (Ferguson 1990, Escobar 1984, 1991). By trying to use "local knowledge" to aid in the uptake of technologies and other development interventions, anthropologists assert themselves as powerful arms of the development apparatus. Development anthropologists act within the power structures and knowledge systems that have been established to subjugate "traditional" or "developing" countries[11] (Friedman 2006); therefore, despite their supposed expertise, development "experts" and anthropologists have little understanding of the local knowledge, history, and political experience (Ferguson 1990). The development apparatus cannot act neutrally. Further, development agencies are "powerfully shaped by the world of acceptable statements and utterances within which they live" (Ferguson 1990, 18). These acceptable utterances only reinforce the power of development discourse and the rationality behind practices. Importantly, Ferguson's (1990) critique

[11] These critiques reinforced the stark contrast between the development anthropologists and anthropologists of development (Lewis 2005)

shifted the focus towards the examining the effects of development practices, rather than the intentions. Therefore, instead of arguing whether participation in development is ethical, the emphasis of critique became the overall effects of the practice despite good intentions (Ferguson 1990).

In general, post-structural critiques assert that development has not just failed, but rather, development discourse has been part of the creation of poverty as it "defines and creates non-Western peoples as 'under-developed'" (Friedman 2006, 202); critics, therefore, demand a deconstruction of the development discourse (Escobar 1984, Friedman 2006). Escobar also names areas of resistance to the Western development apparatus, including protecting the "underdeveloped" country's traditions (Escobar 1984). However, even within his own careful critique, Western worldviews are still imposed. Escobar states that of the traditions considered "*important* and *positive* should be defended" (Escobar 1984, 383). The determination of a tradition as *important* and *positive* is subjective and highly relies on cultural norms.

Post-structuralism is a critically important critique of development and development anthropologists, as it highlights the relationship between knowledge, power, and poverty, and "more generally… [it] generated awareness about development discourse's ability to shape and construct global poverty" (Friedman 2006). The power of development discourse and multilateral organizations, particularly the World Bank, is undeniable. As previously described, the World Bank used these critiques to reform, and profit, by developing social and environmental safeguards that supposedly protect "developing" countries in the form of 'green developmentalism' (Goldman 2005). Although the World Bank, and others, have used what benefited them and ignored the

rest, critical lessons can be drawn from the post-structural critique. The main issue, thus far, is that viable alternatives[12] to the current development model are rarely presented within the post-development literature (Everett 1997).

Technocracy and the "Expert Model"

The word technocracy (a synonym for authoritarian development) itself is an early twentieth-century coinage that means "rule by experts."
William Easterly (2013)

In the development community, poverty is frequently conceptualized as a technical problem. For example, poor rural farmers in a developing country are poor because they do not have the proper tools or the right fertilizers. Technical problems create simple technical solutions: "experts" can determine the proper tools and right fertilizers, give them to the farmers, and then they will no longer be poor. This technocratic view of development has been in place since the inception of the field (Easterly 2013). As previously discussed, this was the first role of anthropologists in development: helping ensure that those farmers use the "right" tools that have been provided by the development "experts" (Wiley and Allen 2013). Technocracy and the "expert" model expose the colonialist and racist tendencies present in development at that time. It was impossible for Westerners to imagine poor developing countries that were able to help themselves. The West is wealthy with advanced technology, and Western "experts" can help by providing "underdeveloped" countries the technology needed to succeed (Easterly 2013). To the dismay of many, technological solutions were not as successful as predicted (Scott 1998, Goldman 2005, Ekbladh 2006). And

[12] Ethnography has been presented by some as an alternative to current methods (Yarrow and Venkatestan 2012, Mosse 2013)

currently, development "experts" often argue that the field has learned from, and moved beyond, these initial colonialist and racist tendencies, leaving only technocratic perspectives based on knowledge and evidence (Easterly 2013). However, these ideas cannot be separated or teased out. The development structure and the focus on technology is inherently racist, colonialist, and imperialist. And even today, with all the available critiques of past and current development practices, the World Bank and others continue this technocratic (Easterly 2013) and imperialist vision (Goldman 2005).

Further, technocracy does not only ensure that technical solutions are favored, it also provides a shield for powerful actors to imperceptibly move politically under the guise of providing these technical solutions (Ferguson 1990). Ferguson (1990) describes this situation clearly:

> By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of "development" is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized in the world today. At the same time, by making the intentional blueprints for "development" so highly visible, a "development" project can end up performing extremely sensitive political operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object. (256)

Essentially, not only does reducing poverty to a technical solution make it possible for the "expert model" to thrive, it also de-politicizes poverty and development. The de-politicization of development ensures that the full historical reasons and contextualization of poverty are ignored. This "technocratic illusion" hides the fact that technical problems "are a *symptom* of poverty, not a *cause*" (Easterly 2013, 7). Again,

the inability to perceive a more holistic and historical understanding of poverty is in of itself, a product of racist, colonialist, and imperialist structures.

The hidden politics of development create what Ferguson (1990, 256) calls "the anti-politics machine." In other words, it is "the suspension of politics from even the most sensitive political operations" (Ferguson 1990, 256). This ensures that large development organizations – like the World Bank – can act politically with impunity as they hide their politics in technical solutions. At the same time, they desperately cling to the notion they act neutrally and apolitically (Goldman 2005), when in reality no intervention or conceptualization of poverty is neutral (Easterly 2013). Every organization is a "mobilization of bias" (Schattschneider 1960), meaning that neutrality is not an option, which is particularly palpable when organizations intervene in the colonial-imperial North-South relations.

Further, "the anti-politics machine" generates unintended consequences relating to state and institutional power, an idea rooted in Foucault's work in prisons. Foucault posited that the categorization of prisoners as delinquents, who then required reform programs to reintegrate into society, in fact created more delinquency. And, despite the reform programs not working as the planners imaged, the programs provided more social control. Although, the planners wanted more social control in the form of prisoners reintegrating into society; more social control came from more prisoners remaining delinquents (Ferguson 1990). As Ferguson (1990) explains, "the anti-politics machine" acts in this way: it creates unforeseen consequences that even when projects "fail," they succeed in enforcing the established power dynamics and emboldening the community of "experts." This can be observed in how development projects act to

reinforce the current "developmental" mental model within the development community.

Development As Practiced

The message of experience since then is rather different: that the state is central to economic and social development, not as a direct provider of growth, but as a partner, catalyst, and facilitator.
World Development Report (World Bank 1997, 1)

Ferguson's (1990) "Anti-Politics Machine" provides one of the most scathing and influential critiques of development. Ferguson's (2009) ethnographical work provides an in-depth examination of the Thabo-Tseka Development Project (TTDP) in Lesotho. Despite TTDP generating none of the intended positive consequences, the project's development officers framed the project as a success given the environment of Lesotho and the complete failings of previous projects. The aid agency involved even stated they pulled out of the project for financial reasons and denied that their decision had to do with the success or failure of the project. This ethnography provides insight into the realities of development projects and the functioning of the development apparatus (Ferguson 1990). Ferguson's critique eloquently rebukes the "expert" model by describing how the technical conceptualization of poverty led to poor technical solutions and a de-politicization of development by offering seamless cover for the development apparatus to act politically while remaining ostensibly apolitical (Ferguson 1990).

However, despite the critiques, the "expert model" remains in full force, and continues to be as expensive as it is unsustainable. According to a 2005 report of the

Commission for Africa, 100,000 "experts" were paid $3.2 billion that year for technical assistance on the continent, and from 1988 to 2008, a total of $300 billion was spent on development efforts in Africa. Yet even these high price tags, Africa is still under great economic, health, and social stressors (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). Further, "the anti-politics machine" causes unplanned consequences, such as creating separation between national and international staff, by paying "expert" expatriates huge salaries, while the national staff works for a fraction of that (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). This dynamic within development agencies reflects the colonial-imperial knowledge-power dynamics that exist on a larger scale.

These problems were quite clear while working at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the summer of 2014. At the ADB, I was asked to evaluate the efficacy of four income and livelihood restoration programs in three countries (Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) after resettlement. Firstly, being an "expert" on resettlement and its effectiveness requires asking the right questions, which is impossible without being deeply aware of the historical context of the impacted local communities. However, international staff is often expected to act as broad "experts," sometimes with little to no experience working in a country. This may be appropriate for some "experts," such as a structural engineer consulting on a bridge design, but not all "experts" are as cross-culturally viable, especially when not applied in specific manner.

Further, one of the projects I examined was the Southern Transport Development Project (STDP). The objective of this project was to build a highway connecting Northern and Southern Sri Lanka, which included huge amounts of

resettlement.[13] The old development adage was that the building of any road would enable progress: if you built a highway, people's lives would improve. However, following the inclusion of social and environmental safeguards,[14] first instituted at the World Bank in the 1980s,[15] road building and subsequent resettlement became increasingly complicated. Yet, despite pushback from communities for STDP around involuntary resettlement, the project moved forward, and the consequences for many locals was disastrous. Firstly, the income and resettlement restoration program was not started until four years after the project began in 1999. The program finally was completed in late 2010, which is a wildly inappropriate timeline for effectively paying locals to involuntarily relocate. But still, while at the ADB, I spoke with employees who conveyed that resettlement is not a real issue at the bank, because compensation is sufficient and easily managed. Even ignoring the staggering naiveté in that sentiment, STDP took seven years to compensate many of those who were forced to resettle, and that compensation did not adequately account for loss of land, crops, and trees, and did not account for non-titled landowners, who often suffer the most during resettlement. Most non-titled landowners were completely unaccounted for in this program, ensuring that the most vulnerable in this project faced further marginalization and silencing (Kroeger 2014).

[13] The Resettlement Implementation Plan identified 5,683 households were affected – about 25% of which were living below the Official Poverty Line (Road Development Authority 2002)

[14] International development agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank, now have policy requiring the improvement, or *at least* restoration, of the incomes and livelihoods of project-affected persons (Asian Development Bank 2009)

[15] Current policies are improved from the original versions in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the first social safeguard policy at the World Bank stated that it was necessary to restore and "if possible improve" the incomes and livelihoods of project-affected persons (World Bank 1980), as opposed to the current language which preferences improvement.

TTDP and STDP are not unusual or rare. These projects are what many large-scale development projects look like. Failed projects are the norm, not the exception.[16] This environment of failure ensures that projects with even the smallest positive impacts in one sector (even the if overall the impacts are negative) receive affirmations from bank employees (Ferguson 1990). The cavalier and superior attitude of "experts," the naïve misunderstanding of local knowledge, and the catastrophically incompetent consideration of the rippling consequences of even the smallest projects all feed the development apparatus. There is heavy debating in the field on why projects fail – centering on prescriptive planning versus descriptive approaches, and the application of local versus expert knowledge (Sachs 2005, Easterly 2006, Banerjee and Duflo 2012, Ramalingam 2013). Yet, the main practices of the power players in development – the Bretton Woods Institutions – still include prescriptive neoliberal planning despite these debates (Goldman 2005, Yarrow and Venkatestan 2012). Prescriptive policies are, of course, more easily developed and communicated, but break down in practice (Nolan 2002, Ramalingam 2013).

Further, even though development is now considering social and environmental safeguards for developing and implementing projects, the general principle behind the old adage has not changed: economic growth will "trickle-down" and improve overall measures on other indices, such as health and education. Development then still boils down to the economy, and the idea that improvements can easily be quantified (Gardner and Lewis 1996). These principles can be seen in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the 1990s, and the post-2015 Sustainable Development

[16] E.g., in the past 20 years, $1.2 billion has been lost because of failed wells in sub-Saharan Africa alone (Brunson et al. 2013).

Goals (SDGs) (Gardner and Lewis 2015). However, what development needs more than ever is a thoughtful discussion of how to move forward without continuing to hurt those most vulnerable.

Why Development Matters

Poverty is first and foremost a social relationship, the result of inequality, marginalization and disempowerment. It occurs in the North as well as the South…while we need to move beyond the language and assumptions of development, the application of anthropology in attempt to construct a better world is as vital as ever in the post-modern, and post-development era.
Katy Gardner and David Lewis (1996, 25)

Minimally, development has mostly failed in reaching its stated objectives; however, development, and industrialization more broadly, has played an important role in the global reduction of infectious diseases. After WWII, in what epidemiologist Abdul Omran outlined as part of the second epidemiological transition, the developed world witnessed a massive decrease in infectious diseases. The reduction was so drastic that in 1969, the United States' Surgeon General, General William T. Stewart, declared that the era of infectious diseases was over. The developing world also experienced a reduction in infectious disease rates, but not to the degree of the developed world. Even though globalization initially increased the spread of infectious diseases (Armelagos, Brown, and Turner 2005), transmission of medical advancements, including germ theory and eventually vaccines, is one of the most positive effects of development and globalization. Post-WWII, anthropologists' participation in development helped understand the impact of anthropogenic environmental changes on disease transmission, and how "cultural values, beliefs, and expectations" shape differential disease patterns

and expression (Singer and Baer 2008, 12). In other words, not all development is inherently destructive for those "being developed."

Still, development has failed far more often than it has succeeded, and GDP is still being used as an inappropriate proxy for human life (Nussbaum 2011). Yet, wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated (Gardner and Lewis 2015). Since 2010, the wealth of the poorest half of the world has decreased by 38% (a trillion dollars), despite the fact that the global population rose by 400 million people since then (Hardoon, Ayele, and Fuentes-Nieva 2016). In 2014, 85 people owned as much wealth ($1 trillion) as the bottom half of the world (roughly 3.5 billion) (Gardner and Lewis 2015, Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso 2014); and by 2016, the wealth of 62 people ($1.76 trillion) was equivalent to the poorest half of world (Hardoon, Ayele, and Fuentes-Nieva 2016). These 62 individuals have seen their personal wealth grow by 45% ($542 billion) since 2010. And the top 1% has more wealth than the cumulative wealth of the 99% (Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso 2014). This substantial difference in equality greatly impacts access to health care, safe water, improved sanitation, and causes differential disease patterns. The rich are often insulated from health problems (Armelagos, Brown, and Turner 2005)

Additionally, roughly one-tenth of the current global population lives under the global poverty line of $1.90 per day.[17, 18] Poverty, of course, cannot be reduced into income or spending power alone, but much of the population living under the global

[17] This is from the World Bank's Global Monitoring Report (2015), which classifies 702 million people (roughly one-tenth of the current population of 7.125 billion) living under the international poverty line, which was changed to 1.90 USD per day. This is down from 12.7% in 2012, 37% in 1990, and 44% in 1981.

[18] It is difficult to find statistics for the number of people living below $2.50 or $5.00 per day, which should also be considered when discussing inequalities

poverty line also have inadequate shelter, unsafe drinking water, and lack of access to sanitation facilities, medicine and hospitals, education, and technology, which could all greatly improve quality of life (Nolan 2002). Moreover, wealthy nations have been allowed to accumulate vast quantities of materials and social capital, mainly through the exploitation of poorer nations, which puts the onus on them to help alleviate poverty and improve quality of life (Nussbaum 2011). However, what these "developed" nations have been doing in relation to development is not working.

Anthropologists are essential in this space. Firstly, they have already provided a more historical critique of development, acknowledging the dynamic between knowledge and power, which is an important component of debunking the "expert model." Further, anthropologists are well situated to criticize the current conceptualization of poverty as technical problem. Anthropologists can help development organizations understand poverty as a multi-dimensional and historical concept. Poverty as a multi-dimensional concept does not only consider monetary resources, but all of the interconnected sectors that influence and enforce poverty traps, such as health, education, and gender. Poverty also needs to be understood in a historical context, as ahistorical descriptions cannot capture potential problems with projects associated with past colonialism or other historical events that have impacted the population's quality of life.

Further, philanthropy has become a hobby for celebrities and wealthy activists, which has created a huge pool of resources that, if the right people get involved, can be applied towards good development practices (Gardner and Lewis 2015). This has also provided "development buzz," which can do a lot of good, but at times can be a

"headless heart" (Collier 2007). Philanthropy and buzz requires guidance, but can be funneled into practices that are not just for appearance. Anthropologists are particularly well situated to examine the application of these vast resources to help assuage global inequalities, and ultimately, support people in developing countries.

> The purpose of global development, like the purpose of a good domestic policy, is to enable people to live full and creative lives, developing their potential and fashioning a meaningful existence, commensurate with their equal human dignity. In other words, the real purpose of development is *human development.* (Nussbaum 2011, 185)

Reframing development as human development can shift thoughts from economic-first policies to practices supporting people and communities, which is how this research conceptualizes development. When human development is the articulated goal, it may be easier to imagine the West supporting local actors in deciding and facilitating their own development. Although wealthy "developed" countries should be at the forefront of this work, since they created these global inequalities (Nussbaum 2011), planning and implementing projects that make sense require more diverse voices than the Western technocratic elite.

Lastly, this research focuses on top-down development from large multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank. Success of NGOs on a small scale is important, but they, too, are nestled within the greater power structures of Development. Examining alternatives to Development that can exist within these structures, but resist their capitalist, West-first policies is an important step forward in aiding human development.

Development and Anthropology

I consider 'development anthropology' a kind of neo-colonialism.
Edmund Leach (1982, 50)

Development anthropologists, for all their self-proclaimed sensitivity to local conditions, have not escaped the ethnocentricity of the whole development paradigm.
Arturo Escobar (1991, 671)

Post-structural critics often view development agencies as "the modernizing enemies of local communities and cultures" (Lewis 2009, 36), creating a palpable tension between development as a practice and anthropology as a field. This tension led to a common distinction in the 1980s between anthropologists of development and 'development anthropologists;' in other words, those who critique development practices – who work 'on' development – and the development practitioners – who work 'in' development (Lewis 2009). This distinction followed the steep rise in opportunities for anthropologists in the 1970s in development agencies coupled with the shortage of academic openings (Almy 1977, Escobar 1991). However, when discussing "the gold rush period of development anthropology" (Escobar 1991, 665), anthropologists of development often describe the rise of development anthropology through the number of employees at development agencies with anthropology degrees, not the number of anthropology or social science positions those employees occupy (Little and Painter 1995). Therefore, although there was an increase of anthropologists in development following the inclusion of social and environmental factors in the 1970s, it was less dramatic than portrayed. These critiques also play into the tension between applied and academic anthropology; as exemplified by Eric Wolf: "Applied anthropology, by definition, represents a reaction against cultural relativism, since it

does not regard the culture that is applying anthropology as the equal of the culture to which anthropology is being applied" (In Gardner and Lewis 2015, 50)

Ultimately, anthropologists of development have provided important post-structural critiques that shed light on how development discourse, which is created and controlled by developed countries and development agencies, impose certain economic, political, and cultural norms while continuing to silence the perspectives of those "being developed" (Ferguson 1990, Escobar 1991, 1984). At times, the critiques have reinforced a binary idea in development of the role of anthropologists and anthropology as a tool. To combat that, Lewis (2005) suggests that these dichotomous stances manifest as three distinct positions within anthropology and development: 'engaged activists,' 'reluctant participants,' and 'antagonistic observers.' The 'antagonistic observers' led the post-development critiques of the 1990s, and continue to be highly skeptical of all development agencies and practitioners. Often, these post-development critics condemn the entirety of the development sector, and all those who participate in and perpetuate the imperial-colonial relations of the global North and South. 'Antagonistic observers' see themselves outside of development, (Lewis 2005, 2009) and hence often assume a position of moral superiority over the latter positions (Yarrow and Venkatestan 2012, Little and Painter 1995). 'Reluctant participants' may work for development agencies because of the lucrative positions,[19] or the need to find positions outside of academia, while the 'engaged activists' work enthusiastically within

[19] From an interview collected by Goldman: "A consultant for the [World] Bank in Addis makes the equivalent of thirty times what an equally qualified economist makes. In the army, you get a bullet for deserting, but with the World Bank, you lose your astronomical salary. It is much easier dodging bullets from the army for desertion then [saying 'no' to] the World Bank" (Goldman 2005, 4)

development agencies, and see anthropology as an important, and unproblematic, tool for development (Lewis 2005, 2009).

Although these positions, and individuals that fill them, are often at odds, it is becoming increasingly difficult to truly "separate anthropological work 'on' and 'in' development" (Lewis 2009, 37). For example, Nolan (2002) envisions the impact for development anthropologists in three connecting roles: gathering and analyzing information, informing policy, and implementation (as imagined in figure 1) as separate from academic anthropologists (anthropologists of development). However, in reality, development as a field and a practice would benefit greatly from the merging of development anthropologists and anthropologists of development. "Anthropology can contribute to more positive forms of developmental thought and practice, both by working *in* development and also by providing a critical account *of* development" (Gardner and Lewis 1996, 25). This kind of integration and inclusion of academic anthropologists and other social scientists has improved certain development practices immensely (e.g. Michael Cernea's work on resettlement).

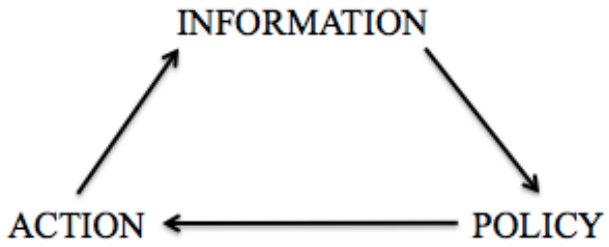


Figure 1. The Three Major Parts of Development Anthropology (Nolan 2002)

The most productive path forward is for anthropology to "travel beyond the dualist position that distinguishes between applied and non-applied categories" (Lewis

2009, 37). Retaining these separations will not improve the training of those anthropologists who, enthusiastically or reluctantly, participant in development work (Almy 1977). Development practices, which continue regardless of the participation of anthropology, would remain woefully in the hands of neoliberal economists. An understanding and study of discourse and its consequences is important and useful, up until the point at which discussion is stalled. There is a large space for anthropologists – both academic and applied – to participate and change how development impacts those "being developed" by actively critiquing programs to be implemented, engaging with local actors on the ground, and moving development towards real inclusion of more diverse actors.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine a better foundation for development through dialogue with a more diverse set of actors. This research uses a method to bring together the wealth of knowledge and perspectives regarding one country – Syria – in both an attempt to demonstrate the importance of creating this dialogue to inform future endeavors and to show that engagement with the country as an actor, with agency and vision, is a critical component of moving the field of development forward. In order to generate these perspectives, this research applies a modified Delphi method, which has not been applied to the field of development before. The interviews in this research examine three main components: 1) trauma and collective memory, 2) the most influential actors in Syria and the perception of those actors' commitment to the country, and 3) the current perceptions of the political, economic, social and cultural

state of Syria. This research will not necessarily reveal any truth, or provide knowledge to an outsider of what life is like in Syria, but, as Ferguson (1990) states: that does not mean it should be dismissed.

The interview questions used in this research were developed by the implementing organization, Sovereignty First, a firm based in Washington, D.C. and they reflect the information the company requires to do their work. However, this research is less concerned about the research questions and more interested in the application of the method to a new field. This method includes more diverse voices, which may result in disparate answers, even in questions seemingly obvious to development "experts." Therefore, this research examines dialogue with some of the local, regional, and international actors in the life of Syria to determine their perspectives. The purpose is to determine whether this tool can be an effective method for actors, many of whom are often marginalized and silenced, to generate the ideas, discourse, and discussion that have thus far been impossible.

Overview of Methodology

Participants included in this research must be representing an organization involved in the life of Syria in some form. Potential participants were contacted and interviewed by Sovereignty First, the implementing organization. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their collective memories of Syria as a hero, victim, bystander, and perpetrator, the influential actors in Syria, and their perceptions of the current political, economic, social, and cultural state of Syria. Data from the first round of interviews was de-identified and integrated into a report, which was distributed

to all the actors directly and publically disseminated.[20] For the following rounds, potential participants were contacted again for interviews.[21] Participants were asked to react to the report and anonymous feedback, as well as provide rationales for their answers. This research includes three rounds of interview data, with two feedback rounds using a modified Delphi method (discussed at length in Chapter 3).

Rationale and significance

Our world needs more critical thinking and more respectful argument. The distressingly common practice of arguing by sound bite urgently needs to be replaced by a more of public discourse that is itself more respectful of our equal human dignity.
Martha C. Nussbaum (2011, 187).

Good intentions do not ensure successful development projects, and historically, multilateral agencies tend to benefit themselves, rather than the countries they are supposedly serving. Engagement of poorer nations as actors – not as passive participants – requires the inclusion of people and organizations influential to the country in question. Effective project planning requires an understanding of the perceptions of influential actors – who are able to create and enforce social contracts – *before* reasonable intervention can be developed. Unfortunately, the global power players have continuously marginalized actors capable of providing this necessary information.

Further, any dialogue between actors who do not simply agree with the established powers is nearly impossible. This can occur for many reasons, including those actors not being brought to the table, or if they are included, their voices are

[20] On the Sovereignty First website.
[21] I anticipate an increasing number of participants throughout the rounds

marginalized because of the power imbalance. The application of a modified Delphi method provides an opportunity for a more diverse set of voices to be heard through anonymous feedback, and the potential for participants to change their mind through rounds of interviews. Widely used, this method could be applied on any scale, with questions focused on any topic. It could be used in a community before any project is planned to draw out opinions regarding priorities of the community and the investors to find common ground. The main significance of this research is the method, not the questions, as it is the first time this method has been applied to the field of development to enable a more equal weighting of perspectives. However, I hope information generated in this research can used in the discussion of overarching goals, needs, and capabilities[22] of Syria.

Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is broken into seven chapters. Chapter 1 outlined the progression of development from its inception in 1949 – including original intentions and how imperial-colonial relations shaped its actions. Chapter 1 also included a detailed description of the development discourse and the post-structural critique. In essence, this chapter detailed how development came to be and the ways in which it continues to serve the West while harming the rest. It also described the current available space for anthropologists to participate and change how development functions and treats those "being developed." Lastly, Chapter 1 provided a brief summary of the rationale and methods for this research.

[22] Increasing the capabilities of the country enables increased choice ((Nussbaum 2011))

Chapter 2 provides an outline of the Delphi method as alternative framework for engaging with "underdeveloped" countries in development, including the history of the method and how it has been applied. The Delphi method provides an opportunity for more diverse voices to be heard, regardless of the current and historical power dynamics, in part because of the anonymous nature of the technique. Chapter 2 delves into how this method can be applied to development. In addition, chapter 2 also discusses the importance of understanding and considering national trauma and collective memory in the planning and implementation of development projects, as each country's trauma informs their reasoning, rationales, and choices. Finally, chapter 2 provides a brief contextualization and contemporary history of Syria.

Chapter 3 details the modifications to the Delphi method and how it was applied for this research. The main features of the Delphi method – anonymity of participants and their responses, iterative rounds with controlled feedback, and statistical aggregation of data – were modified from their original use but retained the essential qualities necessary for this method to be effective. Limitations of this method are briefly discussed. This chapter also details the interview process and the participants, including the interview questions. Sixty-three interviews were conducted for this research, and the organizations that participated in each round are listed.

Chapter 4 is the first of three data chapters. This chapter features the results from the collective memory and trauma portion of the interview. Chapter 4 details the strength of memory associated with each role – hero/savior, victim, bystander, and perpetrator –with a discussion of some of the specific events.

Chapter 5 provides the results from the actor mapping portion of the interview, including an outline of the most influential actors in the country according to the participants and comments about each actor. The actor mapping portion of the interview focuses on the current influence of each actor, their predicted influence in ten years, and perspectives regarding their commitment to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria.

Chapter 6 details the dialogue generated on the current political, economic, social, and cultural state of Syria, which include fifteen questions on group identity, legally enshrined national values, control of borders, international reputation, national and international vision and strategy, the economy, distribution of power, civil society, arts and humanities, social trust, empathy towards marginalized groups, women, and children, and religion. This dialogue provides insight into the priorities of the actors in each area, and which dimensions may be more appropriate for action.

Lastly, chapter 7 will briefly summarize the previous chapters and discuss important observations from the results presented in the data chapters. This chapter will discuss potential future research that is informed by the results, and examine modifications to the method to address some of the problems that arose during this process. Further, this chapter will touch on how these results could be used to inform future development and reconstruction efforts in Syria.

Chapter 2: The Development of "Development"

The Use of Ethnography

The post-structural critique has been widely successful in linking poverty, power, and knowledge, and has created doubt on the ethical nature of working "in" "development." Because of these critiques, anthropologists have proposed alternatives to current development practices – mainly focusing on ethnography (Yarrow and Venkatestan 2012, Mosse 2013), or more specifically bottom-up "thick" description[23] (Friedman 2006). Of course, ethnographies are an asset to development practices, but they are only partial truths. Ethnographies represent an expanded text of a moment, and are a fragment of a fragment (Clifford 1986). Ethnographies are an important supplement to understanding a moment in time from the point of view of the ethnographer, but should not be the only method applied to inform development. Further, ethnographic data should be continuously collected to be most useful in development projects (Gardner and Lewis 2015).

Moreover, bias exists in every narrative, including ethnographies: Even "…the simplest cultural accounts are intentional creations, that interpreters constantly construct themselves through the others they study" (Clifford 1986, 10). It is important to recognize the worldview of the ethnographer as it contributes to the construction of the ethnographic (partial) truth. It is impossible to become a completely unbiased observer (that state does not exist in any process), but that does not diminish the value of ethnography, rather it becomes imperative to understanding it. Ethnographic critiques pushing the field towards a more pervasive voice helps identify the worldview of the

[23] "Thick" description as described by Geertz (1973)

ethnographer, rather than hide it in an attempt to be seen as unbiased. As anthropologists well know – ethnographic gaze and ear is unavoidable – as people are unconsciously interested in what they want to see and hear, and will fixate on what they view as different or "exotic." Therefore, while ethnography provides an important piece of the process, it should be used in conjunction with other conceptual frameworks and development alternatives to help provide a fuller, more historical understanding of the people "being developed."

Complex, Historical Problems

Development agencies tend to think about complex, unpredictable economic and natural resource systems as predictable "wind-up clocks," instead of considering the complicated interconnections and relationships that exist (Ramalingam 2013, 138). The development discourse already models countries into categories that at least reinforce their status, if not create it. This falls back to the development community imagining poverty and other development challenges as technical problems. This is an example of how high modernism – "the unwavering idea that we can use science and technology to organize, structure, and reorder the social and natural world" (Scott 1998) – influences the development community in the framing and planning of development initiatives. But, these models relied upon by the development community cannot grasp the complexities of social processes (Scott 1998). Given the reframing of poverty and development as multi-dimensional social processes that are created and influenced by local histories, the next step is reframing the "experts." In other words, "experts" tend to be highly educated and knowledgeable Western actors, providing technical solutions to

technical problems. Yet, these "experts" often ignore local peoples that are experts of local knowledge and histories (Scott 1998). For this research, the most important contribution is starting a dialogue that brings these actors to the table, alongside and treated equally in strength to the international development "experts."

An Alternative Framework: The Delphi Method

Science is well ordered when its specification of the problems to be pursued would be endorsed by an ideal conversation, embodying all human points of view, under conditions of mutual engagement.
Paul Kitcher (2011, 106)

No better way exists to collect and synthesize opinions better than Delphi.
Theodore Gordon (2003, 12)

Anthropologists have been working for better community engagement in their research for years, using methods such as participatory learning and action (PLA) approaches and community-based participatory research (CBPR). Inclusion of more community actors helps provide a more complete and rich picture of the situation and the community's priorities. However, it is not always clear how this works on a national level, or when the international power players want something different than the local actors. In these situations, the inclusion of a diversity of voices requires more than simply engaging and bringing more people to the table. First, as notoriously demonstrated in the development world, local participants are often included, but not heard. They are talked over or simply ignored. Instead, "experts" from large international (Western) organizations continue to own the discourse and make decisions. Therefore, the discussion must include a leveling of the field.

The most successful development and reconstruction project, which effectively engaged local, regional, and international actors, was the previously described Marshall Plan. Importantly, this plan was *for Europe by Europeans*, with the financial help of the United States. As Ghani and Lockhart (2008, 35) describe, this plan shattered the status quo, and changed the way partnership and governance was imaged because it was based on "constructive, citizen-centered politics." In many ways, the Marshall Plan is crème de la crème of development plans: it had broad over-arching goals, but was realistic and adaptive, they started with dialogue to find common ground, and the plan relied on the expertise of Europeans to know what was best for Europe. "The task was to fix on the broad line along which we wanted to move, and then by increasingly specific development, find what was common ground and what was not…We did not begin with papers…but with *dialogue*"[24] (Acheson 1969, 287). The move away from citizen-centered plans is undoubtedly related to the shifting focus from reconstruction of Western Europe to the development of the "underdeveloped" global South. The development community has never trusted the global South to know what is best for them, and at times egregiously acted in their own best interests without regard to the country "being developed." Unfortunately, in the current aid structure, the positive elements of the Marshall Plan cannot be recreated exactly, however, a modified Delphi method can be used to mimic the necessary foundation of dialogue that engendered the plan's success. This method, which is underused and underreported in the literature, can draw out perspectives of a diverse set of actors to generate that dialogue (Kezar and Maxey 2016).

[24] Emphasis added

In 1963, the first paper was published on the Delphi technique[25] (Dalkey and Helmer 1963). This methodology was originally developed by Olaf Helmer, Norman Dalkey, and Ted Gordan in the 1950s at the RAND Corporation[26] for a project sponsored by the U.S. Air Force (Linstone and Turoff 2011, Hasson, Keeney, and McKenna 2000, Rowe and Wright 1999). RAND, a Santa Monica based "think tank," was searching for a better method of technological forecasting. At the time, technological forecasting methods only included genius forecasting by experts and simulation gaming. RAND researchers thought that although experts (particularly when there was consensus) were likely better than non-experts at forecasting, expert panels to find consensus introduced counterproductive factors, including confrontations, group-think, and the "loudest" participants overwhelming the "soundest" (Gordon 2003, 1). The objective of "Project DELPHI" was "to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts" (Dalkey and Helmer 1963, 458), so the researchers "designed [the method] to remove [the] conference room impediments to a true expert consensus" (Gordon 2003, 1). In other words, the initial goal was to elicit a consensus of experts by changing the environment to remove any potential bias from panels.

Originally, the Delphi method – named for the Oracle of Delphi – was developed for long-range technological forecasting,[27] but has since been adapted[28] in many fields and derivatives have emerged[29] (Linstone and Turoff 2011, Hasson,

[25] Because of security concerns, the paper was published ten years after the experiment was conducted (Dalkey and Helmer 1963).
[26] http://www.rand.org/topics/delphi-method.html
[27] Technological forecasting was particularly focused on military contingencies (Kezar and Maxey 2016, Rowe and Wright 1999, Dalkey and Helmer 1963, Linstone and Turoff 1975)
[28] For example, Policy Delphi which was created for policy resolution and included policy options with the strongest pros and cons of each option (Linstone and Turoff 2011, 1975).
[29] Some derivatives include prediction markers, recommender systems, and collaborative tagging (Linstone and Turoff 2011).

Keeney, and McKenna 2000, Marchais-Roubelat and Roubelat 2011). The original Delphi method consisted of an unstructured first round, which subsequently informed the creation of a structured questionnaire for subsequent rounds; although a rather common modification is a structured round one (Rowe and Wright 1999). The main features of the original method are anonymity of participants and their responses, iterative rounds with controlled feedback, and statistical aggregation of responses (Rowe and Wright 1999, Linstone and Turoff 2011, Landeta 2006). Anonymity is critical to the process as it forces participants to consider and respond to pure ideas, not the individual presenting those ideas (Dalkey and Helmer 1963, Rowe and Wright 1999, Landeta 2006). Minimally, answers must be anonymous, although often participants also receive anonymity (Landeta 2006). Further, iterative rounds with feedback allow time for participants to change their answers based on perspectives and information they may not have previously considered, as throughout the rounds the participants are provided with a more complete understanding of the varied perspectives that exist and the entire knowledge pool (Landeta 2006, Rowe and Wright 1999). Because of the anonymous nature of the method, participants can change their minds "without fear of losing face" (Rowe and Wright 1999, 354). The Delphi method, then, provides the "positive attributes of interacting groups (knowledge from a variety of sources, creative synthesis, etc.), while pre-empting their negative aspects (attributable to social, personal and political conflicts, etc.)" (Rowe and Wright 1999, 354). Positive attributes include encouraging independent thinking – as questions are asked to each individual with no direct confrontation between participants – therefore, the dreaded "group think" cannot occur.

The Delphi method is particularly useful "when the goal is to improve understanding of problems, opportunities, and solutions; or to develop forecasts" (Kezar and Maxey 2016, 144). Often, the technique moves participants toward consensus; however, the method does not force consensus. Although the original intention was generation of a consensus of expert opinions, current applications of the method have moved away from consensus and towards reliability and stability of responses (Linstone and Turoff 2011, Landeta 2006). A rough consensus may appear, but the goal of the method is now stability of responses. An outcome of a bipolar distribution can be as informative as consensus (Linstone and Turoff 2011).

Another important consideration is that this method is apt for complex questions, as it is not after reactive or subconscious responses; rather, the Delphi method aims to get participants thinking about complex situations, ideas, and questions (Linstone and Turoff 2011, Landeta 2006), which can be incredibly useful "in situations where there is contradictory or insufficient information" (Hasson, Keeney, and McKenna 2000, 1008). However, as with any method, there are significant weaknesses in the process, and the effectiveness is highly dependent upon its implementation (Bolger et al. 2011). One of the main weaknesses of the method is the time involved – for both participants and researchers. Depending on the number of rounds, in particular, participants can experience fatigue with the project, as interviews are intensive and repetitive. Integral to the process is that participants receive the same list of questions – round after round – in order to ensure enough time for opinions to change and new perspectives to emerge. But this amount of engagement and time – with no compensation – can often lead to overall fatigue with the process and ultimately

participants dropping out before the project is complete (Landeta 2006, Gordon 2003). Another serious weakness of the method is the ability of the researchers to manipulate the results (through the feedback) and the overall accuracy as participants with extreme opinions may feel pressure to change their responses (Landeta 2006). However, this weakness is more dependent on the application and specific modifications of the method, not a weakness of the process itself. Overall, the method continues to be a valuable technique for gathering perspectives of complex problems.

Application of the Delphi Method in Development

The application of this method to development will immediately generate perspectives often lost, silenced, and marginalized. With continuous dialogue through ongoing rounds, the Delphi method can generate a rough consensus of perspectives, which should be used for planning and implementation of development projects and national development initiatives. Applying the Delphi method to development is a time consuming process, and depending on the questions and the context, any semblance of consensus may not occur for years. However, looking back at failed development projects, with all the time lost and money wasted, while still leaving many communities worse-off than they were previously, taking more time to get it right should not be a major concern. For example, one of the most well-known development disasters is the United States' failed occupation and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. Post-conflict reconstruction has the same goal as development interventions: help "developing" countries "progress" in some form or fashion. The United States' post-conflict reconstruction (development) efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan failed miserably –

with somewhere between 4 and 6 trillion dollars lost (Bilmes 2013). There were many failures along the way, but one of the biggest came at the very beginning, before the start of the war: the 2001 Bonn Agreement. During the talks, the Taliban was excluded from the discussion – they were not even allowed at the table. Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi has described this as the "original sin" of the Bonn Agreement, yet also stated that if the Taliban had been included, the talks could not have happened at all, as the other Afghan factions would not permit it or refuse to participate (Fields and Ahmed 2011). Some within the national security community believe that it was the exclusion of the Taliban during these talks that ultimately resulted in the formation of ISIS.[30] The Delphi method could have been used for the Bonn Agreement to bring the Taliban to the table anonymously; thereby potentially preventing its "original sin" (Fields and Ahmed 2011). With anonymous feedback, it would have been possible for other Afghan factions to listen to the Taliban and vice versa. Consensus still may not have been possible, but if common ground existed, anonymity of participants and their responses would be necessary to find it, potentially avoiding trillions of dollars in waste on a failed occupation and post-conflict reconstruction, while simultaneously enabling an environment in which terror thrived.

The flexibility of the starting point allows the Delphi method to be broadly applied in development, while ensuring that all voices are not only brought to the table, but also heard. This method generates productive, diverse dialogue, and can be applied to any topic. For the sake of development, the focus can be a sector (e.g. water, sanitation, and hygiene) or a locale (e.g. Syria) to determine priorities. The beauty of this method is that the process, not the topic, is the essential component. Since no

[30] Source: Colonel John Agoglia

perfect development plan exists, the process of ongoing dialogue and reevaluation is what enables success. For example, Singapore is often highlighted as a shining success of the development community, and it is assumed that the success arose from careful planning and neoliberal policies. But in actuality, Singapore's strategy included "broad directions" in which "the exact details developed over time through a careful balance of both orchestration and improvisation" (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, 39). Intentional plans, which are based on abstract and rational concepts, are important, but given that actions are guided by complex realities, goals require continuous reassessment. Ongoing dialogue is essential. And, because goals and plans develop over time, there is no perfect plan or easily replicable solution (Ramalingam 2013). A balanced approach, with constant conversation of overarching goals (Ramalingam 2013) and realistic timeframes (Ghani and Lockhart 2008) is needed, and that requires time and patience. The Delphi method provides the ability to have this dialogue in any context, including those currently entangled in conflicts or experiencing other types of chronic traumas that make it difficult for potential participants to openly engage with each other.

Experience at Sovereignty First

In February 2015, I started working with Sovereignty First, a small start-up in Washington, DC. The founder, Dr. Eric Wolterstoff, is a specialist in social trauma, starting working with Karen Dickman, the Vice President of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy and Executive Director of Global Water. Karen specializes in facilitated dialogue and mediation. A week prior, Kim Phan, the Executive Director of the International Law Institute, set up a meeting with Eric, Karen, and myself to discuss

potential overlap of work and interests. Because of my experience working with water, sanitation, and hygiene projects, I began working Karen at Global Water, but quickly transitioned to working for Sovereignty First. Both Karen and Eric have worked in the fields of development and peace building for years, and were focused on taking a different approach centered on the ideas of inclusivity and facilitated dialogue. Immediately, I was drawn to the focus on inclusive facilitated dialogue. When I started working with Sovereignty First, I became the third member of the team. Given the size of the company and its resources, I worked on a little bit of everything, including project design and implementation plans, interview questions, client presentations, and recruiting and supervising interns. At the time, the exact questions and method that were used for the inclusive facilitated dialogue (and this research) were still being developed, and two small pilot projects had been completed, one on-the-ground in Indonesia and the other a simulation project in Pakistan.

The main motivation of Sovereignty First is to increase the self-governance capacity of countries (and cities), using a shared information platform to generate a common political and social operating picture for all organizations influential or active in the life of the country. The company focuses on generating a baseline understanding of the current state of a country through dialogue with influential actors, with the goal of providing the necessary tools for realistic (better) project planning. Sovereignty First's framework, and the research questions, are based on the idea of inclusive nationalism, which for many development scholars is problematic, and goes against much of the development critiques I lay out in this research. Working as an applied

anthropologist in development requires navigating this tension, and the main focus of this research remains the Delphi method as a way of gathering more perspectives.

The questions, however, do start a particular conversation: emphasizing national trauma because of the dislocations experienced in most societies, actor mapping to understand the context in which possible actions occur (and the potential implications), and the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of the country that provide a better understanding of the country's current status, instead of relying on a few "experts." Together, the dialogue generated should provide a more holistic and comprehensive conversation of a country that avoids the mistakes of past development projects by including a multitude of voices, particularly those that have been silenced by more powerful actors in the past. Before I joined the company, Eric already knew he wanted the interviews (and dialogue) to be ongoing with some feedback mechanism. However, during my first year at Sovereignty First, I discovered the Delphi method and felt that this method, with some modifications, fit the mission and goals of Sovereignty First and piqued my interest for this research. Sovereignty First decided to adopt a modified version of the method to be applied to all future research. In essence, this modified Delphi method takes on the successful components of the Marshall Plan, while accounting for an environment of unequal power dynamics.

During 2015, Sovereignty First completed a round one pilot project of Iraq, and presented to congressional staffers on the House Foreign Relations Subcommittee for the Middle East and North Africa on the conflict in Syria, stating that this method could be the key to real dialogue in Syria, which would be necessary for any successful intervention. After the Iraq pilot project, Syria was chosen as a case study because of

the current conflict. Massive amounts of contradictory and complex information are flowing from the region, and there is interest from the US military to better understand that information to help them prepare for reconstruction and development in the region post-war. Sovereignty First pitched the project to investors and various generals in the US military, and by the end of 2015, after presenting the first round of results from Iraq, the organization received the go-ahead from a two-star general to start round one of the project in Syria. Because of this commitment, and the demands of getting the project off the ground, I took a leave of absence from the program to work full time at Sovereignty First. The first interviewer was sent into the field in January 2016. To ensure better feedback throughout the rounds, I created a VBA software program to automate the field reports. Therefore, the interviewers could input the de-identified data into an Excel file, and automatically create a report that could be sent to the offices in Washington, DC. Therefore, only the interviewers ever know the identity of the participants. With encouragement from my chair, Dr. Spicer, I decided to re-enroll in the program beginning in the fall of 2016, and use the data being collected for my dissertation. At that time, I cut my hours at Sovereignty First to compensate for time required for analyzing data and writing. However, this project was funded by Sovereignty First, and I continue to work on various projects for the organization, including client presentations, research, and reports. This is a mutually beneficial project, as any rigorous research produced from this data will likely serve to benefit the organization. Ultimately, the fundamental goal of this research, and Sovereignty First, is better dialogue to enable more successful development and post-conflict reconstruction projects. Quite simply, development's "expert model" continues to fail. This research

project and Sovereignty First are applying an old method in a new way to help combat the mistakes development continues to make.

National Trauma, Collective Memory, and the Health of a Nation

The enduring effects of a trauma in the memories of an individual resemble the enduring effects of a national trauma in collective consciousness. Dismissing or ignoring the traumatic experience is not a reasonable option
Arthur Neal (1998, 4)

Memory is a collective phenomenon… some events are dismissed, while others are elaborated and given high levels of significance
Arthur Neal (1998, 202)

Trauma is often only portrayed as an individual experiencing a traumatic event. Personal traumas impact that individual psychologically and physiologically, and can manifest as nightmares or intrusive recollections, eating disorders, isolation, detachment, et cetera. Individual traumas can create a need to restructure self-identity (Neal 1998). But trauma, like consciousness, can be experienced individually and collectively (Neal 1998, Durkheim 1984 (1983)). When a society experiences a traumatic event collectively, social life is damaged in such a way that it becomes unpredictable. Personal traumas are experienced by an individual, who may feel isolated and stigmatized among a group of "normal" people, while collective traumas are shared by the group as a whole (Neal 1998). Collective trauma can shape, and even drastically change, the identity of a nation; "when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 2004, 1). A collective trauma changes

the consciousness of a nation, and can act as a cohesive agent for the in-group (Neal 1998).

For instance, the collective trauma of 9/11: A trauma no doubt felt by every American that has changed our collective identity as Americans. Immediately following 9/11, there was an impressive show of cohesion and solidarity in order to rescue and rebuild, and bipartisanship previously unimaginable after the controversy of the 2000 election in Florida. President Bush maintained support between 80 and 90% for months following the attacks, including support from 75% of Black Americans, of which 10% voted for Bush (Smelser 2004b). It is easy to imagine how 9/11 changed the country's worldview and influenced collective consciousness on terrorism, Islam, immigration, gun rights, et cetera. Individual opinions and responses to the event vary, but through myths creating memories, a standardization of collective responses result, which then "[define] the moral boundaries of society" (Neal 1998). Myths emerge from the pattern of all versions of the narrative together, not individual versions (Levi-Strauss 1955). Memories of those myths are then collectively materialized and internalized. 9/11 bonded Americans against their constructed idea of terrorism and generated the concept of the "war on terror" (Volkan 2006, Neal 1998).

The Bush administration quickly identified Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda as the perpetrators, and Americans had their collective target. "The identification of a hated out-group only served to strengthen the general feelings of collective solidarity in familiar ways" (Smelser 2004b, 269). This identification of al-Qaeda as the "hated out-group" manifested as a collective, and nearly unanimous, approval of two wars in the Middle East as "proximate symbols…for venting the aggressive impulse" (Neal 1998,

5). Beyond the wars, Muslim Americans also were considered "proximate symbols" and experienced increased threats and violence post-9/11, including a sharp rise in hate crimes committed against Muslims. The FBI reported 28 incidents of hate crimes against Muslims in 2000, and 481 incidents in 2001 (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting 2000, 2001). In the years following 2001, the number of hate crimes against Muslims has decreased from the original surge, but have never returned to pre-9/11 numbers (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015); and, it can be argued that Muslims are under more threat in the United States today than in 2001. As traumas act to redefine the identity of the in-group, they can also construct new identities of the out-group. In fact, the increased marginalization of Muslims by non-Muslims in the West can act to produce more radicalization. In France, class differences and marginalization is palpable: French Muslims account for seven to eight percent of the population, but account for eighty percent of France's prison population (Atran 2016, 2015). Further, more than eighty percent of recruits join ISIS through peer-to-peer relationships, and most come from non-religious families. Recruits are not joining because of religious traditionalism; instead, they are looking for new social identities steeped in glory from their peers (Atran 2015).

Defining in-groups and out-groups, and constructing new group identities, are some of the ways in which a society can shift after a massive national trauma, because our collective consciousness has changed (Neal 1998, Volkan 2006). And despite America's reoccurring role as "perpetrator" in the Middle East, even with the ability to think more critically about the war in Iraq in hindsight, America's shared identification

as the "victim" remains relatively unchanged (Smelser 2004b). Understanding how 9/11, and other American traumas, have shaped American collective identity and memories would be essential knowledge for outside "experts" coming to the States to work on American development. Yet, development practices continue to ignore the national traumas and collective memories of the countries they are "developing." There is a huge space here for the contribution of anthropologists and ethnography – documenting and describing the collective traumas experienced by a country. Further, many "developing" countries are currently experiencing chronic traumas. Unlike acute traumas (e.g. 9/11, assassination of JFK), which are quick, dramatic events that immediately shake the nation, chronic traumas (e.g. the Great Depression) are long-lasting events characterized by continually deplorable conditions. Chronic traumas are extreme disruptions to the social system with consequences so great that it becomes difficult for any citizen to ignore (Neal 1998).

In fact, chronic traumas can dramatically impact the health of a nation. Physiologically, the deplorable conditions created by chronic traumas effect access to resources, including food, water, medicine, and shelter, which describes the current situation in Syria. And when resources are scarce, violence is not hard to find. Social order is fragile, and psychologically, the nation is looking for proximate symbols to focus their reactions and responses. The Great Depression was a severe chronic trauma in the United States. The entire social system in America was shaken – first with the stock market crash in 1929, then the failing of the banks in the early 1930s and the significant decrease in industrial production by 1933.[31] Starvation became a real threat to millions of Americans, and many came to rely on bread lines and soup kitchens,

[31] Between 1929 and 1933, industrial production decreased by two-thirds (Neal 1998).

despite personal feelings of shame. Americans were experiencing "unprecedented levels of hopelessness and helplessness" (Neal 1998). World War I veterans, out of sheer desperation, marched on Washington in 1932 with the hope of receiving $500 each – a payment that had been promised to them for their service. However, President Hoover labeled those marching as "communists" and "criminals," and swiftly dispatched the military to forcefully remove them, injuring more than 100 veterans (Neal 1998). Chronic traumas create conditions of threat – putting the lives of citizens at risk, through physical force or through the absence of basic needs. The overall health of the nation – physically and psychologically – suffers.

A nation's trauma informs the selective memory and collective consciousness of the country: "in the telling and retelling of the stories of our past, the events in question become stereotyped and selectively distorted as they become embedded collective memories" (Neal 1998, 201). These collective memories are an important component in understanding a country's actions, and should be considered when imaging and planning development initiatives. For example, when Israel refused to agree to early warning stations in Golan Heights during peace talks with Syria. The Syrians wanted to be sure that Israel would not attack them, but the Israelis viewed this demand as manipulative; they could not imagine why the Syrians were afraid they might be attacked, despite past actions to the contrary (e.g. the War of Independence, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, and the Lebanon War). Israel could not understand why Syria would feel threatened by them. It is important to explore the consciousness and trauma of a nation the way you might an individual receiving therapy (Grosbard 2003). These traumas are critical components of the construction of identity – whether on an

individual or collective level (Neal 1998). Additionally, some groups in a nation may remember, identify, and memorialize the events differently (e.g. Black and White Americans on the events of slavery and the Civil War) (Eyerman 2004, Smelser 2004a). Understanding in-groups and out-groups provides some historical contextualize of current problems.

National trauma and collective memory often leads to the identification of the group as the "victim;" however, other events may lead to the identification with "hero" or even "bystander" and "perpetrator." Albeit, identifying as the "victim" or "hero" is far easier for any group. Often, collective memory self-selects out any identification as the aggressor (Grosbard 2003), however, these identifications can evolve over time and across generations. For instance the collective memory of Americans in WWII involved being the "victim" of Japanese cruelty (e.g. Pearl Harbor, treatment of POWs) and America's "heroic" efforts entering the war to "save the world." It was not for years after the atomic bombs were dropped that questioning these actions became acceptable: Was American a "perpetrator" in the war? Or a "bystander" given how long it took to enter the war? Self-identification is a critical element in the dialogue surrounding these events.

Syria: A Little Context

…Under the surface of seemingly impregnable authoritarian governments, social change was occurring, and newly mobilized actors venter their frustrations at regimes that made no provision for incorporating them through new institutions. The future stability of that region will depend entirely on whether political institutions emerge to channel participation in peaceful directions.
Francis Fukuyama (2014, 50)

An important component of this method is that the researchers and interviewers are not necessarily experts on the country. The method generates the perspectives and lived experiences of those influential in the country, and the interviewers facilitate that process. However, some understanding is essential to contextualize the information and perspectives for analysis and discussion. Hence, this section will describe the current composition of religious and ethnic groups in Syria for reference, briefly detail President Hafiz al-Asad's rise to power, and the current status of the regime. Finally, this section will provide a quick glimpse into the chaos and chronic trauma that has unfolded in the region since the war began. Current events in Syria are critical to understanding this research and how this dialogue can potentially be used to initiate and plan development projects in Syria.

Religious and Ethnic Makeup

Syria has roughly 17 million people, and is ethnically and religiously quite diverse. Most of the country is Muslim (87%), but within that group there are Sunni Muslims, with a majority of 74%, and minority Muslims – Alawis, Isma'ilis, and Shias. Christians comprise roughly 10% of the country; with Greek Orthodox Christians the most common; and 3% of the country is Druze. Additionally, there are roughly 20,500 Jewish residents in Syria. Ethnically, the country is mostly Arab (90.3%), with the remaining population consisting of Kurds, Armenians,[32] Turcomans, and Circassians (Central Intelligence Agency 2017). However diverse, traditionally, these groups have been regionally divided, with complex relations. Some minority ethnic groups are more

[32] Armenians are also typically Christians, and thus are an ethnic and religious minority in Syria (van Dam 2012).

compact (Alawis, Druze, Isma'ilis, Kurds), while others are more dispersed across the country. Often, compact minorities are regionally concentrated in the poor rural areas, whereas the Sunnis mostly live in richer urban centers (van Dam 2012). The map provided below helps to orient Syria and its neighbors (Figure 2).

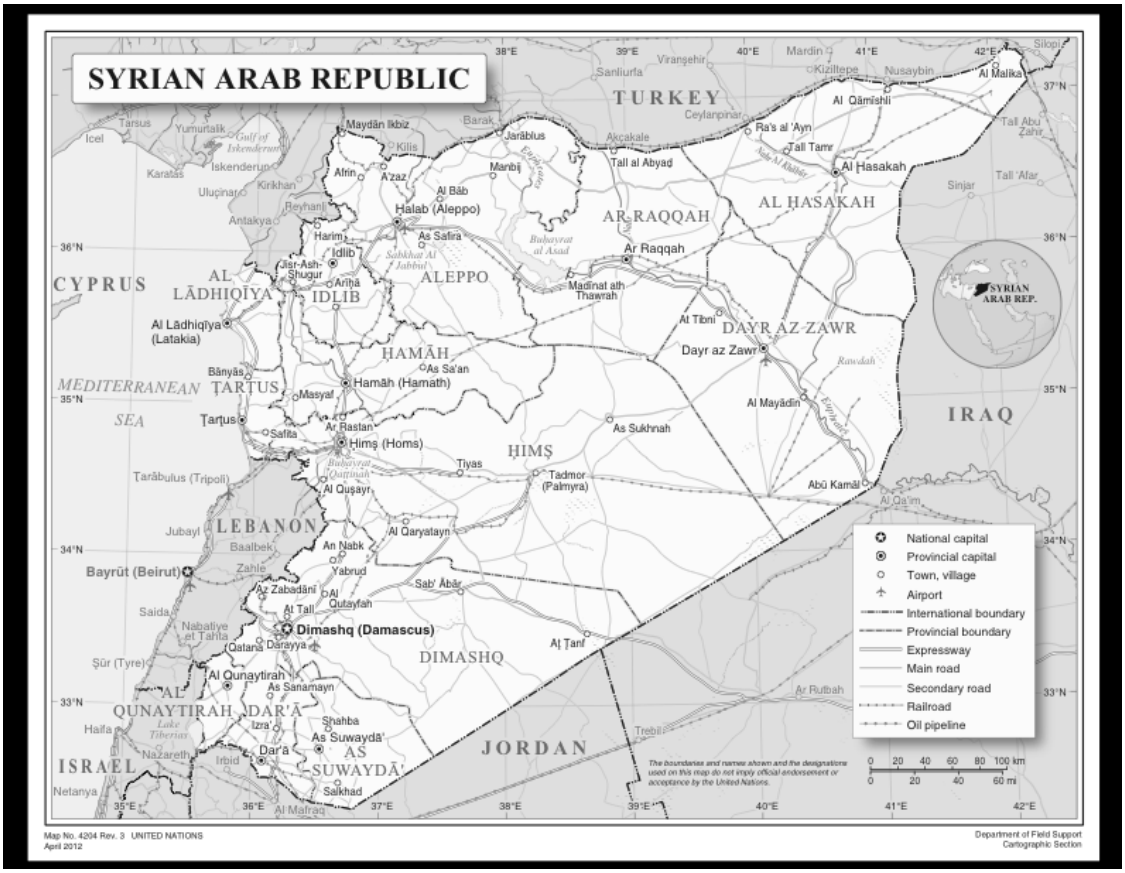


Figure 2. Map of the Syrian Arab Republic (United Nations 2012)

The Rise of the Ba'th Party and the Alawis

…The [Alawis] have by now made so many enemies and created so many blood-feuds that it must be doubtful whether they dare risk letting the succession pass outside their own ranks for fear of a dreadful settlement of accounts.
David Roberts (In van Dam 2012, 133)

Two middle-class schoolteachers – one Greek Orthodox Christian and the other a Sunni Muslim – formed the Ba'th[33] party in 1940. The party was designed to unify Arabs and create a society where all Arabs – regardless of religion – were equal. This form Arab nationalism was different from movements in the past, in which Sunni Muslims were viewed as superior to other Arab religious minorities, who were considered "imperfect Arabs" (van Dam 2012, 17). In fact, "religious minorities tended to suspect Arab nationalism as a disguise for unrestrained Sunni ascendency, similar to the situation that pertained during the Ottoman Empire, the only difference being that Arab rather than Turkish Sunnis now held power" (van Dam 2012, 17). Ba'thist Arab nationalism considered Islam to be inseparable from Arab national culture, but not necessarily the Arab national religion, allowing for all Muslims and Christians to be "equal heirs apparent" (van Dam 2012, 17). Many religious minorities hoped the Ba'th party would end the system of discrimination against non-Sunnis, although, ethnic minorities, because of the ideological importance of Arabism, still faced discrimination (e.g. the Kurds). The party tried to construct an identity of inclusion in the 1970s when Hafiz al-Asad assumed control of the party and allowed non-Arab ethnic minorities to join if they renounced their ethnicity. In reality, even when non-Arab ethnic minorities declared themselves 'Arabs' by renouncing their ethnicity, the Ba'th party still did not treat them as equals (van Dam 2012).

In combination with the Ba'th party's popularity with religious minorities, some minorities – particularly the Alawis and Druze – were overrepresented in the Syrian military. The French Mandate (1920-1946) was an important factor in this overrepresentation. Firstly, the French preferred to recruit religious and ethnic

[33] 'Ba'th' means 'renaissance' (Seale 1989)

minorities because they were less likely to rebel against them, and to ensure that no group within the country gained enough power to overthrow them (a common strategy of colonial oppressors). Additionally, minorities from rural communities were incentivized to join the military as a career outside of the agrarian sector. As a group the Sunnis, who predominately live in the wealthy urban centers, were under no such socio-economic pressure to join. Further, many Sunnis did not want to support the colonialist French, and often refused to send their sons to join the military, even as officers (van Dam 2012).

After Syrian independence in 1946, new academies for military officers opened, and there was an increased the opportunity for minorities to become officers. These minority military officers used their command to advance family members or those with regional or tribal ties. At that time, however, Sunni officers still controlled the most important factions of the military. In fact, it was Sunni officers that lead the successful coup in 1961 in which Syria broke from the United Arab Republic (UAR) and subsequently set up the 'separatist regime' (van Dam 2012). The UAR – a union between Egypt and Syria – had the short life span of only three years before splitting in 1961. This successful coup began a series of coups and counter-coups. However, an important note is that the beginnings of the UAR and Syria's strong ties with Egypt began after Israel attacked Syria in 1955. Immediately prior to the attack, Egypt and Syria signed a defense treaty. In response, Israeli wanted to show Syria that this treaty and their ties to Egypt were ineffective, so they attacked southern Syria near Sea of Galilee. Israeli was trying to drive a wedge between Egypt and Syria, and instead, the attack resulted in the relationship between Syria and Egypt growing stronger (and

subsequently the relationship with Egypt's arms dealer – the Soviet Union) (Seale 1989).

Despite the dissolution of the UAR, pan-Arabism remained strong among the surviving Ba'th party members – including Hafiz al-Asad. And on March 8, 1963, a coalition of Ba'thist, Nasserist, and independent union officers staged a successful coup of 'separatist regime' (van Dam 2012). Although the new president, Amin al-Hafix, was a Ba'thist Sunni, a reported 700 officers, mostly Sunni, were dismissed, and between 50 and 90% of those positions were replaced by Alawis (reports vary). The new Alawi officers then did as before: they appointed family members and individuals with tribal or regional ties. Shortly after, prominent Nasserist and union officers were also removed and replaced with Alawis. Additionally, three of the Military Committee's leaders were Alawi – including soon-to-be president, Hafiz al-Asad. Sectarian ties became important in appointments, and Sunnis now faced discrimination in the military. In 1966, another military coup – lead mostly by the Alawis and the Druze – removed President al-Hafiz from office and purged the military ranks of Sunnis, again increasing the minority command of Alawi and Druze against the Sunnis. In the same year, an attempted second coup by a Druze officer, Salim Hatum,[34] was discovered, which lead to the arrest of many Druze officers in the military, five of which were sentenced to death for their crimes (van Dam 2012, Seale 1989).

The final two most influential leaders in the country were Hafiz al-Asad and Salah Jadid, which lead to an intra-Alawi-Ba'thist struggle for power. However, Asad overthrew Jadid in his successful 1970 coup described as the "Corrective Movement."

[34] Hatum received political asylum in Jordan, but returned to Syria in 1967 and was executed (van Dam 2012)

Hafiz al-Asad appointed himself president of Syria and remained in power for thirty years (van Dam 2012). Alawite Hafiz al-Asad's rise to power in a majority Sunni state is an important component of not only how current President Bashar al-Asad came to power, but also provides insight into Syria's sectorial and tribal power dynamics.

On June 10, 2000, President Hafiz al-Asad passed away from heart failure. Originally, Hafiz had planned for his first son, Basil, to succeed him. However, after Basil died in a car accident in 1994, the job fell to his second son: Bashar. The day following his father's death, the Ba'th Party unanimously chose him as the nominee for president. On June 24th, the Syrian Parliament changed the presidential age requirement to from forty to thirty-four, Bashar's age at the time. And on July 10, 2000, Bashar al-Asad was voted into office by referendum – reportedly receiving 97.2% of the vote. The purging of the military in favor of Alawis paid off for the Asad family – all the high-ranking military officials are Alawis, and accepting Bashar as the successor not only avoided an intra-Alawi power struggle, it also helped ensure that the Sunni were unable to reclaim power (van Dam 2012).

The Civil War: 2011 Onwards

During the 2011 Arab Spring, much of the Middle East experienced what Samuel Huntington has labeled the "Third Wave" of democratic transitions. Although many elements set the stage for this transition, countries like Tunisia and Egypt, who experienced this "Third Wave," saw a rise in their middle classes (30% and 28%, respectively, between 1990 and 2010), an increase in college graduates, and a utilization and mobilization of new technologies (e.g. Twitter), all of which factored into their

ability to participate in this transition. However, Syria, along with the rest of the Arab Middle East, was unable to participate, as no political opposition was able to operate in the country at that time. Peaceful protests against Bashar al-Asad were swiftly, and brutally, squashed, ultimately giving rise to the current conflict (Fukuyama 2014).

Conflict is often both a cause and a result of poverty (World Bank 2011), and nearly 50% of countries who "emerge from conflict revert to hostilities within ten years" (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, 22). This high correlation cannot be ignored, and has unfortunately played out in the devastating situation in Syria. The most impoverished areas in Syria have also had the most conflict, but extreme poverty is now widespread, with two-thirds of the population not having their basic food and non-food needs met (World Bank 2016). According to the Syrian Center for Policy Research, since the war began 470,000[35] Syrians have been killed, 1.2 million injured, 4.8 million are registered refugees in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey, and 7.6 million are considered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Male life expectancy at birth has decreased 31% from 2010 (69.7 years) to 2014 (48.2 years), with the largest impact on males 15 to 19 years young. Combining the refugees and IDPs, roughly half of the Syrian population has been displaced over the last six years (Nasser et al. 2016), and consequently, the housing sector is the most impacted sector by the conflict (World Bank 2016). Further, roughly 60% percent of the workforce is unemployed, with many resorting to informal sectors to increase cash flow (Nasser et al. 2016); and about one-fourth of schools are currently closed because there are not enough teachers (World Bank 2016)

The economic impact of the conflict is difficult to measure exactly, but a few indicators include inflation, oil exports and revenue, and GDP. In 2013 through 2016,

[35] About 1.9% of the total population (Nasser et al. 2016)

average inflation increased 90%, 29%, 30%, and 25%, each year respectively (World Bank 2016). Inflation has been impacted by the depreciation of the Syrian pound, from 47 pound/USD in 2010 (World Bank 2016) to 214 pound/USD in 2017.[36] The situation in Syria is dire, and the country was placed on "Very High Alert" in 2016 for overall "fragility" and likelihood of collapsing (The Fund for Peace 2016). The Fragile States Index is far more comprehensively than just using GNP – the index includes such indicators as uneven development, poverty and economic decline, legitimacy of the state, and factionalized elites, but remains focused on information through expert analysis and decision-making (The Fund for Peace 2016). Syria is "fragile" on the verge of "failing." And, most within the field are uncertain of the path forward for any country on the ledge, especially one with ongoing conflict that has no end in sight.

Summary

In this chapter, I argue that ethnographies are an important component of moving the field of development forward, but should be used in conjunction with an ongoing dialogue with a diverse set of actors to ensure that a fuller, historical understanding of the current situation is captured. In order to enable this conversation, especially in traumatic environments, I suggest applying the Delphi method. RAND developed the Delphi method in the 1950s for consensus building among experts. Given the anonymity and multiple rounds, this method provides a unique opportunity for participants to comment on pure ideas, and potentially even change their perspective as they gain more access to the entire knowledge pool. In traumatic environments, like Syria, anonymity is critical as many participants are not able to sit at the same table.

[36] Rough estimate; Actual conversion accessed on 8 May 2017

The Delphi method can provide some insight into the conversations that need to occur in order to find common ground, but can only occur with anonymity.

Lastly, this chapter provided a brief history of the rise of the Ba'th party and Hafiz al-Asad, which paved the way to hand-off power to his son, Syrian President Bashar al-Asad. A glimpse into the dire circumstances in Syria is described, which is one important reason to try new methods and techniques. The Syrian people cannot rely on past reconstruction and development methods, as time and time again those methods fail to enable human development.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Our world needs more critical thinking and more respectful argument. The distressingly common practice of arguing by sound bite urgently needs to be replaced by a more of public discourse that is itself more respectful of our equal human dignity.
Martha C. Nussbaum (2011, 187)

This research examines an application of a modified Delphi method with a focus on Syria. The Delphi method's approach provides an opportunity to start a dialogue of the current situation in Syria with a more diverse set of actors. The participants can be internal or external actors with a focus on Syria, including those organizations deemed violent extremists. The goal is to be as inclusive as possible; however, given the real world implications and difficultly of many actors to agree to participate, the number of participants in the first round will likely be small and grow as the process and organization collecting the data gain more trust in the region. Trust is an essential component of the method. Participants need to trust the implementing organization and individuals conducting the interviews to preserve their anonymity. Particularly in a context like Syria, where violence is common and expected, participants may be more fearful of the process at first, but as the process develops and it is clear anonymity is being respected, more individuals should join. This is another benefit of a modified Delphi, since the goal is to generate diverse perspectives, participants can join and leave in-between rounds without hurting the integrity of the process.

The perspectives generated from participants are not necessarily true or untrue. These perspectives are tied to the lived truth of the participants and their ideologies, but as Ferguson (1990, 18) notes, even if many of these perspectives are untrue "that is no excuse for dismissing [them]." Further, the questions used in this research are to fulfill

the vision and values of Sovereignty First, the organization collecting the data. However, the focus of this research is the pool of knowledge generated through these questions and the peer assessment. In other words, these questions are not necessary for the method to be applied; rather, this organization provided an opportunity to examine the application of this method with their questions.

This research examined data from three rounds of a modified Delphi method. One of the modifications is a semi-structured first round, instead of an unstructured first round in which the conversations in the first round are then used to create the questionnaire for the later rounds. A semi-structured first round better matches the mission and goals of the implementing organization, but an unstructured first round would be a better approach to ensure that the dialogue generated is important to the participants. However, working as an applied anthropologist requires constant negotiating of theory and practice. Each round of the interviews included the same questions on three topics: 1) collective trauma and memory of Syria as a hero/savior, victim, bystander, and perpetrator, 2) actor mapping to determine the influential actors in Syria and the perceived commitment of each actor to the country's development, and 3) the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of Syria as described by the participants. I edited the questions for clarity and to reduce bias, but the questions were developed by the implementing organization to serve their vision of understanding the context in Syria in a certain way. Interview prompts and questions are located in Appendix B.

Syria was chosen as a case study for this research, because the implementing organization received funding to work in Syria. The implementing organization and

myself as an employee completed small pilot projects to test the questions and the method, including a round 1 report for Iraq that generated interest in funding for this research in Syria. Currently, there is interest in the national security community in gathering information about Syria to be better prepared for a post-war Syria, in whatever form it exists. The implementing organization funded the interviews and data collection.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research began January 1, 2016 and ended March 15, 2017. Each round lasted approximately five months. The timeline for the project was as follows:

- Round 1: January 1, 2016 through May 31, 2016
- Round 2: June 1, 2016 though October 31, 2016
- Round 3: November 1, 2016 through March 15, 2017

Interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C., Beirut, Lebanon, and Gaziantep, Turkey. These locations were chosen because they provided access to many participants, but did not put any interviewers in danger. The interviewer asked questions verbally, with an interpreter when necessary or requested. For most of the interviews occurring in the same location (Washington, D.C., Beirut, and Gaziantep), the interpreter was consistent. In addition, written questions were available on request in English or Arabic. Translation is difficult, time-consuming, and not always clear;

therefore, a team of fluent Arabic and English speakers has proven to be critical to the process. Sovereignty First has used a number of translators for their work, but prefers teams of at least three translators when possible. Translation is discussed among the translation team and with Sovereignty First employees to determine the best way to translate meaning and context. The lead interviewer for this research is Karen Dickman, a mediator with extensive experience working in peacebuilding and with victims of violent crimes. Karen interviewed the majority of the participants, with two other Sovereignty First team members conducting the remaining interviews.

After each interview, the lead interviewer entered the raw de-identified data into an Excel file with a macro I created to automate field reports. Reports were generated at the end of each round for public consumption, with the raw (relevant statements by interviewees) and aggregate data. The generated reports were then used to provide the feedback required for the feedback rounds – rounds 2 and 3. In these rounds, the same questions from round 1 were asked verbally to participants, but the interviewer also provided the range of answers from the previous round and relevant statements to generate reactions and produce dialogue.

The questions asked in this research reflect the vision and values of Sovereignty First. Although, I was excited by the opportunity to examine the application of a modified Delphi in a new context, as an anthropologist, I prefer the traditionally unstructured first round of the Delphi method to a semi-structured first round with a questionnaire already developed. In an unstructured first round, participants would be provided topics of discussion, but the interviewer would not ask specific questions. An unstructured first round is ideal for generating a questionnaire that encompasses the

priorities of the participants; however, the implementing organization carefully crafted these questions for a purpose, and therefore this research would not have been possible without the use of these questions. These negotiations and constraints are part of applied anthropology and research, and must be navigated to examine practical applications of theory.

Human Participants, Ethics, and Security

This research received an exempt status from the IRB (#7332) on October 5, 2016 as it is only using de-identified secondary data collected by the private firm, Sovereignty First, located in Arlington, Virginia. Sovereignty First collected the data with the intention of making it public. Participants were informed that the data would be made public after each round, but that it would be anonymous (responses would never be linked to any participant). After each round of interviews, data was integrated and synthesized into a report, which was published online.[37] The implementing organization then provided the de-identified data set to the researcher for analysis. These reports were also distributed to the participants and influential actors directly.

Speaking out against power in Syria is difficult, and can be dangerous; therefore, security was a concern for both the interview team and participants. Interviews were conducted over Skype when necessary, but in-person whenever possible. Every participant was coded using a physical codebook that was kept in the locked offices of the implementing organization. Physical copies of the interviews only have the coded number on top (names and dates are never written), and are kept in a separate drawer of the implementing organization's office. The interviewers handwrote all interview notes.

[37] On the Sovereignty First website.

The process of handwriting the interview notes increased the overall interview time, as quotes were important to get right.[38] However, this decision was made given the reality that bringing a computer, phone, or recording device would have made many participants too nervous to participant or provide honest answers. Given the instability and violence in the region, many participants would be afraid they were being recorded even if the interviewer was using an air-gapped computer for note taking. Trust between the interviewer and the interviewee is paramount in this process, as the goal is not only repeat interviews with individuals but also introductions to other potential participants. Skype interviews were the exception to this, as a computer or phone is required for these interviews. Individuals agreeing to participate via Skype had to trust the interviewer and the implementing organization completely to not record their interviews.

Participation

A total of sixty-three interviews were conducted from the beginning of round 1 and the end of round 3. Participants could be any individuals representing an organization working in Syria at any level. All of the interviews were individual. Depending on the availability of the team and language requirements of the participant, individual interviews were conducted with just the interviewer, with the interviewer and a note-taker, or with the interviewer and a translator (who also acted as a note-taker). The interview process was quite long. Despite being semi-structured, the interviewer did not cut off participants when they wanted to tell stories or engage deeply with

[38] Comments in quotes were quoted in the interviewer's notes, however, since the interviews were not recorded for security reasons, they may or may not be paraphrased to some extent. Notes from the interviewer that were not in quotes, or that have been condensed in anyway, are presented without quotes.

certain sections; therefore, some of these interviews occurred over several days, with the longest interview lasting a total of seventeen hours. Sometimes participants were unwilling to engage with the questions, and simply would not answer, instead providing the narrative they wanted the interviewer to hear. It was important for the interviewer to allow the participant to construct the narrative of their choosing, especially given the chronic trauma Syrians are experiencing. However, because some participants declined to answer, or their answers were unrelated, it was impossible to get an equal number of data points for each section of the interview. One essential component of this method, though, particularly when used in a country suffering from a collective trauma, is to develop trust between the interviewers and participants. Part of that trust comes from the interviewer not being too forceful or pushing the participant to move forward if they did not want to continue, which laid the foundation for more rounds with more diverse dialogue. Therefore, in this research, despite the number of interviews conducted, the amount of data per question is sometimes limited. In particular, the first round of interviews took longer to perform than the subsequent rounds and elicited less data points overall. In addition, all notes taken by the interviewer were taken by hand, which made it difficult, particularly in the longer interviewers to capture all of the data and dialogue generated. However, taking notes by hand remained important throughout the rounds to continue to develop the trust between the interviewer and the participants.

Round 1

Twenty-one individuals representing eighteen organizations participated in the first round of interviews (January 1, 2016 – May 31, 2016):

- Canadian Business Council of Dubai and the Northern Emirates
- Egyptian Government
- European Union
- Local Councils
- National Iranian American Council
- Syriac National Council of Syria
- Syrian American Engineers Association
- Syrian American Medical Society (2)
- Syrian Center for Political Strategic Studies
- Syrian Forum (2)
- Syrian Interim Government
- Syrian National Coalition (2)[39]
- Syrian Network for Human Rights
- Syrian Government
- Syrian Promise
- Russian Government
- Turkish Government
- Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM)

Round 2

Eighteen individuals representing sixteen organizations participated in the second round of interviews (June 1, 2016 – October 31, 2016):

[39] Also known as the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces

- Al Nida
- Baytna Syria
- Center for Civil Society and Democracy
- Day After Tomorrow Project
- Dawlaty
- Eastern Mediterranean Institute
- Egyptian Government
- European Union
- International Rescue Committee
- Free Syrian Army (2)
- Kurdish National Council
- Local Councils (2)
- Muslim Brotherhood
- Qatar Red Crescent/Civil East Assembly
- Syrian Government
- Syrian Network for Human Rights

Round 3

Twenty-four individuals representing twenty organizations participated in the third round of interviews (November 1, 2016 – March 15, 2017):

- Accuracy Press Institute
- American Relief Coalition for Syria
- Assistance Coordination Group

- Baytna Syria
- Committee of Syrian Youth
- Egyptian Government
- European Union
- Free Syrian Army (2)
- International Rescue Committee
- Kurdish National Council (2)
- Local Councils
- Red Cross/Red Crescent
- Syrian Advisory Center (2)
- Syrian Government
- Syrian Network for Human Rights (2)
- Syrian Relief and Development
- Tribal Leader
- Turkish Government
- Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM)
- United Nations

Only four organizations had individuals who participated in all three rounds:

- Egyptian Government
- European Union
- Local Councils
- Syrian Government

Modifications of the Original Delphi Method

The main features of the Delphi method – anonymity of participants and their responses, iterative rounds with controlled feedback, and statistical aggregation of responses (Rowe and Wright 1999, Linstone and Turoff 2011) – were modified only to tailor the method for the particular research, while retaining the essential qualities required for the method to work. Anonymity is strictly observed, and participants were guaranteed that none of their responses would be linked to them, as it is critical to ensure that participants respond to pure ideas (Dalkey and Helmer 1963, Rowe and Wright 1999), avoid "losing face" (Rowe and Wright 1999, 354) and the dreaded group-think, but also because of the volatile nature of dialogue regarding Syria at the moment. Further, many actors would be unable or unwilling to sit in the same room together, let alone separate ideas from the individual or organization represented. The only modification here is that the names of the organizations associated with each participant is retained and then published in the end-of-round reports. However, this does not break the critical rationales for anonymity, and given the structure of the questions, the participant's identity would be difficult to determine.

Additionally, the number of rounds with feedback was tailored for the project with time restraints being a major factor. In the original usage of the Delphi method, there were four rounds with feedback beginning in the second round. Modern applications of the method involving in-depth interviews instead of questionnaires use one or two rounds (Gordon 2003). The multiple rounds with controlled feedback are necessary as that ensures participants have opportunities to change their perspectives, or

at least be made aware of the range of perspectives that exist. This research examines data from three rounds (two rounds with feedback), using semi-structured interviews. Ideally, this would be an ongoing process with at least ten rounds to examine potential change of perspectives or shifts over time. For this research, time is a critical factor, and therefore only three rounds are included; however, the implementing organization that is collecting the data will be continuing the process for as long as funding is available.

Lastly, statistical aggregation is important to secure anonymity, provide the controlled feedback, and grasp the bigger picture. In the original method, statistical aggregation included reporting the median and range of responses, often using inter-quartiles. In this research, reporting of the mean in the feedback rounds was avoided as extreme opinions (or outliers) could "pull" it (Gordon 2003). One of the important critiques of this method is that it pressures participants with "extreme opinions" to move toward a moderate consensus. When the range is presented using inter-quartiles, the feedback is clear: Participants are made aware of whether they are considered "extreme" or "moderate" compared to the group. Therefore, an important modification of this research was to provide the total range during the feedback rounds, with no indication of the "center." Participants, then, became only aware of the entire knowledge pool, without an indication of whether they held "extreme" opinions or not, and consequently should feel less pressure to conform to any consensus.[40]

Other modifications of the method include a semi-structured first round. Originally, unstructured first round interviews provided the required qualitative data to create a structured interview for subsequent rounds. However, structured first rounds

[40] This paper will present averages, however, as it is not being used as a tool for feedback, rather, it is an examination of the method and the dialogue generated.

are one of the most common modifications to the method and do not effect the efficacy of the methodology (Rowe and Wright 1999). Further, the Delphi method was originally designed for expert dialogue. Yet, it is clear that development "experts" are not the only participants who should be engaging in this dialogue. Therefore, instead of including only Syria "experts" in this process, participants are individuals that are associated with an organization working in Syria.[41]

The last modification is that this process is public. This modification requires publication of reports after each round of interviews. The reports are published online,[42] and sent directly to participants and influential actors.[43] This modification is aimed to increase transparency and participation in later rounds. Ideally, all actors assessed as influential will participant in every round; however, pilot studies suggest that participation increases with rounds, as actors want to include their perspectives and respond to comments. Further, transparency is a critical part of this process. This is one of the best ways to ensure participation –actors require a *quid pro quo* of information. In other words, actors are more likely to participate and provide detailed information if they know they will also be receiving information. Overall, these modifications create a unique tool for examining the range of perspectives of the current state of Syria and those currently considered influential. The questions assessed attempt to grasp a more comprehensive picture of Syria, but the real benefit is the access to the diverse

[41] In a real way, participants will be experts of Syria, but here the term "experts" is used to describe traditionally viewed, academically trained development experts in the field
[42] www.SovereigntyFirst.com
[43] Reports are sent to all participants, and to organizations deemed influential. Sovereignty First reaches out to each organization through email, phone, and mail, and determines the best means of sending the report at the end of each round for that organization.

perspectives previously unheard.

National Trauma and Collective Memory of Syria

In addition to arguing for the inclusion of a more diverse set of voices, this research suggests that national trauma and collective memory are an important component to understanding the complex relationships and histories of any country. Including a diverse set of actors changes the understanding of the totality of available perspectives. Therefore, instead of simply understanding Syria and its history as a monolithic narrative that can easily be understood and described by development "experts" designing and implementing projects, this research provides a shred of the diverse perspectives required for real success of these projects. In other words, projects *for Syria by Syrians* necessitate a better understanding of the complex heterogeneous perspectives and narratives existing and thriving simultaneously within the Syrian context, which necessitate an understanding of Syrian collective trauma and the internalization of those traumas into national memories.

Actor Mapping

One solution to the 'crisis of representation' facing anthropology is to 'study up' and research the powerful rather than the powerless.
Paul Rabinow (In Gardner and Lewis 1996, 24)

The next phase is to determine the influential actors in and outside of Syria through peer assessment. For the organization collecting the data, only data from interviews with influential actors are included in their reports. This research, however, will include data from all interviews to ensure the most diverse set of perspectives are

considered. However, only actors deemed influential are peer-assessed in the interviews. In other words, despite the inclusion of data from all interviews conducted, the actor mapping portion of the interview only includes peer assessment of the influential actors. Actors deemed influential actors include local, national, regional, and international actors. The number of actors from each level depends entirely on the country. In other words, this process does not include the five most influential actors from each level to be assessed, but rather include all those considered most influential overall. Individuals participating in the process represent an organization working in Syria, because organizations are "known, identifiable, and recognizable… itself a mobilization of bias in preparation for action" (Schattschneider 1960, 30). Therefore, an individual representing any organization working in or with Syria is eligible to participate in the interview process, as the organization's worldview is identifiable and, minimally, provides the start of the necessary dialogue.

The first step in determining the influential actors in Syria is to generate an initial list of potential influential actors through a desk review. This list guides the first stages of the interview process.[44] Although the initial list of potential influential actors provides a starting point for interviews, the final list of influential actors is not determined until the end of each round, and therefore, could change during the process as a whole (this is more likely in Syria, with active fighting and violence, than in more stable countries). Further, any participant regardless of their final status as an influential actor or non-influential actor will be included for the purposes of this research. This

[44] The focus of Sovereignty First's interview process is influential actors. Therefore, even though I am including interviews with actors that at the end of the rounds were not considered influential, the majority of the interviews are with influential actors. An unfortunately consequence of this is that their focus on influential actors reduces the overall pool of potential participants, and thus limiting the interview data collected.

created a deviation in the treatment of the data in this research and for the implementing organization. The implementing organization only included data from those considered influential actors through their determination method, while this research includes all of the interview data available and determined the most influential by examining the influence ratings alongside the number of times that actor was mentioned. The first round of interviews includes a peer assessment of potential influential actors, while later rounds include only confirmed influential actors from the previous round. Although this does not effect the inclusion of interview data, it changes the list of organizations included in the peer assessment. However, for each round, this portion of the interview is semi-structured, which allows for participants to add any other actor they believe to be influential to the list and assess them.

Participants are also asked to evaluate each influential actor's commitment to the country. Commitment is divided into five categories: core, champion, ally, neutral, and opposed. Actors identified as core are considered fully committed towards development of Syria; this is the primary purpose of this individual or organization. Champions are actors committed to the stability and development of Syria, but do not work exclusively on that issue. Actors perceived as allies offer transactional support for Syrian development; these actors only support initiatives when their interests are also served. Actors identified as neutral are neither opposed to nor support Syrian development. And actors that are identified as opposed actively are against the development of Syria, which could be for personal gain, or because of their beliefs. This part of the actor mapping provides an in-depth look at the complex relationships between actors within and outside of the country, and provides an opportunity for actors

to find overlapping areas of interest and to generate ideas and consensus around *what they want*, not simply *what they are against*[45] (Ferguson 2009). This is an important component of the generation of perspectives, as it sheds light on the diverse opinions on the reputation of each of these organizations. In other words, it may seem obvious to some international organizations that certain actors are working for or against the best interest of Syria, but this will elucidate whether there is consensus around the work of these organizations, or if there are a plurality of opinions regarding their reputation and work.

The Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Dimensions

The economic, social, and political dimensions of development proceed on different tracks and schedules, and there is no reason to think that they will necessarily work in tandem.
Francis Fukuyama (2014, 50)

The final part of the interview data includes fifteen questions[46] regarding the current political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of the country, which were created by Sovereignty First as part of their mission and goals. The goal of these questions is to capture the perceived state of Syria, in order to more reasonably prioritize and plan realistic interventions. Again, this is *a* starting point for this dialogue. The main focus of this research is the application of the modified Delphi method to

[45] Ferguson (2009) discusses the pattern of the development community framing issues and ideas they are against, rather than for: anti-corruption, anti-imperialism, and so on. He argues that moving forward requires being for ("pro-") ideas and alternatives; and simply asks: *what do we want?* Not *what are we against?* (Ferguson 2009).
[46] Four questions were removed (one about science and education, and three about threats facing the country) because of the language changing during the three rounds; therefore, they could not be reasonably summarized.

produce dialogue; therefore, the questions themselves are less important than the conversation they generate.

Research Constraints

One of the main limitations of this research method is the time requirement. The Delphi method requires ample time for each round of data collection, synthesis and feedback. Consensus or shared understanding is a slow process that cannot be rushed. Sovereignty First began collecting data for this project in January 2016, and the third round of data collection ended March 2017. Ideally, this research would examine ten rounds of data, which would roughly take four years in Syria; however, for purposes of a timely dissertation, this research only includes the first three rounds of the process. Unfortunately, this means that consensus is unlikely as the first three rounds mostly provide the total pool of perspectives and knowledge, rather than serving to shift perspectives. Ideally, eliciting patterns from shifting perspectives over time would have been part of this research, but given the number of participants and data points per round, examining data across rounds was not possible. Therefore, the data is only considered as a total pool of data and diverse perspectives. In addition, for countries experiencing severe trauma, like Syria, it would be expected that the time required to shift perspectives would be longer than in countries or communities less impacted by trauma. Hence, even if more data points were available, it is unlikely any shift would occur in this timeframe.

Additionally, given the length of the interviews – both because of the questions asked and participants focusing on certain sections or simply telling stories they wished

to tell – many participants did not complete the entire interview. Therefore, many questions have less data points than number of participants. For example, some participants listed the actors they thought to be influential, but did not assess their level of influence. Other actors, because of time constraints, ended the interview before any data on the collective memory or the dimensions could be collected. In addition, length of interviews is increased when an interpreter is required. For many of the interviews, an English-Arabic interpreter was necessary, and can create confusion since language interpretation is never exact. Further, given the limited number of participants available and the instability of the environment, the total number of participants was lower than desired. This research method cannot rely on a random sample; instead it requires participants who are actively working in or with Syria in some context, which means that individuals or organizations unwilling to participant cannot simply be replaced. In particular, with the ongoing conflict, some organizations will more difficult to access than others. The implementing organization contacted as many organizations as possible for participation, but some organizations, especially those deemed terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic State, are incredibly difficult to access and interview. This difficultly is only intensified given the inability of the implementing organization to physically work in Syria. Instead, interviews with participants in Syria were conducted over Skype. For many organizations in Syria, using Skype is a security risk, and therefore, this form of communication and interviewing limited access to those organizations.

Lastly, one of the limitations of this research design is the anonymity of the process. Anonymity is an essential component to generate more diverse perspectives,

ensuring that more marginalized voices are heard as participants' responses are weighted equally, regardless of the actor. This method is an intrinsically democratic process, with each actor getting one vote within each round. However, every actor in this process does not have the same influence and importance within Syria. Therefore, when the time comes for implementation of development and post-conflict reconstruction projects, the anonymity and inherent democracy of the process is constraining. Further, the anonymity of responses guarantees that it is impossible to match perspectives with the actor that holds them. Although this generates more honest, transparent dialogue, it can also inhibit understanding the realities on the ground. Ideally, a combination of this method to generate the entire pool of available perspectives will be used with a method that accounts for the varying influence of the actors. The reports from the implementing organization weighs influence more than this research, as they only include data from interviews with participants deemed as influential in Syria by their peers. A combination of these methods in examining influence may help overcome this constraint.

Chapter 4: Collective Trauma and Memory Results and Discussion

Every country has collective national memories and myths. Some of the most powerful myths are of the country acting as a glorified "hero" or as a wronged "victim." Collective national memories highlight some events, while ignoring others. To begin to understand the collective national memories of Syria, participants were asked on a scale of one to five how strong their national memories are for each role: hero, victim, bystander, and perpetrator. Here, the strength of the memory is only important as it gives some relative indication of whether the participant views Syria more as the hero, victim, bystander, or perpetrator. In other words, countries that view themselves as the hero should have the strongest collective memories associated with playing the hero, while countries that view themselves more as a victim should have stronger memories associated with that role.

Figure 3 shows the average responses of participants' collective memory of Syria as a hero, victim, bystander, and perpetrator. On average, the participants had the strongest collective memories of Syria as a victim and the weakest memories of Syria as a hero, bystander, and perpetrator. The standard error bar for the strength of memory of Syria as a victim (shown in Figure 3) does not overlap with the memories of Syria as a hero, bystander, and perpetrator. However, the analysis is qualitative and focused on emerging patterns and themes. In addition, all roles elicited the total range (1-5) from participants. In other words, at least one participant named the strength of their memory of Syria in each role as a "1" and a "5," which begins to demonstrate the disparate ways in which Syria is constructed. Detailed dialogue generated for this section of the interview is located in Appendix C.

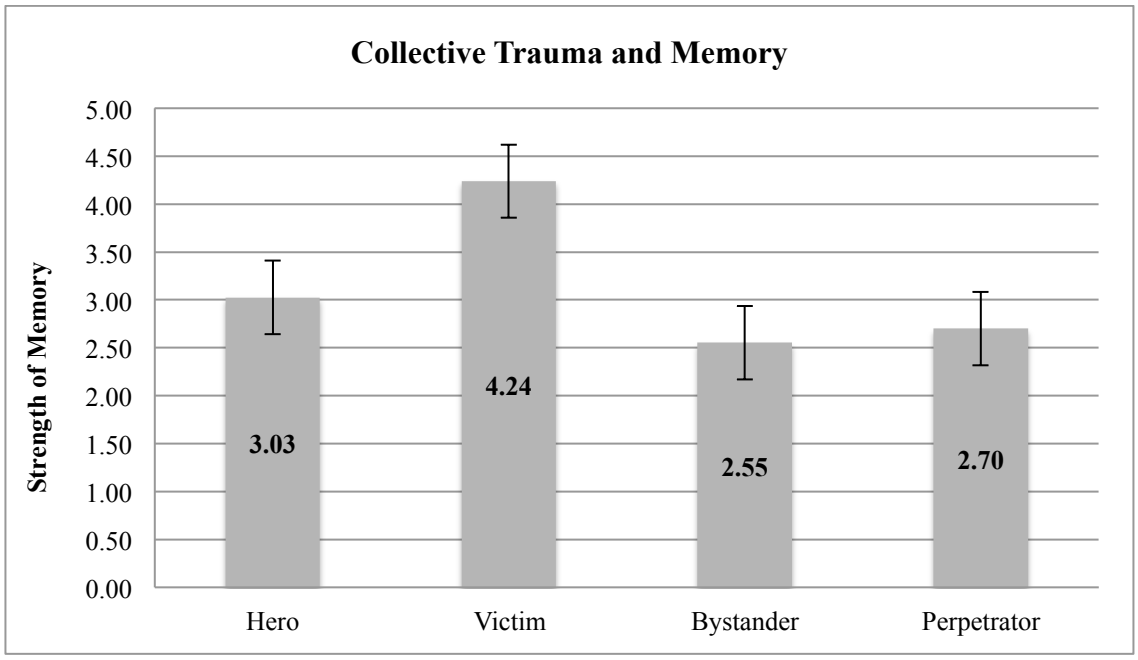


Figure 3. Strength of Memory of Syria as a Hero, Victim, Bystander, and Perpetrator

Syria as a Hero or Savior

Participants had an average strength of memory of Syria acting as a hero of 3.03. Throughout the three rounds, participants mostly remembered Syria as a hero in relation to the Armenian Genocide by acting to save Armenians from the Ottoman government. Participants also focused on Syria as a hero in relation to Israel, with some comments as general as Syria acting as a hero in the "wars with Israel." However, participants particularly focused on the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, with Syria fighting against the formation of Israel with Palestinian land. Participants also remembered Syria as a hero against the French, in both 1925 and 1946. Fighting for Syrian land and against French colonialism was a common theme in this section of the interview, but was conspicuously absent from the actor mapping section on France.

During the feedback round, participants did not push back on Syria acting as a hero in these situations, except one participant who argued that Syria was not a hero in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, which was specifically mentioned by another participant: "Syria was detrimental to its settlement." Disagreement among memories is expected, as individual memories depend on individual identity and relation to the remembered event. Individual memories and narratives feed the collection of narratives that create and perpetuate collective memories. In addition, one participant commented that the story of Syria as a hero is the result of brainwashing: "There are a lot of stories of Syria as heroic, but we see it totally different now. This was all brainwashing. Syria as a government is not playing a heroic role, only the resistors, sacrificing their lives." This comment demonstrates the distrust and separation between many Syrians and the Syrian government. The distrust seeps into and can change previously established narratives and memories, as individuals begin to question the reliability of the narratives they have been told based on systematic distrust.

Syria as a Victim

Participants had the strongest association with Syria as a victim (average 4.24), and most often described Syria as a victim in relation to Israel. However, not all of the Arab-Israeli Wars were discussed equally. Participants most frequently brought up the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (the first Arab-Israeli War), in which Palestinian land was to be designated as Israel. Some of this land to become Israel was part of 'natural' Syria. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Great Briton and France divided up the Middle East in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Syria fell under French rule, and by the time

the French were ousted in 1946, Syrian land had been contracted from roughly 300,000 square kilometers to less than 185,000 square kilometers (Seale 1989). The amount that the first Arab-Israeli War is mentioned in this research, and the strong association of Syria as a victim to Israel, is illuminating. In 1948, Syrians had just become independent, and were dealing with the loss of their land, which is deeply tied to Syrian and Arab nationalism and identity, and then, land that was formerly Syrian is designated for non-Arabs. Pan-Arabism was already prevalent in Syria prior to the war; an ideology espoused by the rising Ba'th party, but post-Arab defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, in the 1950's and 1960's, pan-Arabism gained immense popularity in the region. The theme of lost Syrian land, trauma, and memory were prevalent throughout the interviews.

Participants also focused on the current war in Syria, with the Syrian people the victims and the Syrian government (and others) as the perpetrators. One comment, in particularly, elucidated many recurring themes and patterns during these interviews:

> Syria did not start the conflict. In general people came up against the regime peacefully. *The government countered with bullets*. It transformed from peaceful to armed. The whole country became a victim. Even the regime has no say. *Outside forces, Russia and Iran are in control of all the killing.* The opposition leaders are ready to put down their arms and return to civilian life. *The government brought in ISIL*. 'Syria' means the people, not the government. The government is standing by watching.

In this quote, the participant describes the Syrian Government, with outside regional and international powers, victimizing the Syrian people, and blames the Syrian Government for the Islamic State in Syria. The participant defines Syria as the people in relation to this question (Syria as a victim), but in the later questions presents Syria acting as the perpetrator and bystander as the Syrian Government. The defining of Syria

as the people when in the role of victim and redefining Syria as the government when in the role of bystander or perpetrator is a dominant theme in the interview data.

A few participants during feedback rounds pushed back on two events in particular: the British Occupation and the 1982 Hama Massacre. For the British Occupation, some participants stated that this event never occurred (and therefore, Syria could not be a victim of it). And, for the 1982 Hama Massacre, participants did not agree on the identities of the victim and perpetrator. In round 1, one participant described the Muslim Brotherhood as the perpetrator and the Syrian state as the victim, while in round 2, another participant argued that it was the state that was the perpetrator and the Muslim Brotherhood was the victim. Even though memories are the internalization of collective narratives, individuals have their own associations and specific memories of an event, which can vary dramatically.

Syria as a Bystander

On average, participants' strength of memory as a bystander was 2.55. Participants most associated Syria as a bystander in relation to the recent wars in Iraq, the historical and current oppression of Syrian Kurds, and during the current war. Many participants again framed the Syrian Government as the bystander. In addition, some participants also framed the opposition groups as bystanders: "The government knows the refugee situation, and isn't doing anything about it, even allowing humanitarian assistance. The rebel groups were selfish, too, by not sacrificing more for the sake of civilian lives that would be lost." Again, participants are defining the Syrian people as victims of various bystanders.

Syria as a Perpetrator

The participants' average strength of memory of Syria as the perpetrator was 2.70. Many participants discussed the current war, with a particular focus on Syrian President, Bashar al-Asad. Asad is described as the "one clear perpetrator" orchestrating the same "level of brutality" as the Islamic State, but on a larger scale. Participants also describe Asad as blackmailing other countries to support him financially, and attacking Syrian civilians with chemical weapons. Participants also defined Syrian Kurds as victims of the Syrian Government, specifically mentioning the burning of the Amoudah Cinema in 1960 and the demonstrations in 2004 in the Kurdish region, which the Asad regime quickly and violently suppressed. In addition, participants mentioned the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood and the 1982 Hama Massacre as examples of Syria as the perpetrator. Participants also mentioned these events as examples of Syria as the victim, which demonstrates both that individual memories and narratives can differ, but again that there is a separation in the description of Syria the people and Syria the government.

Discussion

Participants had the strongest collective memories of Syria as a victim, which is unsurprising as Syria has been experiencing conflict and instability since 2011, and generally the strongest collective memories are as a hero or victim (Grosbard 2003). In addition to this research, more detailed discussions and discourse around each of these discrete events is required to have a better understanding of how these collective

memories impact the ways in which Syria acts and reacts as a participant in their own development. In particular, many participants mentioned Syria as a victim in relation to Israel acting as the perpetrator. These events were the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (also known as the first Arab-Israeli War), the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (the Six Day War), 1973 Arab-Israeli War (the Yom Kippur War), and the current occupation of a portion of Golan Heights.

The participants' collective memory of Syria as a victim in this research excluded two events mentioned by Grosbard (2003) – the Lebanon War and the War of Independence – and included one event he failed to mention – the 1948 Arab-Israeli War – as reasons for peace talks between the two countries continuing to fail. Of course, this only provides a sliver of information regarding the collective national memory of Syria, but it opens the door to the difference between an expert's analyses of which national traumas impact current peace talks and the selective memory of Syria by a more diverse panel of voices. Additionally, this research only scratches the surface of which events participants selectively remember. Further inquiry to access a deeper understanding of how these memories impact the current situation is essential. For example, Grosbard (2003) describes these national traumas impacting peace talks in Golan Heights because the Israelis did not understand why Syrians felt vulnerable to Israeli attack. However, a more in-depth examination of why each of these traumas were included or excluded may provide more specific explanations to comprehend the actions of Syria in these talks, and in turn provide an opportunity to create understanding with Israeli.

The event included by participants in this research that was excluded by Grosbard (2003) was the 1948 Arab-Israeli War that occurred after a portion of Palestine was to be designated as Israel following WWII. Importantly, 'natural Syria' previously included some of this land. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the French extended Mount Lebanon to create Greater Lebanon with Syrian land. By the time the French pulled out of Syria in 1946, the country, which was once roughly 300,000 square kilometers, had been contracted to less than 185,000 square kilometers (Seale 1989). It is telling that the first Arab-Israeli War, then, is mentioned in this research, but not by Grosbard (2003). Syrians had just experienced an extreme loss of land, which is deeply tied to Syrian and Arab nationalism and identity, and then, a portion of that land is carved out as Israel. This connection should be explored further, but in relation to national trauma. Syrians may not only feel vulnerable to Israeli attack, but also that this Israeli land claim is illegitimate or a step too far in the continued carving away of 'natural Syria.' Losing land from Syria is constructed as losing pieces of Syria, physically and emotionally, like losing a limb from the body.

Additionally, the feedback rounds revealed some disagreement in events in which Syria was a victim. For instance, in round 1, multiple participants asserted that Syria was a victim during the British Occupation, but in round 2, a few participants refuted that Great Britain had ever occupied Syria. Historically, there is not a debate on the British Occupation. In 1941, the British army occupied Syria after defeating the French Vichy forces in Damascus. The British promised Syria independence from France (the French Mandate began in 1923), but after the British left, the new French

forces, the Free French, did not hold up their end of the deal[47] (Seale 1989). Since there is no historical debate over the British Occupation, it is unclear why some participants refuted the occupation, while others specifically mentioned it. There are many potential explanations, but the most compelling are: 1) the occupation was short-lived, and given the continuance of the French Mandate, the British occupying Syria for a short period in 1941 is simply not well-remembered, and 2) the selective memory of the British Occupation is associated with the region of the country the participant was born. Given that an equal number of participants remember and refuted the occupation, it would be interesting to explore the differences in region and association with this memory. If an association exists, the most likely explanation is that individuals from the region most impacted by the fighting of the British and the Vichy forces have a stronger memory of the occupation. In addition, Syrians from rural Alawite populations, who received special treatment by the French (Seale 1989), may be less likely to remember the defeat of the Vichy forces which eventually lead to the ousting of the French a few years later.

Another event that should be explored further is the Hama Massacre of 1982. Participants remembered Syria as both a victim and a perpetrator. Some participants noted the Muslim Brotherhood as the perpetrator (the state was the victim) of the Hama Massacre (e.g. "rebellion against the state by the Muslim Brotherhood"), while other noted the state as the perpetrator (e.g. "state aggression against the Muslim Brotherhood") with the Muslim Brotherhood as the victim. The 1982 Hama Massacre was twenty-seven days of fighting between the Syrian Government and the Muslim Brotherhood. Government reports stated that the Muslim Brotherhood started the fighting, while other reports state the Syrian army was sent to Hama by President Hafiz

[47] The French Mandate ended on April 17, 1946, which is now Syria's National Day (Seale 1989)

al-Asad to suppress the potential uprising. Further, death toll estimates are highly varied. Government sympathizers typically estimate only 3,000 were killed, while others maintain that more than 20,000 perished (Seale 1989). Seale (1989) states that the real death toll was likely between 5,000 and 10,000. Regardless, the narrative of this massacre varies. Those sympathetic with Asad and the Syrian Government most likely associate Syria as the victim of the massacre perpetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood. It would be simply to draw conclusions based on ethnic and religious identities here, with sympathizers more likely to be Alawite, and non-sympathizers more likely to be Sunni. However, given the complex nature of these relationships, it would be important to study how different identities (ethnic, religious, regional, political, etcetera) correlate to this narrative.

Further, participants mostly framed Syria as a perpetrator during the current conflict, with a particular focus on Bashar al-Asad and the Syrian Government acting as perpetrators against the Syrian people. In a way, this also reframes Syria as the victim, with only a particular out-group acting as the perpetrator. One participant noted the current war as an example of Syria as a victim, bystander, and perpetrator. Besides the current conflict, most participants focused on Syria as a perpetrator against the Kurds, the Muslim Brotherhood, Lebanon, and during the Iraq War. Syria as a perpetrator against the Kurds elicited two specific examples (both in the Syrian Kurdish region): demonstrations by Syrian Kurds in 2004 and the burning of a cinema in 1960. The burning of the Amoudah Cinema in 1960 is particularly disturbing, but the cause of the fire remains unsettled. A few participants stated that the Syrian regime was responsible for the burning of the cinema, which trapped and killed 180 to 300 Kurdish children,

with up to 150 more injured (KurdWatch 2009). These allegations against the Asad regime have not been proven, but remain a strong narrative with some (Mella 2015). Others assert that the this was simply a tragic accident when the projector caught on fire, and worsened by the combination of no fire department in the city and hundreds of packed and panicked children inside (KurdWatch 2009). However, the distrust between many participants and the Syrian regime is clear, and this impacts past and future internalization of collective traumas as memories. In other words, because this distrust exists, collective narratives of the Syrian regime acting as the perpetrator and the country as its victim are easily formed.

Participants also noted the demonstrations in Kurdish Syria in 2004, in which riots broke out and a statue of Hafiz al-Asad was toppled. The Syrian army was deployed to assert control – injuring at least 100 and killing dozens of Kurds (Brandon 2007). Participants also remembered Syria as a bystander associated with attacks on the Kurds, including, the 1988 Halabja chemical attack orchestrated by Sadam Hussein. These traumas generating historical narratives and collective memories, with the information provided about the PYD from the same group of participants (see Chapter 5), provides some insight into the complicated current and historical relationship between Syrian Kurds and other Syrians. In this part of the interview, participants seemed to view Syrian Kurds as separate from Syria as whole, and in particular, participants are constructing Syrian Kurds as specific, discrete victims of the Asad regime. Yet, participants were conflicted about the PYD during the actor mapping portion of the interview (detailed in chapter 5). However, taking this information in conjunction with the historical carving of 'natural Syria,' the conflicted nature of the

relationship between Syrian Kurds and a Kurdish territory becomes clearer. Seale (1989, 14) captures the essence of this dynamic when he describes the oppositional nature so often found in the Arab world: “Separatism and unity, minority and majority, margin and mainstream, the part and the whole – these opposites still lie just below the surface of politics and society in the Arab world.” The actor mapping portion of the interview seeks to unveil some of these contradictions, while layering them within the information revealed in the collective trauma and memory portion.

Chapter 5: Actor Mapping Results and Discussion

We need to listen to Syrians differently, empathetically. Being able to understand them through their eyes is the crux of the matter.
Ofer Grosbard (2003, 69)

This chapter will summarize the results from the actor mapping portion of the interview. Participants were first asked to identify or comment on the actors most influential in the life of Syria. The participants were then asked to provide a number on a scale of one through five of how influential that actor is in Syria and how influential they predict them to be in ten years (five being the most influential, and one the least). During the first round, there was a short list of actors that the interviewer used to guide the conversation around influential actors; however, in the second and third rounds, the interviewer used the feedback and actors identified in the first round to create the list of actors that each participant was asked to score. A score of "0" meant that the participant believed the actor as not influential at all. These scores were not removed, but are noted.

After scoring the influence of each actor, the participants were then asked to identity the commitment of each actor to the development of Syria. Commitment was divided into five categories: *core*, *champion*, *ally*, *neutral*, and *opposed*, which are defined below:

- *Core*: Actors that are fully committed towards the development of a stable, inclusive Syria. This is the primary purpose of the individual or organization.[48]

[48] Typically, prime actors considered *core* are national actors.

- *Champion*: Actors that are committed towards the development of a stable, inclusive Syria, but it is not the exclusive purpose of the individual or organization.
- *Ally*: Actors that offer transactional support for the development of a stable, inclusive Syria; in other words, they only support this development when their interests are also served.
- *Neutral*: Actors that are neither for nor against the development of Syria.
- *Opposed*: Actors that are actively opposed to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria, which could be for personal gain or ideological reasons.

This part of the peer assessment is important because it provides information on the perceived reputations of these influential actors. These categories are just one method of eliciting perspectives of the whether each actor is working for or against a stable Syria, for their own benefit or for the benefit of the Syrian people. The purpose is to examine whether there is a general consensus of the intentions, motivations, and influence of each of these actors. Additionally, it also provides an opportunity for the actors themselves to find overlapping areas of interest and to generate ideas and consensus around *what they want*, not simply *what they are against* (Ferguson 2009), as well as discover the perceptions surrounding them. The commitment stances were not developed specifically for Syria, and the stance of *opposed* should not be confused with the Syrian Opposition. The Syrian Opposition, in its various forms, may be considered *opposed* to the development of Syria by some participants, but are not inherently *opposed.*

Over sixty actors were assessed throughout the three rounds; however, only a portion will be examined in this paper. Again, the importance of this research is the application of a modified Delphi method to elicit diverse perspectives; therefore, not all of the actors require attention to show that method did produce these diverse perspectives. Any actor included in this research had to be assessed as influential by at least twenty participants during the process. The total number of participants was sixty-three, but not all participants assessed all actors. In addition to the reasons already addressed, the list of influential actors grew throughout the rounds, as more actors were deemed influential by the implementing organization. In the first round, after assessing a short list of more 'obvious' potential influential actors, participants then were asked to add to that list as they saw fit. Therefore, not ever actor was assessed in each round.

Further, the average influence ratings and comments on the stances of each actor is not necessarily truth. Some conclusions can be drawn from these numbers, but the real value in this method is the diversity of opinions that are drawn-out providing a more complete understanding of the totality of available perspectives. At least ten participants assessed the influence of thirty-seven actors (listed in Appendix D); however, only twenty-one actors were scored as influential by at least twenty participants and hence are the only influential actors included in this research. Those actors are listed below in order of their average influence rating:

- Russia
- Turkey
- Iran
- United States

- Syrian Government
- Islamic State (IS)
- Hezbollah
- Free Syrian Army
- Saudi Arabia
- Ahrar al-Sham
- Alawites
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
- Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD)
- European Union (EU)
- Local Councils in Syria
- France
- Qatar
- Jordan
- High Negotiating Committee (HNC)
- United Nations (UN)
- Iraq

Figure 4 shows these actors, in the order of their current average influence ratings, and the range commitment stances provided during the interviews. Each actor will have a section summarizing these responses, with their influence ratings and the comments participants made about them. However, the importance of figure 4 is to demonstrate the incredibly varied perspectives of some of these actors. With only one

actor – the Islamic State – having unanimous consensus on their commitment to the development of a stable Syria.

Figure 5 shows the current and predicted influence ratings of these twenty-one actors, which will be detailed in the following actor-specific sections. Russia was the only actor that on average is rated at a "4" or above. Additionally, the Syrian Government was rated as the fifth-most influential actor in Syria, with their predicted influencing decreasing significantly in ten years, putting them in the bottom-half of the predicted influence ratings (shown in Figure 6). Participants predicted the United States will be the most influential actor in ten years, followed by Turkey and local councils in Syria. This section is focused on themes and patterns emerging from the dialogue. The detailed dialogue is located in Appendix E.

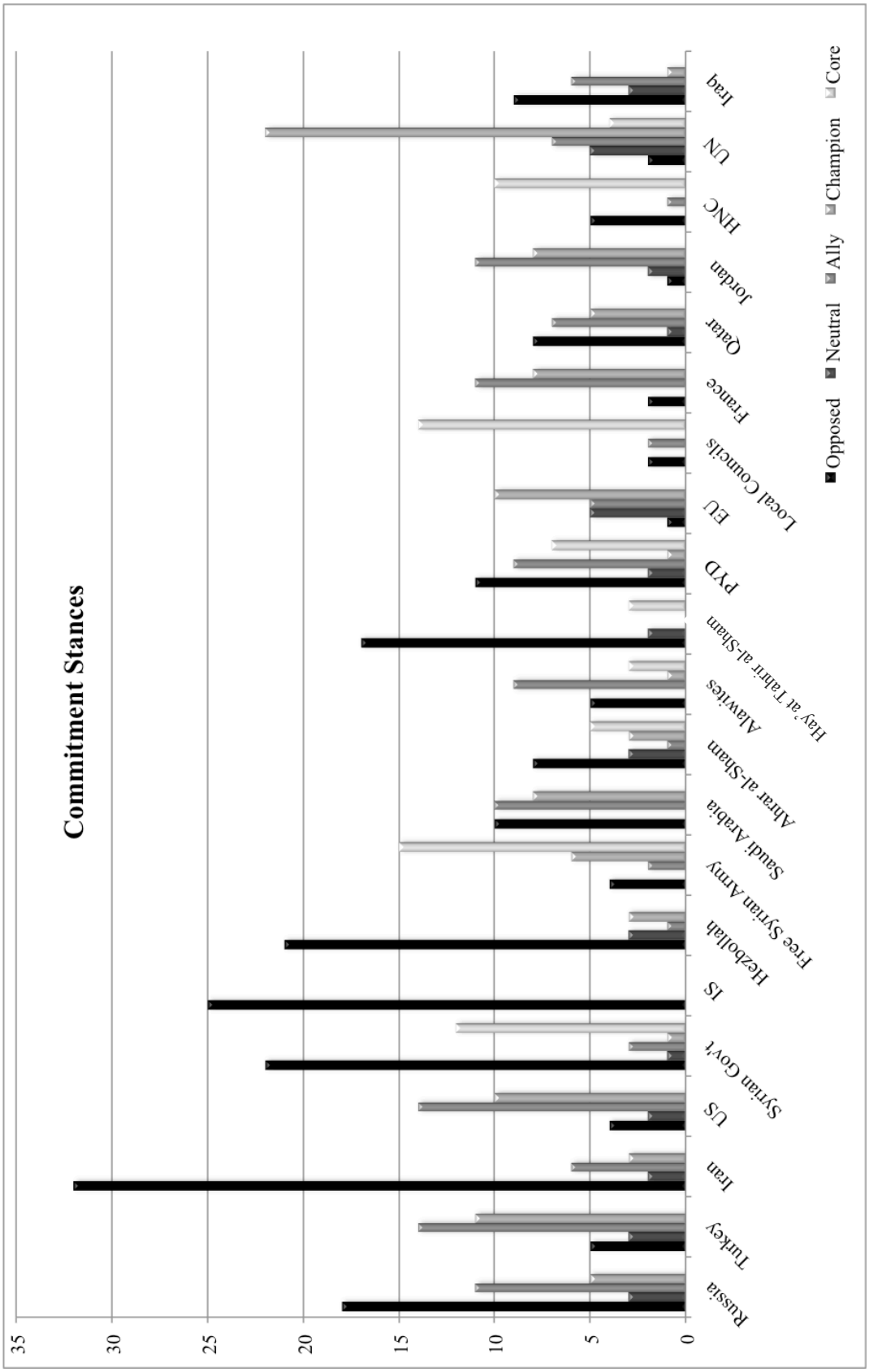


Figure 4. Commitment Stances of the Influential Actors

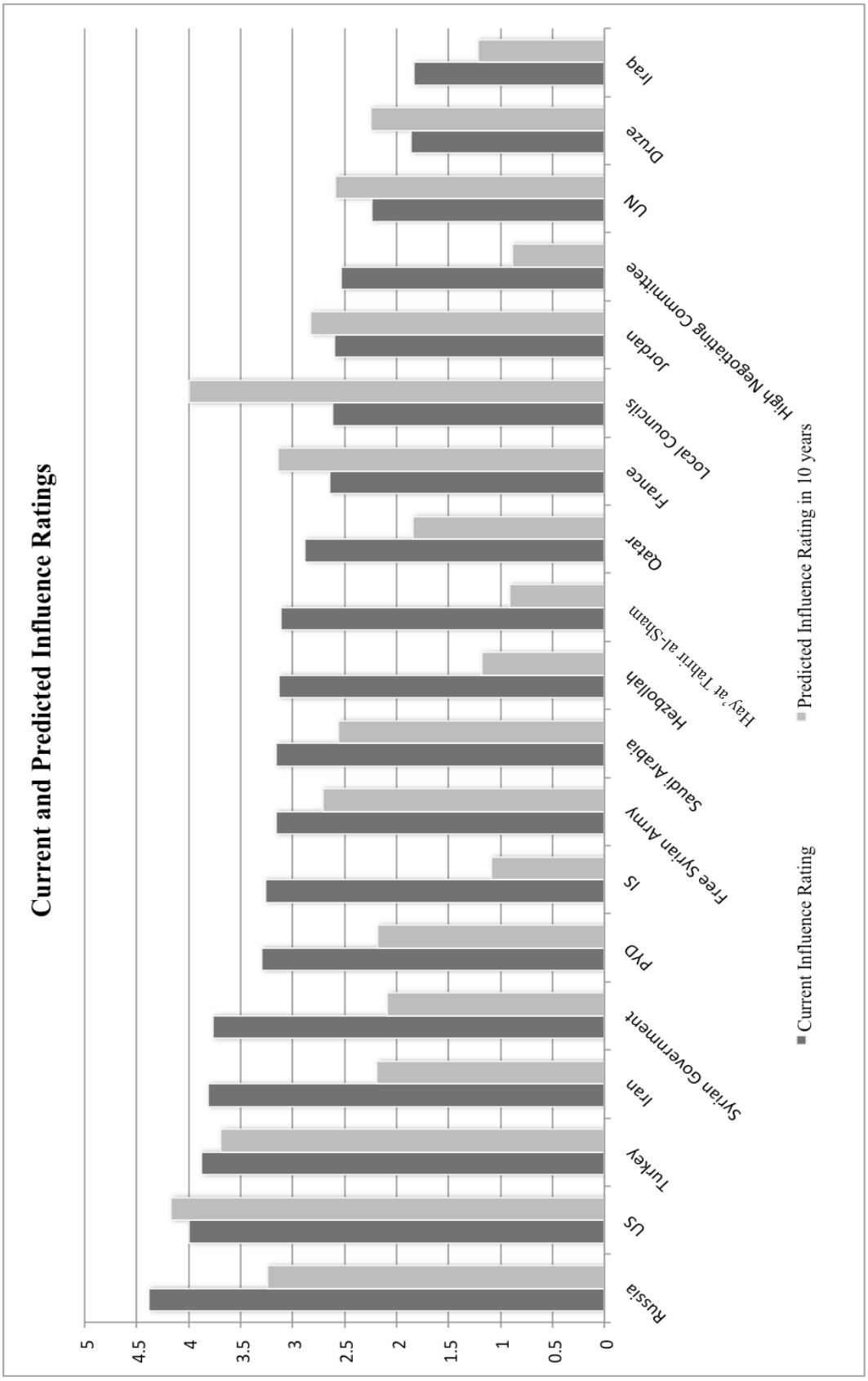


Figure 5. Current and Predicted Influence Ratings

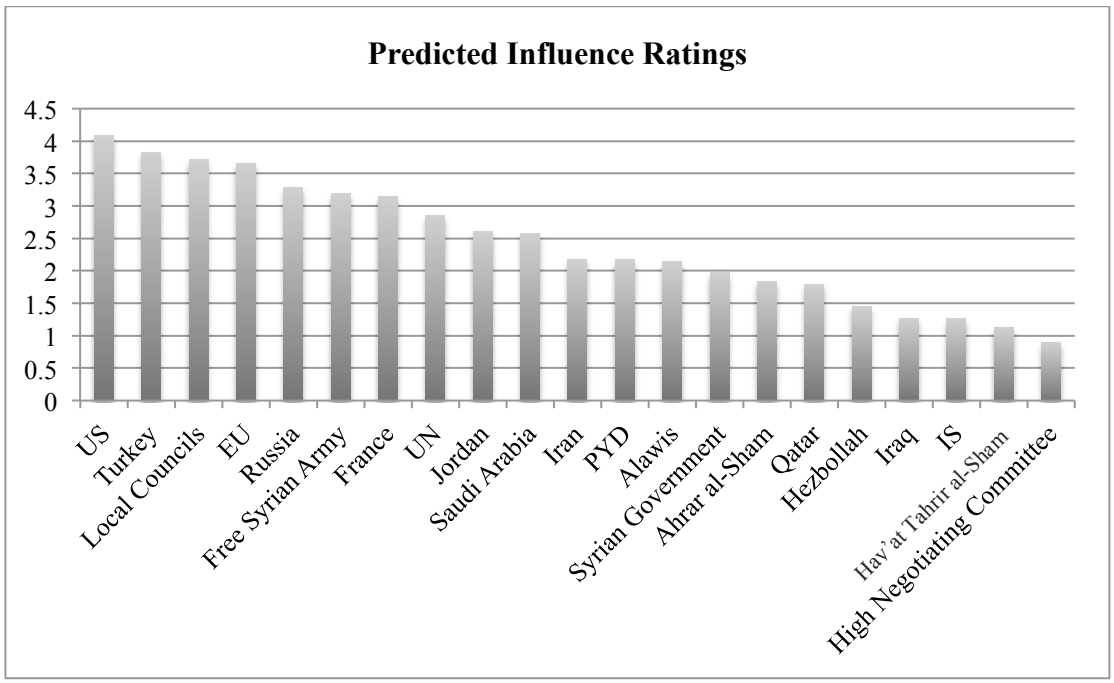


Figure 6. Predicted Influence Ratings in Ten Years

Russia

On average, participants considered Russia the most influential actor in Syria, with an average influence rating of 4.42 (median 5, range 1-5, n = 44). More than half of Russia's influence ratings were a 5 with a few scores dragging down the mean. Specific individuals were mentioned twice: Vladimir Putin (once) and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (once). However, participants predicted Russia's influence would decrease significantly to an average of 3.29 (median 3.5, range 0-5) in ten years, including two participants predicting that Russia would have absolutely no influence on Syria then (scored a "0"). From both the data and the comments, many participants considered Russia far more influential in Syria than the Syrian Government. Consistently, and throughout all sections of the interview, Russia was brought up as an actor who has significant influence in Syria, with many participants saying that Russia

is directly controlling the Syrian Government. Russia's strong military presence and national interest in the region was a major theme. Participants described Russia as making all the decisions for the Syrian Government, and even saying "*They decide whether there is war or peace.* If they decide it was Assad's last day it would be." Participants were in general agreement that Russia was the most powerful actor in Syria right now, but there was less of a consensus around the commitment of Russia to a stable Syria (Figure 7). Roughly equal participants viewed Russia as an *ally* or *champion* and as *opposed.* In other words, participants were split on Russia's commitment and intentions in Syria. However, some of the reasons Russia is considered *opposed* are also why some participants considered them an *ally* or *champion*. In other words, some participants described Russia as an ally to the regime, but in their rationale describe Russia as opposed to the development of Syria.

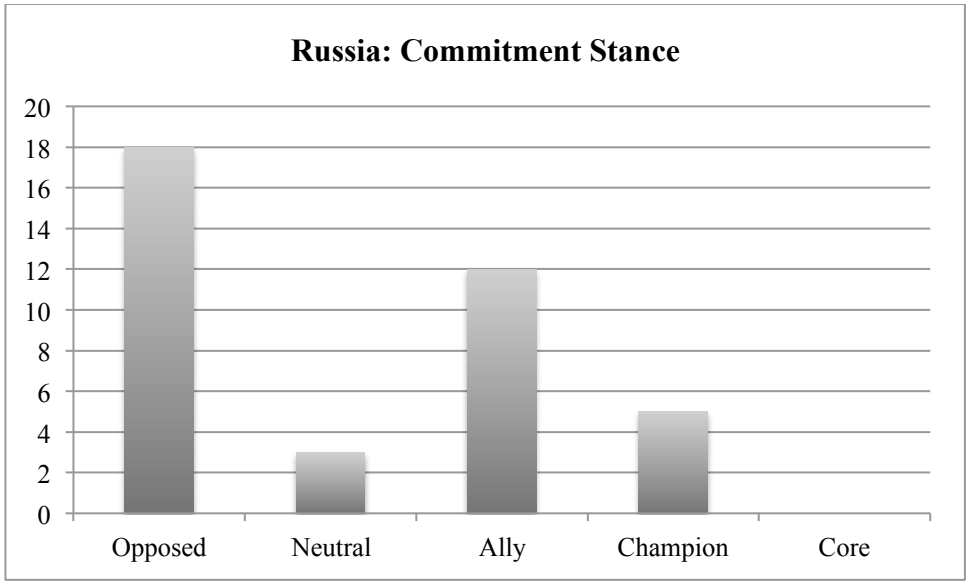


Figure 7. Perceived Commitment of Russia to the Development of Syria

For example, some participants describe Russia as more dangerous to Syria than the Islamic State: "The only thing that can threaten a country is another country. Even terrorists are controlled by countries. *ISIL's threat to Syria is nothing compared to Russia's*…. 95% of the bombing is directed to civilians, not terrorists." Fearing Russia more than the Islamic State is reasonable given Russia's military strength, financial power, and occupation of Syrian bases. One participant described Russia not as supporting the Syrian Government, but as occupying Syria. The quotes below illustrate some of the diverse perspectives generated on Russia:

- "Supporting the only party taking responsibility for governance"
- "They decided to intervene in Syria. They support the Asad regime with bombs, etc. more than any other ally. It freezes any peace solution without them."
- "Russia has had armed bases in Syria and are trying to protect that interest. They destroyed much of Syria. With all their weapons, they killed thousands. It's still going on. They are the closest ally to the regime and ISIL. They will disappear with the regime."

The Syrian Government also elicited similar mixed reactions. Some participants are viewing Russia, and the Syrian Government, as the only actors taking responsibility for governing and providing necessary services, whereas other participants describe both Russia and the Syrian Government as criminals. Both the Syrian Government and Russia were described as having links to the Islamic State, but this was not a pervasive theme.

Turkey

Participants rated Turkey the second-most influential actor in the Syria, with an average influence rating of 3.95 (median 4.75, range 1-5, n = 38), with a slight decrease in predicted influence rating of 3.83 (median 4, range 1-5) in ten years. Turkey was mostly viewed as an *ally* or *champion* of Syria (Figure 8). The dominant patterns emerging from dialogue on Turkey was their acceptance of Syrian refugees and their support of the Syrian Opposition, including allowing opposition groups to hold meetings in Turkey and acting as the "main conduits for supplies."

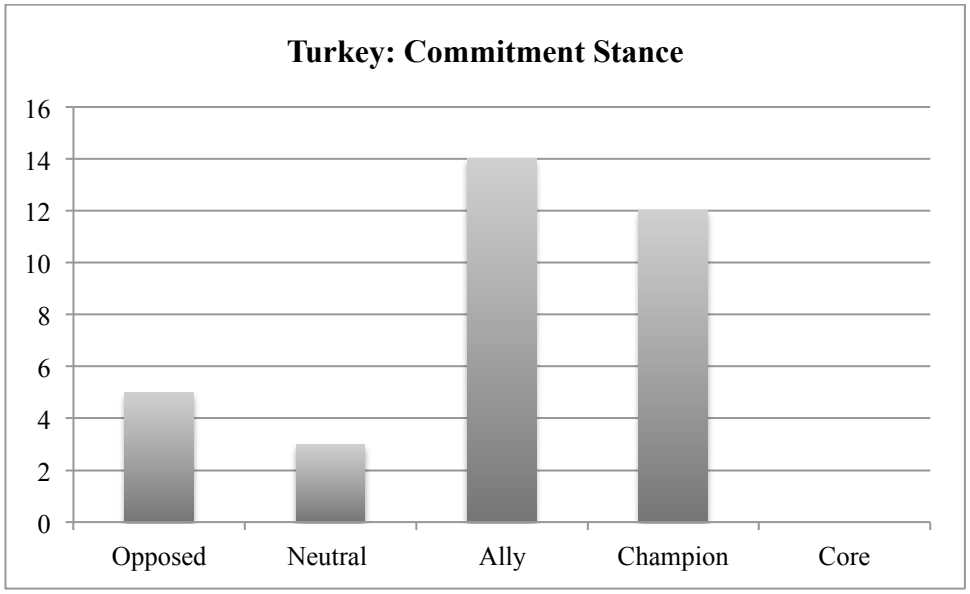


Figure 8. Perceived Commitment of Turkey to the Development of Syria

However, despite participants agreeing that Turkey supports the development of a stable Syria, participants were split on whether this support is transactional in nature. For example, one participant responding to round 1 comments about Turkey's support, stated that "…They are a power in the region with influence in Iraq… agree with the Round 1 comments, but *they do what they do for their own benefits.* They are reacting

to what Iran did in taking over Iraq. Doing the same in Syria. They are only interested in protecting their border." In the context of transactional support, participants also posited that Turkey's main concern is the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the PKK (armed Kurdish separatists). Again, themes of land and identity continue to appear:

> …The war is a national security issue to Turkey. They finance it. They take in refugees. The Turkmen are a minority in Syria. They support some fighting brigades. *They do not want Turkish and Syrian Kurds to unite. Fighting ISIL is a lie to cover fighting Kurdish advancements.* They place the refugee camps to separate the Syrian and Turkish Kurds.

The Kurds, who are spread over five Middle Eastern countries, are often caught in the middle of the pull between separatism and Arab nationalism. Kurdish separatism paralleled with the potential loss of land from those countries is a dominant theme throughout the interviews. Here, Turkey is described as providing transactional support to Syria to prevent Syrian and Turkish Kurds from uniting, which fits with the overall goal of Turkey, as described by the participants, as wanting a "stable united Syria, not a fragmented state." The future of Syria as federated states could lead to the uniting of Kurds into their own region. The narratives emerging from loss of land were strong and reveal some proximate symbols that act as the hated out-group; for example, one participant stated that Turkey was opposed to Syrian development because:

> Turkey took part of Syria after WWII…Alawi living there moved to Syria. The Alawi were sent to Russia and Eastern Europe for higher education. Replaced county officials with them. *Sparked the current revolution.*
> *People were disappeared and killed with acid*.

The participant is referencing the city of İskenderun, which was formerly Syrian, but

became part of Turkey after a referendum. Many Syrians, however, still feel that this referendum is illegitimate (Fateh 2014).

Iran

Iran was identified as the third-most influential actor in Syria, with an average influence rating of 3.90 (median 4, range 1-5, n =44). The participants predicted that Iran's influence would decrease drastically in the next ten years, with an average predicted influence rating of 2.18 (median 2, range 0-5) and six participants predicting their influence to fall to "0." Additionally, participants mostly agreed that Iran is *opposed* to the development of Syria (Figure 9). Besides IS, which received complete consensus votes for *opposed*, Iran is one of the least disagreed upon actors.

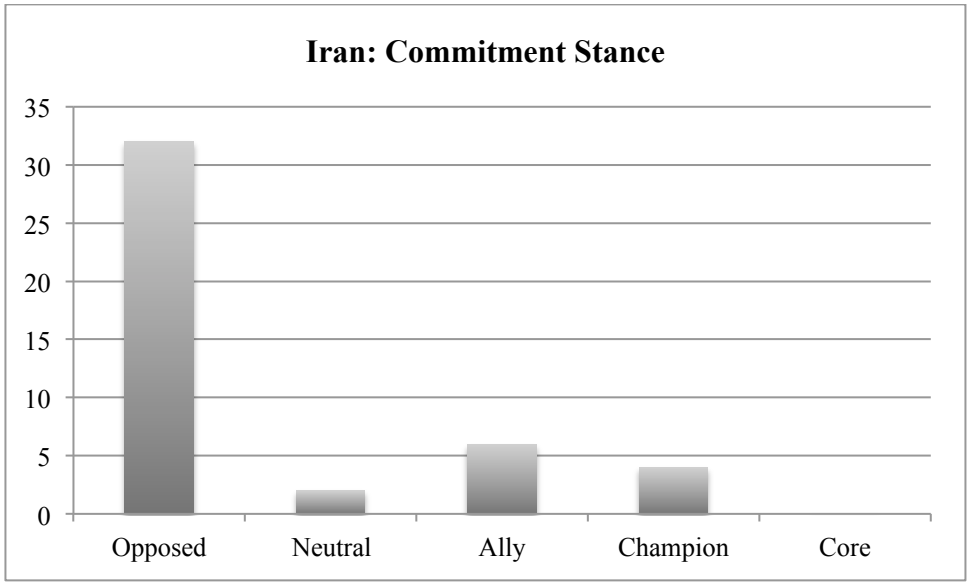


Figure 9. Perceived Commitment of Turkey to the Development of Syria

Participants described Iran as an important supporter of the Syrian Government, but also as more opportunistic and less controlling than the United States and Russia.

Like Russia, Iran is described as occupying Syria and supporting the Asad regime. Additionally, Iran is repeatedly linked to Hezbollah, with participants stating they provide arms and other supplies to the group. Even though the participants deemed Iran as less powerful than Russia and the United States, they generally considered Iran more powerful than the Syrian Government, especially militarily. Participants mostly agree that Iran is feeding the war, with arms and money, for their own gain. Below are some quotes that highlight the participants' description of Iran, their influence, and their commitment to a stable Syria:

- "Like Hezbollah, *killer of Syrian people*..."
- "Extension of Syrian government. Has manpower Syrian government lacks. Brings soldiers from Afghanistan and other places to support Syrian government. *In some places they command more respect than the Syrian Army*."
- "*Exporting revolution*"
- "They are important, even to the United States, because they *provide strategic balance* between the Shia and Islamists…."

The United States

Participants identified the United States as having roughly the same influence as Iran, with an average influence rating of 3.88 (median 4, range 2-5, n = 35). However, unlike most of the current top-rated influential actors, participants mostly saw the influence on the US growing over the next ten years, as they predicted their influence would increase to 4.09, which is the highest predicted influence among all actors (median 4, range 3-5). Additionally, participants mostly listed the United States as

either an *ally* or a *champion* of Syria (Figure 10). Although, the majority of these interviews occurred before the United States' travel ban on seven majority Muslim countries, including Syria. This, and other policies currently being enacted, could impact the perception of the US as an *ally* or *champion*.

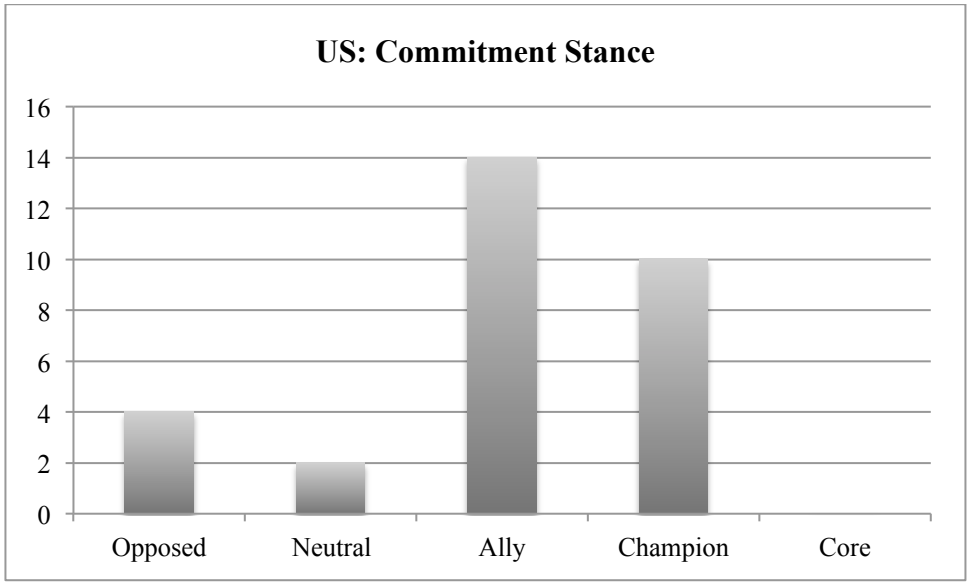


Figure 10. Perceived Commitment of the US to the Development of Syria

Despite the fact that the United States is perceived more favorably, the US, like Russia, was also identified as exerting extreme control over Syria, often for their own benefit. For the United States, this includes protecting their ally, Israel, which may put them at odds with Syria in the future. One participant even described the United States as "…the puppet master to everything." And, the US's support for the Syrian Opposition was frequently defined in relation to Russia. The participants portray the Syrian war as a proxy war between the US and Russia, with support from Iran, and using the Syrian Opposition and Government as tools for their own agendas, respectively. For example, participants stated that the US provides support to "…a

significant number of armed groups. They have vested political interest in opposing Russian expansion…" and that "they are *trying to impose their will on Syria and in direct opposition to Russia.* They support the Opposition." Many participants seemed to view the United States as exerting control for their own benefit, but still acting as at least an ally to the Syrian people, while Russia's influence was seen more as for their own benefit and opposed to the development of Syria. Certainly, many participants are viewing this as a proxy war between the US and Russia and both were repeatedly accused of letting the conflict linger while having the ability and opportunity to end it. For instance, one participant highlighted these themes when describing the US's commitment to a stable Syria:

> We hope they will stand by the revolution. We used to like jeans and western movies because they are American. *We were surprised by the role they have taken in this. They could have resolved this a long time ago.* They could have unseated Asad since he lost his legitimacy a long time ago. *They only seem to be concerned with ISIL, who killed a few thousand, rather than Asad, who killed millions.*

The US is described as having the power to end the war whenever they please, but the war continues because the US's interests are not aligned with the interests of Syrians, who participants describe as more concerned with the Asad regime than the Islamic State. Despite the misalignment of interests, the US is more aligned with the Syrian people (against the Asad regime) than Russia, who is directly supporting the regime. However, there is inconsistency in how these two international powers are perceived. Given the responses and feedback of participants on the involvement of US, I would have anticipated that there would be more of a consensus of Russia as *opposed* to Syria. Yet, the opinions on Russia were split. So, despite the fact that participants are

essentially describing the control of power in Syria as binary between the Russia and the US, the participants are not viewing them as diametrically opposed in their commitment to a stable Syria.

Syrian Government

The Syrian Government was identified by participants using a few names, including the Asad Regime, the Asad family, and Bashar al-Asad. If the government was identified as anything beside the Syrian Government, the interviewer clarified the meaning. Also included within the Syrian Government is the Syrian Armed Forces, which was at times noted separately than the government. The participants rated the average influence of the Syrian Government as 3.85 (median of 4, range 0-5, n = 48), with one participant rating the Syrian Government as not influential at all with a score of "0." Unexpectedly, the Syrian Government was rated as the fifth-most influential actor in Syria; with participants predicting their influence would fall to 1.97 in ten years (median 2, range 0-5). Fourteen participants believe that the Syrian Government will have no influence in ten years.

This is an important result of the process – four outside actors (Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the US) were all thought by participants to be more influential in Syria than the Syrian Government. In particular, Russia and the US were seen as controlling Syria through the Syrian Government and the Opposition (respectively), while Iran is seen as more of a financial backer opportunistically after land and power in the region. Some participants were very unambiguous about this control (e.g. the government is "controlled by Russia"), which was likely only possible because of the anonymity of the

process. The anonymity provided an opportunity for participants to be quite explicit on their feelings of Asad (e.g. “Bomb the Asad palace. If he died it will be all over. He has killed so many already he deserves it”). However, participants were split on the Syrian Government’s commitment to Syria (Figure 11).

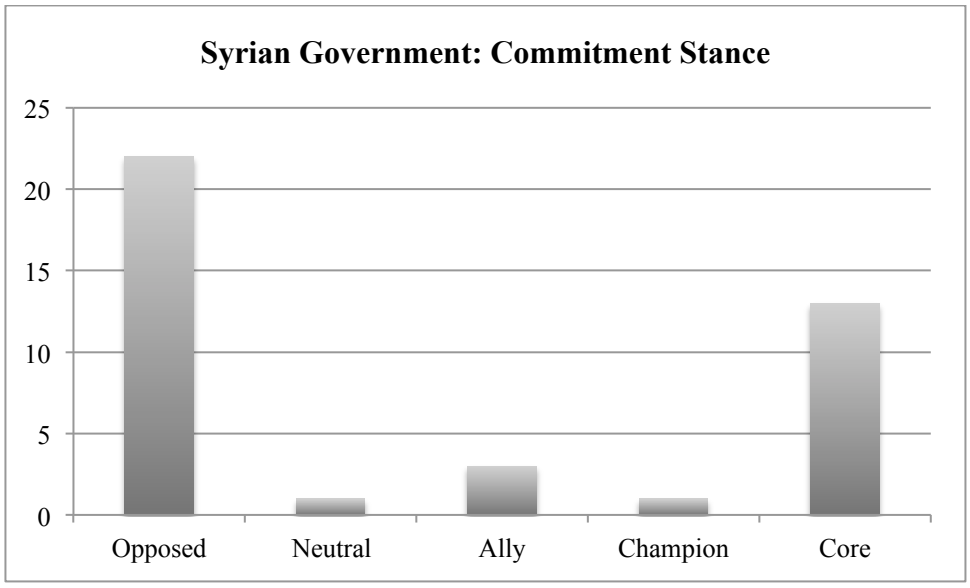


Figure 11. Perceived Commitment of the Syrian Government to the Development of Syria

The Syrian Government is as exerting power through violence, often by making use of the Syrian Armed Forces, their army, which can “operate in a paralegal world where the government can’t.” Participants describe the members of the Syrian Armed Forces as “mercenaries,” “thugs,” and “killing machines,” in addition to being “largely Alawite.” And, despite many participants articulating that the Syrian Government is “killing the people of Syria” and “only in power with Iranian and Russian Support,” others focused on the services they provide. For example, a handful of participants stated that the Syrian Government is not only still important, but necessary, including one participant stating “they have the network and know-how. *A lot of people trust them*

more than the radical groups." While others emphasized that the government was the only group taking the responsibility to pay for and deliver services, even in areas occupied by the Opposition. Often, participants were not separating the Syrian Government from the Asad regime, while one participant in particular articulated why this is problematic:

> [The Syrian Government has] a lot of experts and experience. They have not let the government services fall apart. *They want a strong, democratic state, are against terrorism,* and the majority do not support Asad. The round 1 answers were not deep in understanding. The Opposition has no problem with the government. They Syrian Government is still paying salaries in the regions they have access. Protecting the government services is a big plus for the government. The Iranians are trying to change the demographics around Damascus.

So while many participants are predicting a future without a strong Syrian Government, this may be conflated with the notion of the government solely existing as the Asad regime, not that the Syrian Government (however it is reformed) will be unimportant. The extent to which government services are still being provided and the distinction between Asad and the government system should be explored in future research.

The Islamic State

The Islamic State is the only influential actor in which participants were in complete consensus of their commitment to the development of a stable Syria. However, participants disagreed on the current overall influence of IS on Syria, with an average influence rating of 3.48 (median 3.5, range 0-5, n = 26), with one participant scoring IS's current influence a "0." Although, in general, participants saw IS's influence drastically decreasing – to almost none – in ten years. More than half of the

participants noted that IS would have zero influence then (predicted average influence 1.26, median 0, range 0-5), with many explicitly stating that IS will not even exist (e.g. "…within a few months they will be kicked out of Syria. In 10 years they will be barbeque in heaven"). Participants imagine IS's role is disappearing, and that they will soon disappear from Syria, alongside the regime. One participant in this section described IS as being controlled by Syrian and other intelligence organizations, while at times, other participants describe them as being controlled by Russia. Some participants noted that IS directly supplies the Asad regime in disputed areas. Nevertheless participants generally agreed that their influence results directly from controlled territory and external support, especially monies and weapons. Lastly, participants articulated that the Islamic State is "abusing religion to the maximum for their own benefit" and that "they don't understand the religion, but kill in the name of it." The concept of misuse and abuse of religion by IS was a common pattern.

Hezbollah

Participants rated Hezbollah current influence in Syria as a 3.35 (median 4, range 0.5-5, n = 33) but saw their influence decreasing in the next ten years to 1.45 (median 1.5, range 0-3.5), with seven participants saying they would not exist at that time (scored as a "0"). Hezbollah was overwhelmingly viewed as *opposed* to the development of a stable Syria, but it was not unanimous (Figure 12).

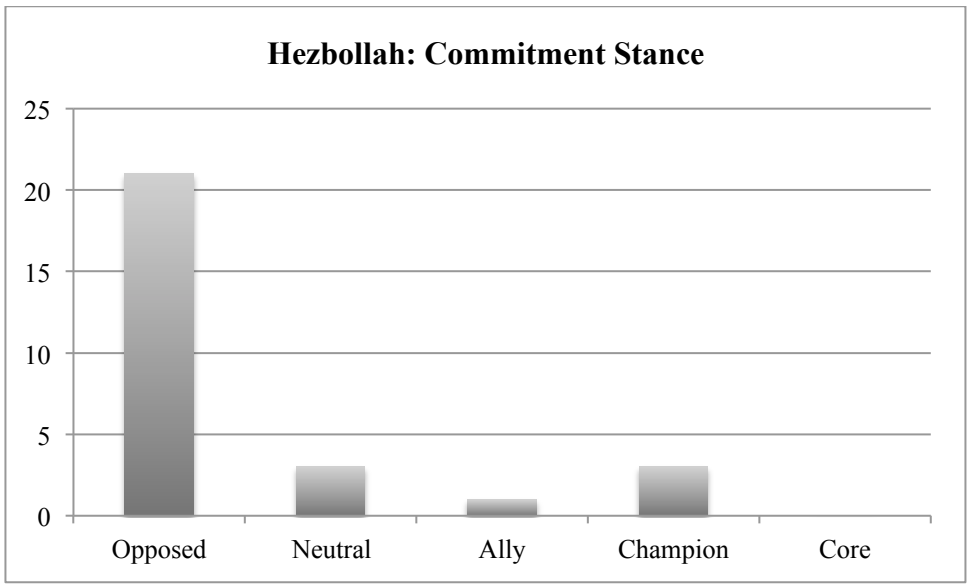


Figure 12. Perceived Commitment of the Hezbollah to the Development of Syria

Participants mostly associated Hezbollah as an armed force that sides with Asad and the Syrian Government, including pointed comments such as "they do all the massacres of the Syrian people." Participants imagine their role as essential to the continued survival of the Asad regime, with some positing that without Hezbollah's support of Asad, "the war would have ended within three years" and that "there would be a democratic government in Syria today." However, the rationale for supporting the regime is transactional, in other words, participants framed Hezbollah as supporting the Syrian Government because that is in their best interests, not for ideological purposes.

Free Syrian Army

The Free Syrian Army is the military faction of the Syrian Opposition. Most of the participants agreed that the Free Syrian Army represents the Syrian people, and were either an *ally*, *champion*, or *core* in Syria's development (Figure 13). The Free Syrian Army's average influence rating is 3.33 (median 3, range 0.5-5, n = 29), with a

slight predicted decrease in ten years to 3.19 (median 3, range 0-5), with two participants predicting they will have no influence at that time.

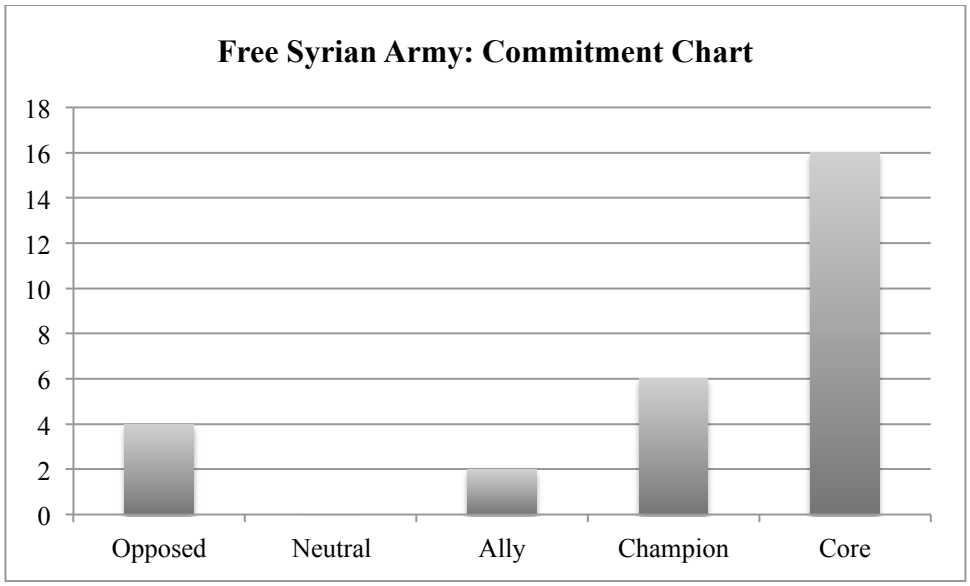


Figure 13. Perceived Commitment of the Free Syrian Army to the Development of Syria

Overall, the comments regarding the Free Syrian Army give the impression of trustworthiness as the people's army, although the degree to which participants believe them influential is varied. For example, participants frame them as "standing up for the people, because they fight on all fronts, against the government, terrorists, and outside countries" and that the Free Syrian Army "represents most of the Syrians." The Free Syrian Army is mostly described as moderate, trustworthy, and not in associated with Islamists, which has led to external support, particularly from the United States. A few participants believe that the Free Syrian Army is a good candidate for the next Syrian Government and "can integrate into a national army," whereas others portray the group as having limited influence. Specifically, some participants mentioned that although the

group was once influential and capable, times have changed and they are no longer influential at all, providing their lack of representation at recent attacks as evidence.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia had a current influence rating of 3.25 (median 4, range 1-5, n = 32), but participants saw their influence decreasing in ten years to 2.58 (median 2, range 0-5) with one participant rating predicting they would have no influence at that time. Participants were more split on the current stance of Saudi Arabia to the development of Syria (Figure 14), with roughly equal numbers rating them as *opposed*, *ally*, and *champion*.

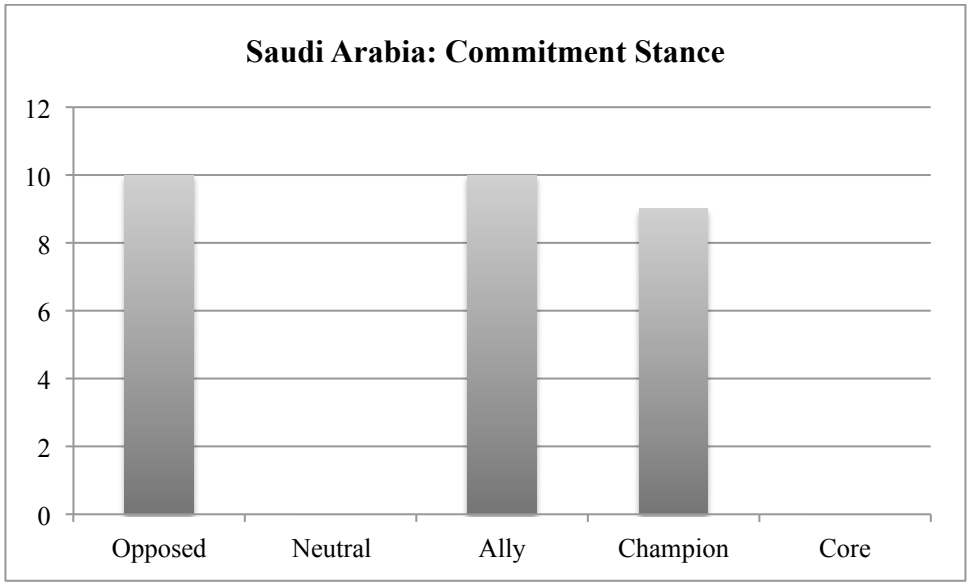


Figure 14. Perceived Commitment of Saudi Arabia to the Development of Syria

In general, Saudi Arabia is perceived as supporting the Syrian Opposition, but for their own benefit as they are trying to oppose Iran. Saudi Arabia is also deemed as regionally influential and important, but not being able to exert the same influence and

power as the countries previously mentioned (Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the US). Still, participants state that Saudi Arabia provides huge financial support to opposition groups, and to fight against IS. However, the extent to which Saudi Arabia opposes other extremist groups is unclear. Participants mostly describe their influence as transactional to remove Iranian influence and control.

Ahrar al-Sham

Participants rated Ahrar al-Sham's influence at 3.22 (median 3, range 1-5, n = 20), with a drastic decrease in their influence in ten years at 1.83 (median 1.25, range 0-5), including six participants predicting they would have no influence. Ahrar al-Sham's commitment to Syria was divisive among participants (Figure 15).

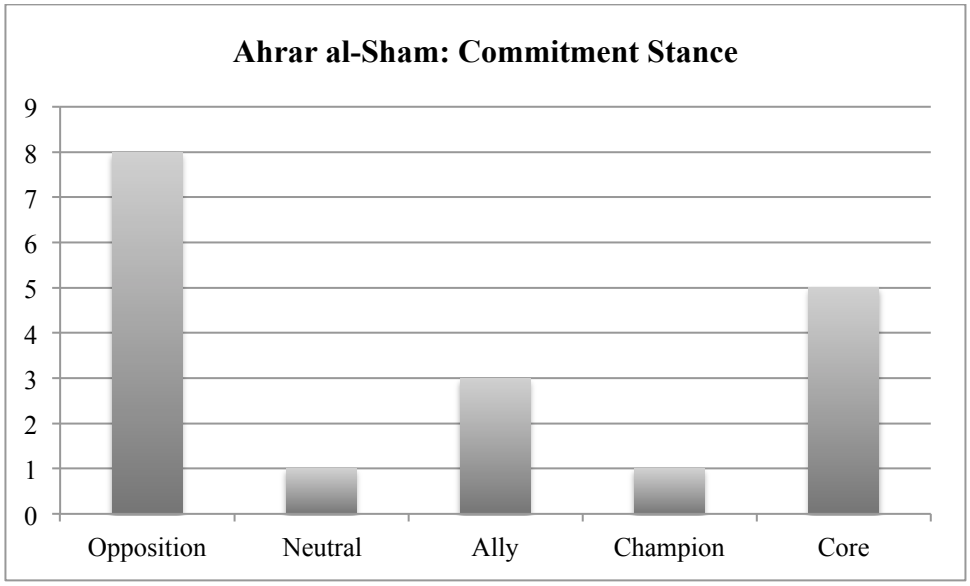


Figure 15. Perceived Commitment of Ahrar al-Sham to the Development of Syria

The perspectives on Ahrar al-Sham are quite varied, ranging from Syrians with strong ideology to foreign terrorists. One of the most pointed comments was that Ahrar

al-Sham "slaughters Alawite villages." The diversity of perspectives is evident in the following comments by participants:

- "They have no ideology. *They aren't really Muslim*… They use Islamic sayings and imagery for the public image."
- "…*They have an ideology*. They are the only one who is part of international agreements. They are *95-98% Syrians*, and not classified as terrorists…"
- "*Many are foreigners*. They are classified as a *terrorist group*…"
- "They are *an armed terrorist group*, affiliated with [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]."
- "…They represent *the moderate Islamic movement*…"

The stark mixture of perspectives of Ahrar al-Sham in Syria is interesting, but the reasons are not clear from this dialogue. Categorization of Ahrar al-Sham is difficult for outside experts, as it is both a rebel group fighting the Asad regime and an organization with ties to al-Qaeda. The end-goal of Ahrar al-Sham is to replace the Asad regime and Syrian Government with an Islamic government. Some countries, including Syria, Russia, Iraq, Lebanon Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, consider Ahrar al-Sham as a terrorist organization, whereas the US, UN, and EU do not classify them as terrorists. The contrast may seem clear, but Ahrar al-Sham was linked to the Islamic State until an inter-group conflict in 2014. (Standford University Institute for International Studies 2017a).

Alawis

The Alawis were the only religious group that participants deemed as an influential actor by at least twenty participants. As previously discussed, the Syrian Government and military are mainly Alawites, including the Asad family, despite the fact that Alawis are a minority in Syria. Participants rated the Alawis' average influence at 3.18 (median 3, range 0-5, n = 20) with one participant rating their current influence a "0." In ten years, participants predicted their influence would fall to an average 2.15 (median 2, range 0-5) with five participants believing they would have no influence. This decrease in influence is unsurprising given that participants predicted the Syrian Government's influence would fall to 1.97 in ten years. Given that the government is majority Alawis, it is expected that their fate would be inextricably tied to that of the Syrian Government. Participants were also conflicted about the commitment of the Alawis to Syria (Figure 16).

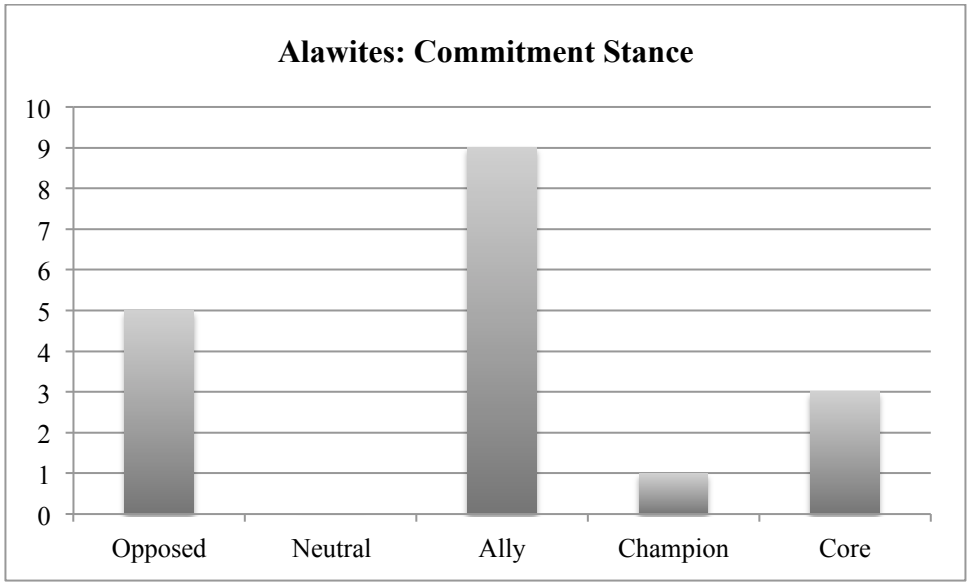


Figure 16. Perceived Commitment of Ahrar al-Sham to the Development of Syria

The Alawis are a religious branch, which is likely to be a heterogeneous population. Some participants have a nuanced perspective of the Alawis, acknowledging that power intersects with class; however, the Alawis have been associated with the ruling elite for so long that is not that surprising that participants view them as influential and powerful. Participants were divided on whether the Alawis were also a victim that have coerced by the Syrian Government, if they are simply complacent, or if they are inseparable from Asad, but the most dominant theme was that the Alawis had been coerced and "hijacked" by Asad, under fear of physical harm if they do not support him (e.g. "[Asad] convinced them the rest would bury them if they didn't support him").

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, formerly known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (until January 2017),[49] and Jabhat al-Nusra[50] or al-Qaeda of Syria, had an influence rating of 3.15 (median 3, range 0.5-5, n = 28), with their predicted average influence falling significantly in ten years to 1.13 (median 0.5, range 0-3), including eight participants rating them a "0." Additionally, although it was not quite unanimous, the large majority of participants believe that Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham is *opposed* to the development of Syria (Figure 17).

[49] In January 2017, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham merged with a few smaller factions and therefore changed their name to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (The Assembly for the Liberation of Syria) (Standford University Institute for International Studies 2017b).
[50] In July 2016, Jabhat al-Nusra became Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (The Front for the Conquest of the Levant) after it stopped associating with al-Qaeda (Standford University Institute for International Studies 2017b).

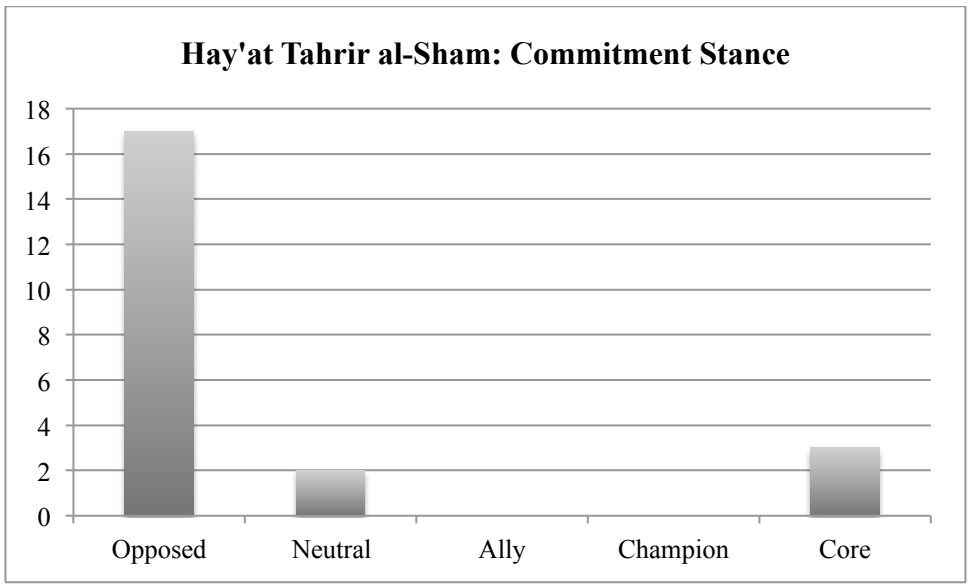


Figure 17. Perceived Commitment of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham to the Development of Syria

Despite the overall pattern that participants view Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham as *opposed* to the development of a stable Syria, based on the comments, participants were not in agreement on whether this organization is fighting for or against the Asad Regime. Some participants commented that they are strongly "pro-government" while others noted, "the members are good people" because "they fight Asad." Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham has been designated as a terrorist organization by the US since 2012 and have been on the UN sanctions list since 2014 (Standford University Institute for International Studies 2017b). Another focus of the comments from participants was Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham's recruitment, which one participant noted is "more [effective] than the Free Syrian Army because they have an ideology." Although another participant stated "90% are Syrian nationals, not foreigners. They don't join because of ideology. They join because they are so vicious in fighting the Asad regime."

Kurdish Democratic Union Party

The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) had an average influence rating of 3.06 (median 3, range 1-5, n = 32) and a predicted influence rating of 2.17 (median 2, range 0-5) including three participants believing they will have no influence. In general, participants were very split on PYD's commitment to the development of a stable Syria (Figure 18). This division is informative. The Kurds are an ethnic group split between five countries in the Middle East, including Syria. Syrian Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, and have experienced physical and political oppression for years.

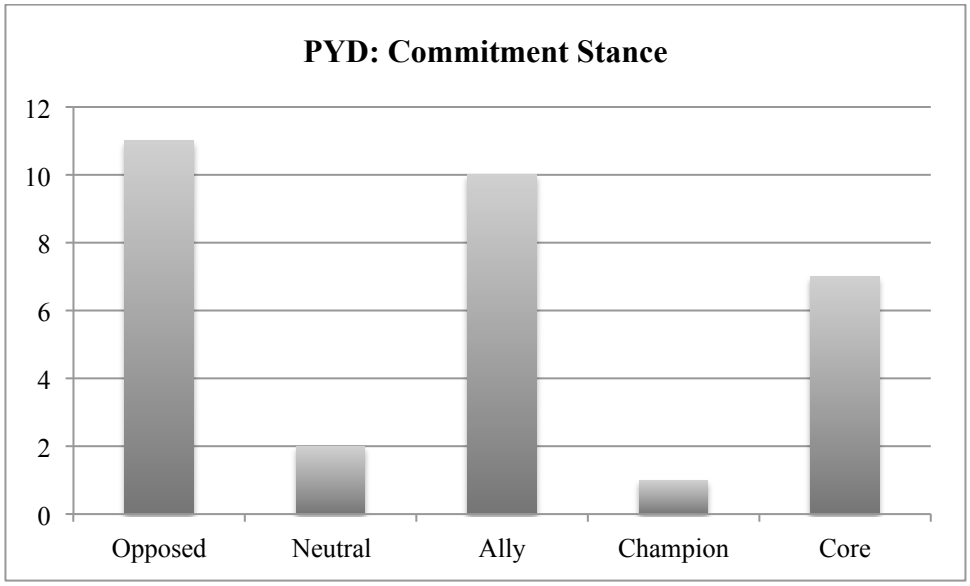


Figure 18. Perceived Commitment of the PYD to the Development of Syria

The PYD is interested in a Kurdish region, separate from Syria, which can be polarizing, especially to Syrians who have seen portions of their country continually split off. As expected, the perspectives of PYD were varied among participants, but there were a few clear patterns: they are supported by the US and they are interested in controlling the Kurdish region of Syria. The contradictory perspectives of the PYD

highlighted in the dialogue focus on the PYD's level of extremism and separatism. Participants disagreed whether the PYD is a terrorist organization or a moderate group. In addition, participants weighed in on Kurdish separatism, with some participants imagining a future Syria of federated states and the Kurds having autonomy, while others cannot imagine Syria without Kurds. Below are a few quotes from participants that show the range of perspectives discussed in the interviews:

- "… It's *a terrorist organization* made by Hafiz al-Asad…."
- "*They are terrorists*…They are the *same as ISIL*, only Kurdish…."
- "A component of Syria. They have some legitimate demands, and some not legitimate. They ask for rights, but also autonomy and independence. *We should all be one united country*…"
- "…There will come a time when everyone will fight them. They use the revolution to their advantage. They never fought the regime."
- "Will have *autonomy in their own region*…Syria's likely future as collection of federated states."
- "One important component of the Syrian population... *They have never been radical*. They will be important to the future of Syria."

The PYD represents Kurdish separatism to most of the participants, which reveals the contradictory nature of the narratives surrounding the Kurds. In the collective trauma and memory portion of the interview, many participants viewed the Syrian Kurds as separate from Syrians, whereas in the actor mapping section, Syrian unity became more thematic.

European Union

The EU's average influence rating was 2.89 (median 3, range 0-5, n = 24) with one participant rating their influence a "0." However, the EU was one of the few actors whose influence was seen increasing considerably in ten years with an average of 3.66 (median 4, range 2-5). In general, participant viewed the EU as at least *neutral* (Figure 19).

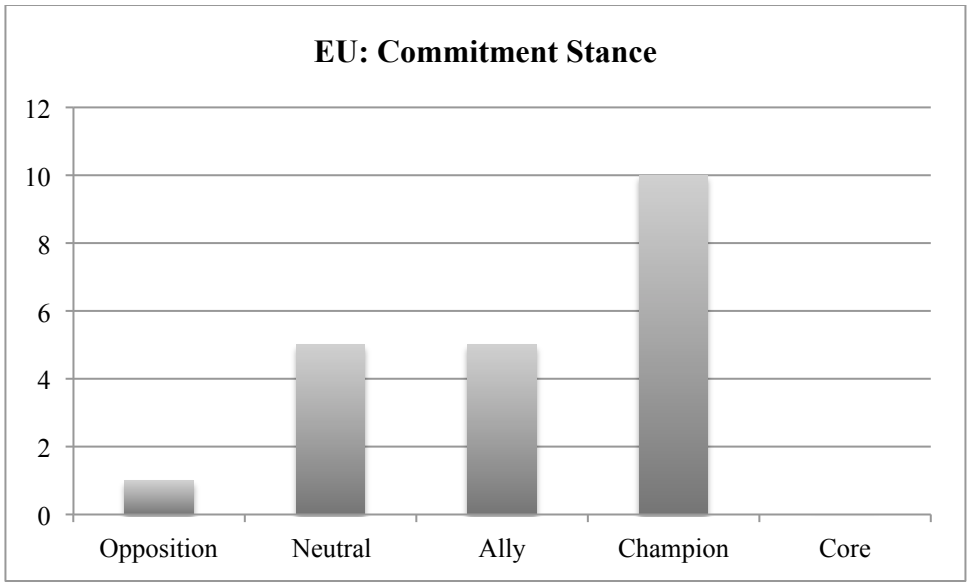


Figure 19. Perceived Commitment of the EU to the Development of Syria

Overall, participants were relatively positive regarding the EU, particularly in relation to the EU taking in Syrian refugees and providing humanitarian aid. However, one participant noted that they did not "trust what [they] hear about [the EU]." The political dynamics of the EU and within EU countries has changed over the course of this research, with a wave of nationalism spreading across Europe. In particular, the United Kingdom will leave the EU following a 2016 referendum, and there is growing

support for nationalist candidates that also support their country's removal from the EU (e.g. 2017 Presidential candidate Marine Le Pen in France). European nationalism could impact their potential involvement in post-conflict reconstruction, which is expected by many participants, and their continued humanitarian support and settlement of refugees.

Local Councils

Participants named local councils in Syria as an influential actor, with an influence rating of 2.83 (median 3, range 0.5-5, n = 20). Participants named specific local councils three times, but overwhelmingly participants named local councils as a general, inclusive term. Further, participants predicted the influence of local councils would increase drastically in ten years to an average influence rating of 3.71 (median 4. range 1-5), which is the largest increase in influence of any named actor and would make them the third most influential actor in Syria after the US and Turkey. Additionally, local councils were one of only two actors that received a majority of votes as core to Syrian development (Figure 20).

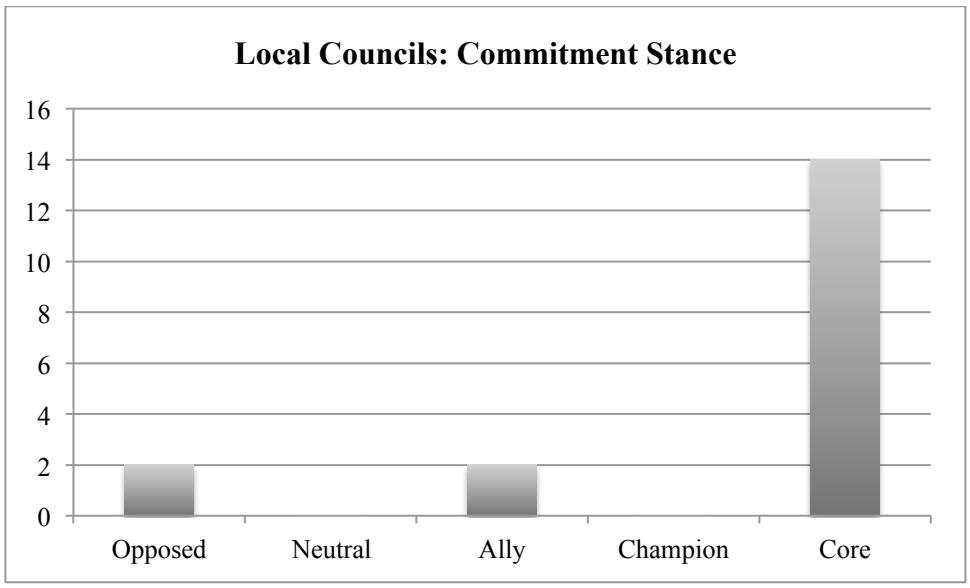


Figure 20. Perceived Commitment of Local Councils to the Development of Syria

Participants overwhelmingly viewed local councils as an essential component of Syria. In particular, participants focused on the services that local councils provide that the Syrian Government is no longer providing, which is contradictory to the claim by some participants that the government is still providing services in Opposition-held areas. Many participants were explicit when speaking about the current and future value of local councils, with participants stating they are "replacing the government," "a sign society is still breathing," "anchors of civilization," and "part of Syria's future." Local councils are described as the only functioning government in Opposition-held areas by some, offering access to basic survival resources (food and water), which aids in counter-terrorism by deterring the most vulnerable from turning to terrorist groups to access those needs. As with most political groups, there are accusations of corruption, but this is a fringe opinion. Fringe opinions are not inherently untrue, but must be considered in the context of the overarching goal, which is generating the totality of

available perspectives and determining if a rough consensus exists in these peer-assessments.

France

France had an average influence rating of 2.75 (median 3.5, range 0-5, n = 24), with two participants rating them as having no influence in Syria currently. Participants predicted their influence would increase in ten years to 3.14 (median 3.25, range 1-5), and interestingly enough – given France's colonial history with Syria – participants mostly rated them as an *ally* or *champion* in the development of Syria (Figure 21).

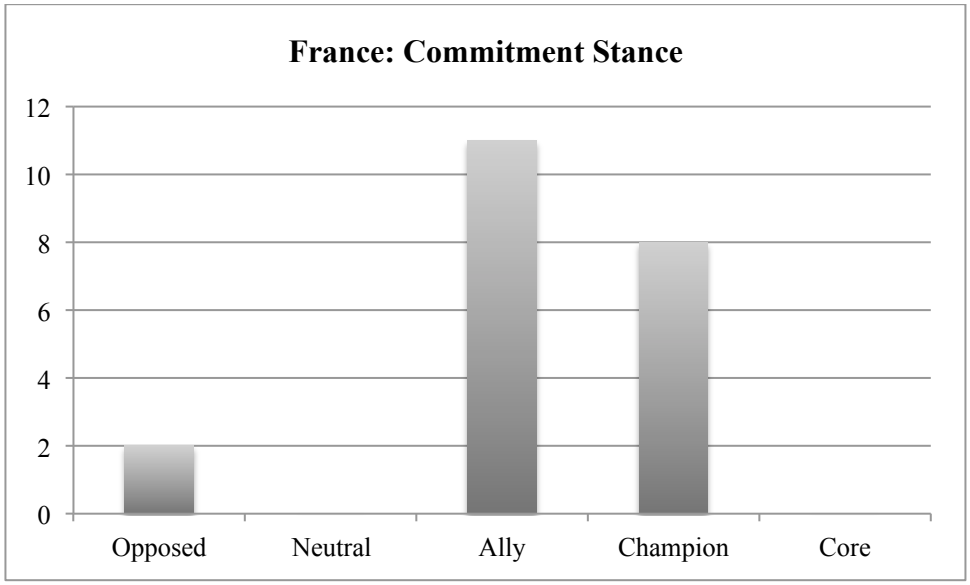


Figure 21. Perceived Commitment of France to the Development of Syria

Participants in general have a positive view of France, but are unsure of their influence. Some participants felt they were quite powerful, while others stated they "couldn't even pass its resolution in the Security Council." Participants did not overlook France's colonial past with Syria (e.g. "France is still important to Syria. Sykes-Picot is

still important" and "they made the Alawi…"), but France is still framed as working for Syria and supporting the Opposition. Especially given Syria's traumatic memories associated with Syrian land lost during French colonial rule, and the negative perspectives towards other proximate symbols related to that land, it is surprising that the French received mostly positive feedback.

Qatar

Qatar's perceived current influence was an average 2.54 (median 3, range = 0.5-3, n = 29), with participants predicting that influence would decrease to 1.79 (median 1, range 0-5) including three participants predicting Qatar will have no influence. The main theme relating to Qatar is their financial support of the Syrian Opposition (e.g. "70% of the Opposition is on Qatar's payroll") and the interim government, which functions in Opposition-held areas. Participants appear to disagree on Qatar's commitment to the development of a stable Syria (Figure 22); however, the comments from most participants simply place Qatar on the side of the Syrian Opposition.

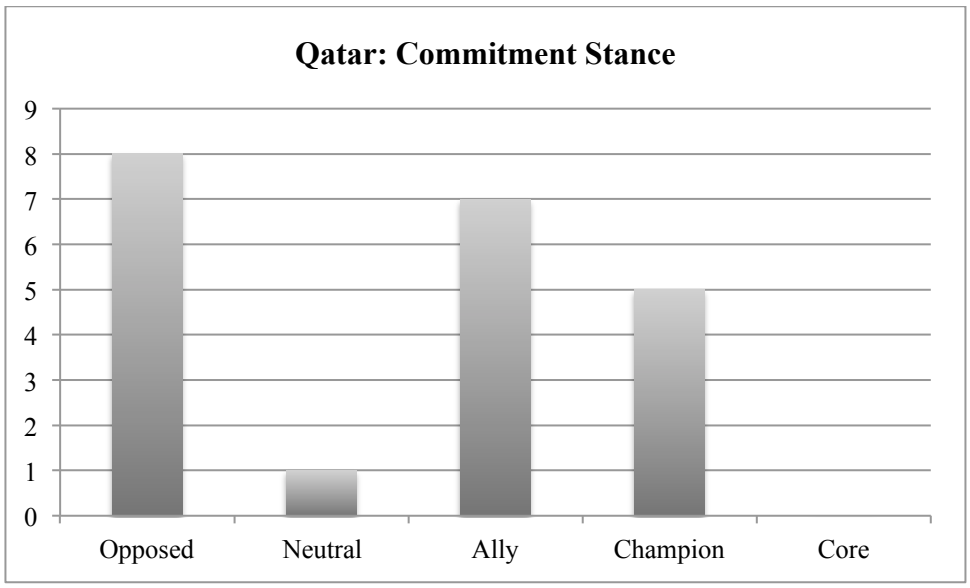


Figure 22. Perceived Commitment of Qatar to the Development of Syria

Jordan

Jordan's current influence rating was 2.52 (median 2, range 1-5, n = 24), and their predicted influence rating was roughly the same at 2.61 (median 3, range 1-5). Participants mostly viewed Jordan as an *ally* or *champion* of Syria (Figure 23). Most participants viewed Jordan as an *ally* or *champion*, because of their intake of large numbers of Syrian refugees, but describe them as only regionally important.

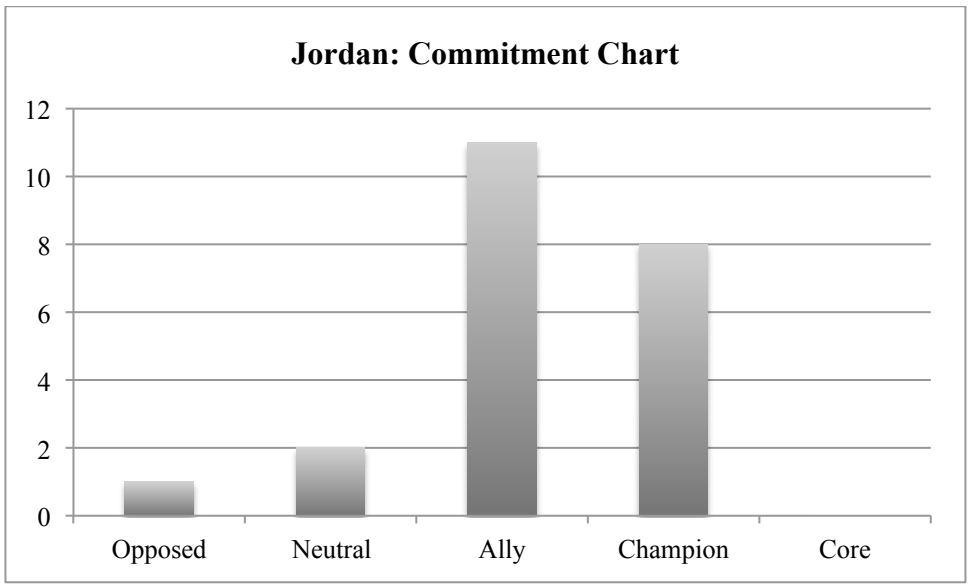


Figure 23. Perceived Commitment of Jordan to the Development of Syria

High Negotiating Committee

The High Negotiating Committee (HNC) had an average influence rating of 2.53 (median 2.75, range 0.5-4.5, n = 20), with the most dramatic decrease in their predicted influence in ten years with an average of 0.89 (half predicting the HNC would have "0" influence then). In addition to local councils, the HNC was the only other actor to receive a majority of participant responses as *core* (Figure 24). Some of the members of the HNC, including the HNC coordinator Riyad Farid Hijab, are former members of the Syrian Government, which some participants perceived as making them highly qualified while others found disconcerting (e.g. "They just changed uniforms"). However, the extent to which HNC has longevity and influence in the region in unclear.

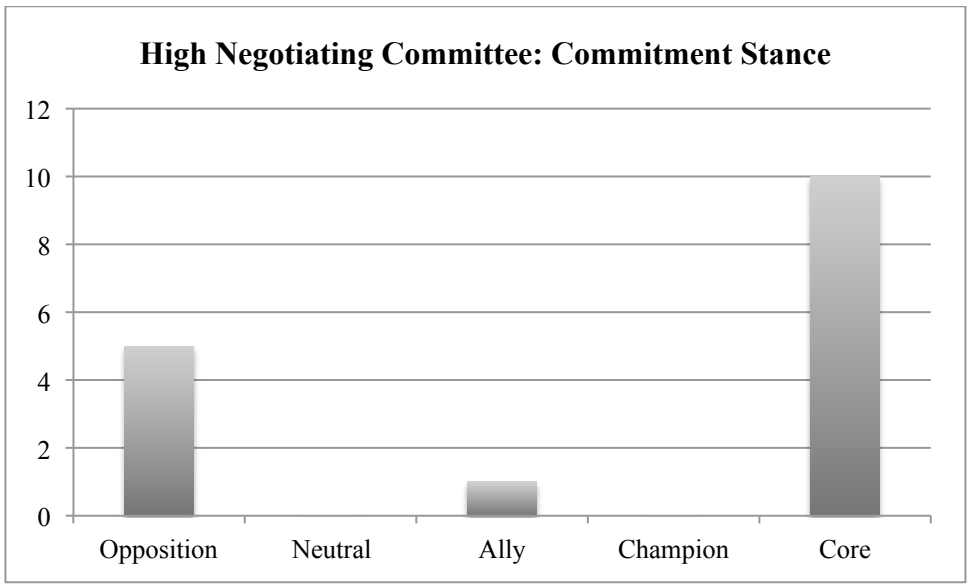


Figure 24. Perceived Commitment of the High Negotiating Committee to the Development of Syria

The United Nations

The UN was listed as influential more than any other actor during this process; however, their average influence was one of the lowest at 2.32 (median 2, range 0-5, n = 53) with two participants rating them "0". Therefore, despite being listed as influential more than any other actor, the overall influence of the UN was not perceived as particularly high. In ten years, participants predicted the influence of the UN to increase slightly to 2.85 (median 3, range 0-5), including four participants believing they will have no influence in Syria. Participants mentioned six specific offices and programs within the UN: Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Security Council, and the World Food Program (WFP). The UN and these specific offices and programs were mostly identified as a *champion*, but participants also identified them *opposed*, *neutral*, *ally*, and *core* (Figure 25). Most comments were about the UN helping refugees and acting as mediators, but having

minimal influence in the region overall.

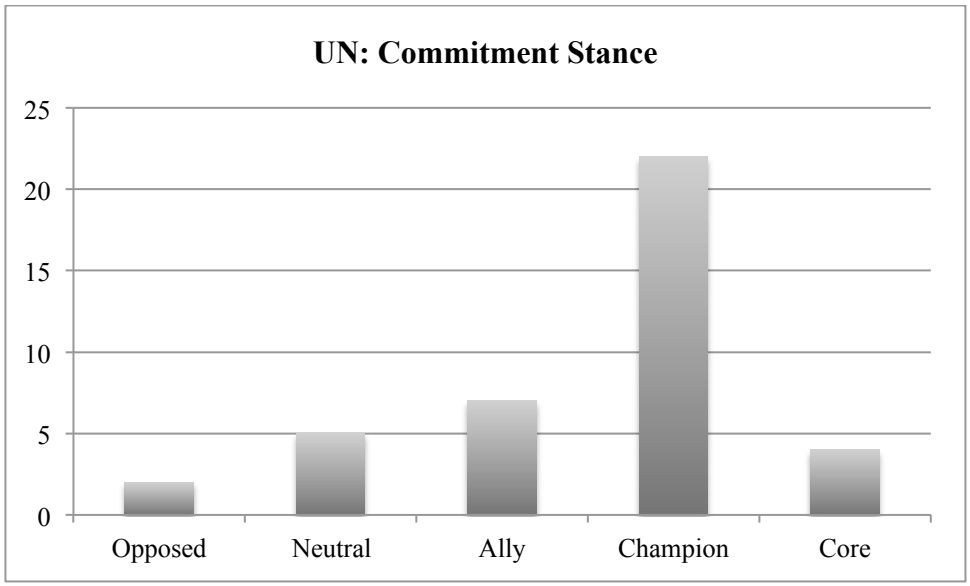


Figure 25. Perceived Commitment of the United Nations to the Development of Syria

Iraq

Participants rated Iraq's influence in Syria as the lowest of all the actors with an average influence rating of 1.89 (median 2, range 0-5, n = 31) with one participant rating them as having no influence. Their predicted influence decreased to average 1.27 (median 1, range 0-5) with a total of ten participants predicting they will have no influence in ten years. Most participants categorized Iraq as an "instrument in the hands of Iran," but having relatively little influence and power. In general, participants were relatively torn on Iraq's commitment to the development of Syria (Figure 26). Participants' stating that Iraq is *opposed* likely equates the country as a tool of Iran, which received overwhelming agreement that they are opposed to the development of Syria.

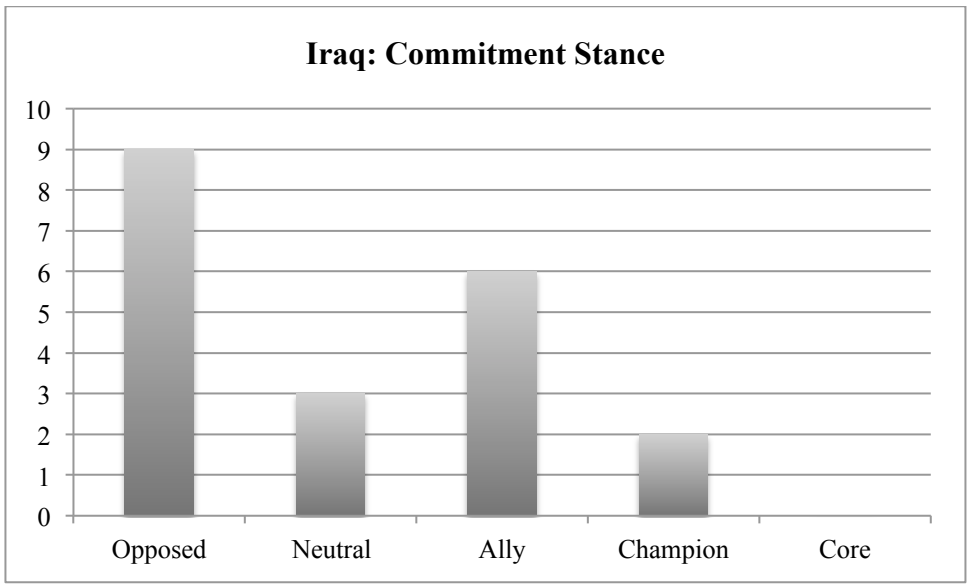


Figure 26. Perceived Commitment of Iraq to the Development of Syria

Discussion

Participants rated Russia as the most influential actor in Syria right now, followed by Turkey, Iran, the US and then the Syrian Government. This was one of the more surprisingly results of the interviews. I expected the Syrian Government, despite participant's varied views of their intentions, to be considered the most influential actor in Syria (as I would expect most governments to be considered the most influential actor in their respective countries). However, governments in four countries were considered more influential in Syria than Syria's government. Further, the influence of the Syrian Government was predicted to fall dramatically in ten years to an average of 1.97, with fourteen participants predicting they would have no influence. One possible interpretation is that the participants are conflating the idea of the Syrian Government with Bashar al-Asad. In other words, participants may be predicting Asad loses power in that time, but not that the current structure of the Syrian Government collapses. , Another interpretation is that participants are predicting that local councils will replace

the current structure of the Syrian Government given that participants predicted that local councils in Syria would become one of the most influential actors in Syria in ten years, with comments suggesting that they are Syria's future. This is one of the more surprisingly, and interesting, findings this method elicited, and should be explored further.

Participants also predicted that the US would become the most influential actor in Syria in ten years, which is likely because of US's previous post-conflict reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. Further, in relation to the US, comments during the interviews suggest that many participants view the current war in Syria as a proxy war between the US and Russia, with various countries, terrorist groups, and organizations supporting one or the other. A number of participants felt that Russia was controlling the Syrian Government, with Iran acting as their main supporter. On the other hand, the US was seen as directly supporting various Syrian opposition groups and the countries supporting those groups (e.g. the Free Syrian Army and Turkey). Yet, despite the rough consensus from participants that the US was not opposed to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria, participants were not in agreement on Russia or the Syrian Government. In other words, although participants saw Russia and the US as diametrically opposed and acting through various regional actors to fight a proxy war, and that they saw the US as not opposed to Syria or the Syrian people, there was no rough consensus on Russia's commitment to a stable Syria. Given the oppositional relationship described by participants, I would have expected more of a consensus around Russia and the Syrian Government (or less of a consensus around the US), but the perspectives were more complicated than that. In addition, one complicating factor

is that the lead interviewer is an American citizen and the implementing organization is an American company, which could impact the willingness of participants to openly criticize the US.

Further, only one influential actor[51] – IS – received unanimous consensus on their commitment (opposed) to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria. The fact that every participant that commented on IS believe they are opposed to the development of Syria is not surprising; however, what was surprising is that no other influential actor received a unanimous commitment stance rating. In general, there was a wide range of perspectives on each actor's influence and commitment, which points to the convoluted and complex nature of these relationships. However, some influential actors had more of a rough consensus (e.g. Iran) than others. In particular, participants were quite split on the stance of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), with a number of participants viewing them as *core* and *opposed*. This finding is important as it begins to touch on the potential future makeup of the region. The PYD want the Kurds to have their own territory; however, it seems that there is no consensus on whether the Syrian Kurds are Syrian, or Kurds, or both, and whether that impacts PYD's claim that an independent Kurdish region should be established. Some participants even view the PYD as a terrorist organization, while others believe they are important in the fight against extremism. An important result of this research is these diverse perspectives that may make the situation seem more convoluted, but in fact, it is provided a clearer picture of the confusion that exists and the important debates surrounding these influential actors.

[51] With more than ten data points

Three influential actors – Ahrar al-Sham, PYD, and the UN – received responses for all five of the commitment stances. For the UN, only one participant noted that the UN was *opposed* to Syrian development, specifically noting the UN World Food Program, but did not provide any rationale for this response. As noted in the previous chapters, many development programs and projects leave communities worse off than they were previously, which provides one possible explanation for the participant stating this program as *opposed*. However, like the PYD, opinions on Ahrar al-Sham were diverse. For example, some comments from participants stated Ahrar al-Sham are terrorists and moderates, or majority foreigners and majority Syrians. The truth is not necessarily important here, rather, the fact that these contradictory perspectives exist points to the need for research, such as this, to begin to tease out these opinions and rationales.

Chapter 6: Dimensions Data and Discussion

The last part of the interview includes fifteen questions that span the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of Syria. For each dimension, participants assess Syria on an 8-level measure.[52] Individually, the dimensions show the current perspectives, and collectively, the dimensions help to illustrate the country's unique and descriptive state in two important ways: 1) the amount of consensus around each dimension shows how disparate the perspectives are, and whether potential interventions would be possible, and 2) the current perceptions of Syria to better plan potential interventions with realistic end states in mind. This process provides an incredible amount of combinations for describing a country's current state across dimensions, which should be at least minimally more accurate than describing Syria as "failing" or on "very highly alert" for becoming a "failed" state (The Fund for Peace 2016). The levels will be used to create a map that better illustrates the unique state of the country, revealing not only areas of "fragility" but strengths to be built upon. This information allows practical and achievable positive end states to be envisioned and worked toward in an informed and systemic manner for development initiatives by not only allowing actors to better describe *what they want* but also *what is possible*. Overall, this map helps to determine appropriate goals for development projects, which is critical for any development practitioner (Wallace 2009).

It is important to remember that the levels are intended to draw perspectives of the country's unique state from participants, and in no way should be used as a measurement tool that provides conclusive proof. The process focuses on developing

[52] Most dimensions have 8 levels

shared trust, interpersonal relations, and shared political consciousness that in theory will enhance the ability of the actors to work together by finding shared interests and goals, and ultimately providing the necessary dialogue to determine realistic goals and timeframes. In this chapter, the range of perspectives generated from each dimension by level and round will be presented. Dimensions with significant disagreement may be only suitable for interventions targeted at creating understanding and consensus, whereas dimensions with more agreement could consider realistic interventions and discussion of priorities. The detailed dialogue is located in Appendix F.

Group Identity

Societies often split as various factions viewing each other as "the other." This dimension examines where participants view this splitting – at the family, village, regional, ethnic, national, supranational, or global level – for Syria. The range throughout all three rounds was 2 through 8 with all three rounds (median 5, mean 4.81). Figure 27 shows that overall participants agree that Syrians identify mostly at a level 5 or level 6.

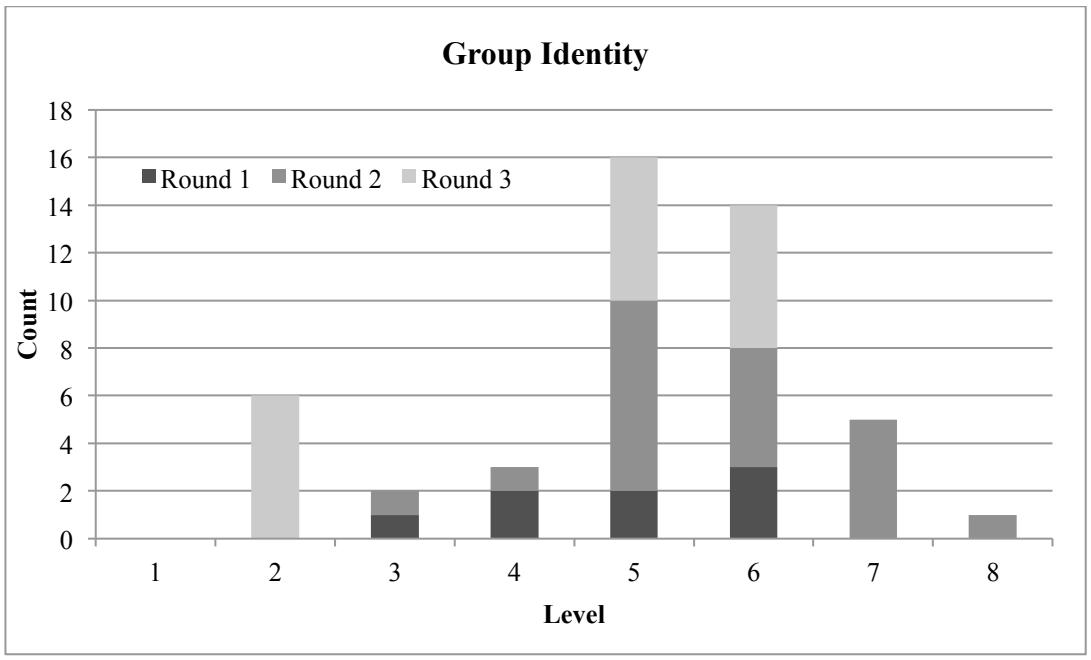


Figure 27. Group identity data per round

A majority of participants chose levels 5 (ethnic or religious group identity) and 6 (national identity) for this level. However, given the comments and rationales, most participants actually agree that Syrian identity is currently associated with ethnic or religious identities. Although, some participants still believe that Syrian identity is at the national level, with one participant arguing that religious and ethnic group identity is not important (i.e. "In Syria we don't speak about ethnicity or groups, only the country."). However, most participants who chose both levels 5 and 6 stated that before the war, Syrian identity was at the national level, but now, many people have reverted to their "pre-country identity" and that there is a "growing ethnic divide." Some participants also expressed the desire to return to country level as the ideal loyalty and identity. Rationales for surrounding the loss of this national identity include the loss of a larger system holding the country together, and the Asad family failing to cultivate a strong sense of Syrian national identity (e.g. "Over the past 50 years of the Asad regime

the regime failed to make a national identity" and "Bashar divided the country between Sunni and Alawi").

Kurdish and Syrian identity is an also important theme in this section (e.g. "The Kurd's ethnic affiliation has become even more important over the last years."). This question elicited a range of perspectives on Kurdish identity, including "…the Kurds are loyal to the Kurds first, regardless of where they are. The Arabs are divided by religious lines." Again, Kurdish identity is separated from the identity of the majority of Syrians, who are Arab. Many participants pointed out that how Syrians identify depends on class and regional ties, especially since "the constitution was not made by all the people." Additionally, there is again a separation of Syria from Syrian people and the Kurds from Kurdish people.

> Since the war started five years ago everyone is remembering their roots, whether it is ethnic or religious. That's why it has become sectarian. *The Kurds want autonomy*… There are…four sectors, Kurds, ISIL, Opposition, and Regime. *The majority wants Syria to remain unified, besides ISIL*. Each sector wants to expand for influence. *The people have no say*…Whoever has arms and money dictates the rules. This is a normal result from five years of war.

This participant is simultaneously stating that the Kurds desire autonomy, which would require separation, but also that "the majority wants Syria to remain unified," again highlighting the contradictory narratives described by participants that surround the Kurds: Syrian people, including Kurds, do not want separation, while the armed groups representing Kurdish nationalism fight for autonomy and cultural rights.

Legally Enshrined National Values

This dimension questions not only if the country has legally enshrined national values, but also if there is perceived differential enforcement of those laws to various

subsets of the population. An example of legally enshrined national values in United States is the Declaration of Independence stating some of our core American values ("life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"), which has manifested into many laws. However, at the time of its inception, only landowning white males were included in the enforcement of those values. A majority of participants chose either level 2 or 4 (median 4, mean 3.51); however, the range was level 1 to 8 (as shown in Figure 28).

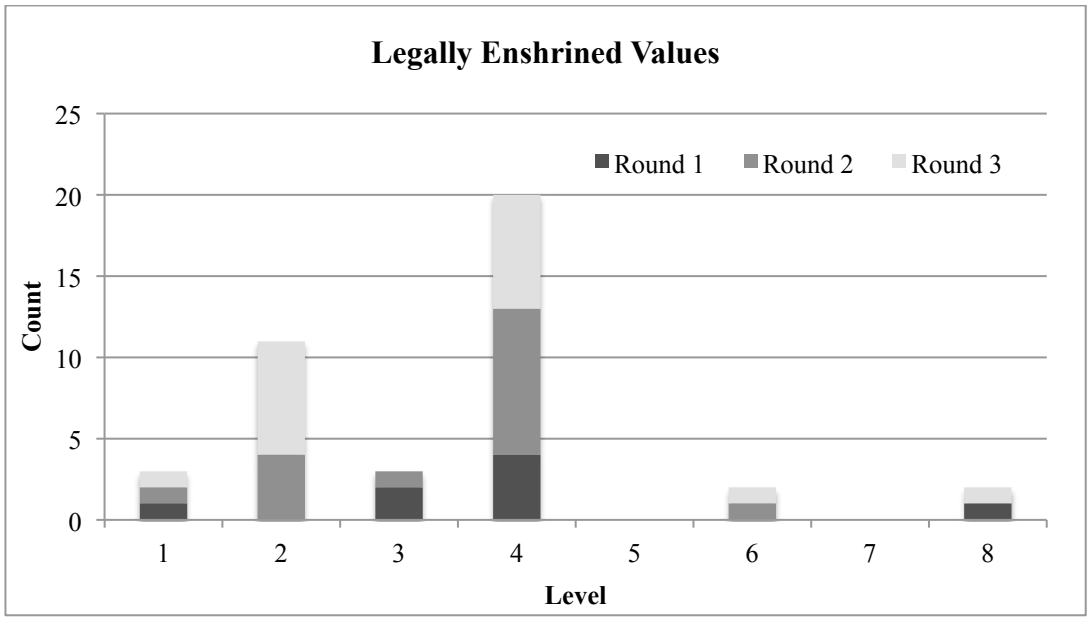


Figure 28. Legally enshrined values per round

Many participants chose level 2 (regional, ethnic, or religious factions hold different values from each other. There are no "national" values), which aligns with group identity existing at the regional, ethnic, and religious levels. For example:

- "There are *some people* not covered under the constitution at all."
- "…What we had in the 1950's has all been replaced by the Asad family regime…the absence of those values this is one of the reasons for the revolution.

Even the revolution couldn't come up with a law that everyone accepts… There has been no uniting as a nation."

- "*The conflict divided everything, including the values…*"
- "*There have never been national values*. It was only a political investment. Subgroups have their own values."

However, a majority of participants chose level 4 (the national values are enshrined in law, but apply differently to those with and without political or financial power), which generated a discussion of Alawi power in Syria. A round 1 participant stated that "the Alawites are an example" of laws applying differently to those with and without power, which produced many responses in the feedback rounds, including "the power was in the Asad family, not the sect. *This is one of the biggest mistakes of the opposition*. It brings about what Asad wanted to happen." However, the largest difference between participants who chose level 2 and level 4 is implementation compared to written in law. Participants who chose level 2 focused on the laws in practice, whereas participants who chose level 4 focused on the written laws. For example:

- "The law is written, but the regime does not apply it. T*he regime decides what happens and what doesn't happen*."
- *The laws are perfect*. It's one of the best constitutions in the world. The implementation is as a dominant group over the others."

- "The legal values are enshrined in the constitution, but it's never implemented. It's like a nice painting. They do the opposite."

Again, the distinction between Kurdish and Arab identities arose in the varying applications of the law, and marginalization of Kurdish peoples:

- "There has always been a *clear Arabist identity exclusive of Kurdish groups*…There are problems with the constitution, but its application has always been the bigger problem.
- "The Kurds were not given rights. Bashar al-Asad jailed and oppressed them…"

Lastly, one participant declined to provide a level, but provided an aspirational desire for Syria's legally enshrined values after the conflict: "Syria will be for all the people. Whatever constitution will govern the people will be for everybody, not distinguishing anyone from the others, except people who are not Syrians." Aspirational statements were relatively common throughout the interviews – despite the conflict, not all hope is lost.

Control of Borders

This dimension examines the amount of perceived definition and control of national borders, and the perceived influence of external actors on the economic, political, and cultural components of the country. Most participants chose level 3 for this dimension (median 3, mean 3.27), and there is a slight right skew, although answers ranged from level 1 to level 8 and no rough consensus (Figure 29).

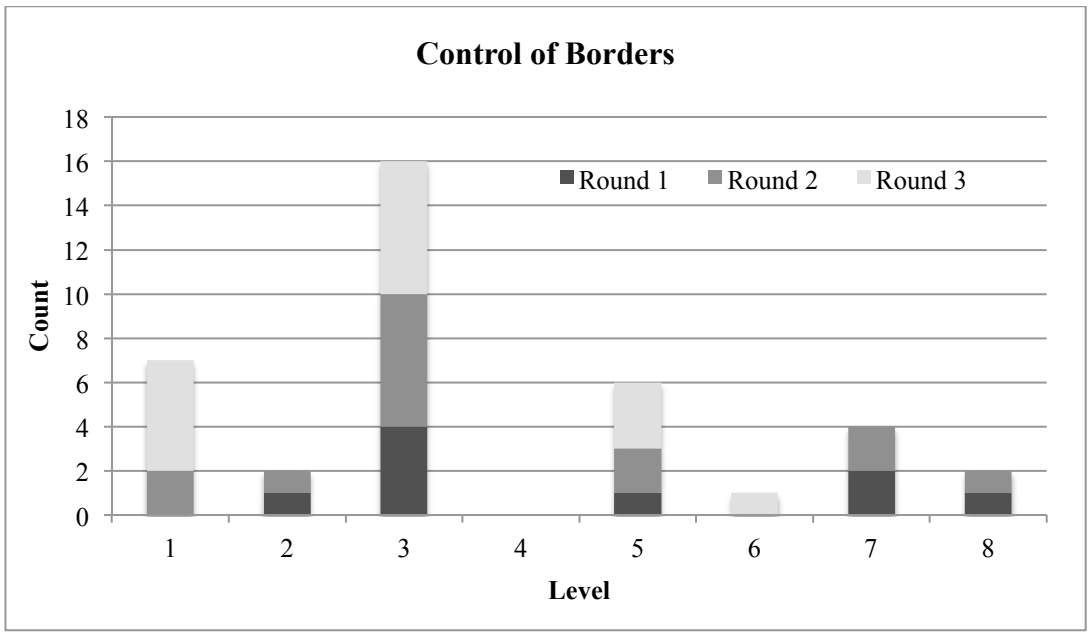


Figure 29. Control of borders per round

The majority of participants chose level 3 (this legally recognized country is not able to protect itself against the mass murders of parts of the population by outsiders or its own people) concentrating on external control and again expressing that Syria is currently an occupied state:

- "It is a legally recognized country, but controlled by other groups, and easily infiltrated by other countries."
- "*There is no country now*. The decisions belong to Iran and Russia. It used to be the Alawi. No longer. *It is all outside. There is no border*."
- "…*There is foreign occupation on Syria now…*"

Overall, participants were in strong agreement that Syria does not control its borders, although a small group of participants focused on the global trend of "weaker

and weaker borders" because of globalization, even arguing, "there is no country that controls its borders."

International Reputation

A country's perceived ability to interact well with others impacts their participation in trade negotiations and deals, peace treaties, with the United Nations, likelihood of stability, et cetera. Further, countries considered untrustworthy are less likely to be fully included in the global economy (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). This dimension examines the perception of the country's relations with other countries. Participants roughly agreed that Syria's international reputation is overall negative as shown in figure 30 (median 3, mean 2.73). The countries participants repeatedly mentioned as having positive relations with Syria are, as expected, Russia and Iran. China, North Korea, and the United States were also described as having mostly positive relations with Syria. Of course, the definition of Syria, as the government, the Opposition, or the people, determines how these relations are defined.

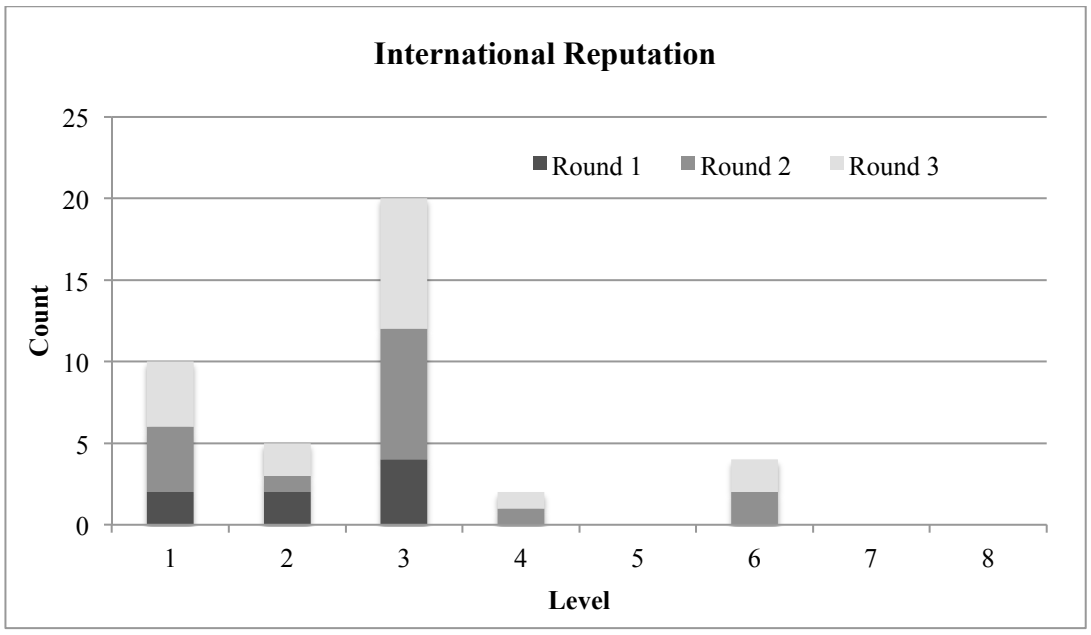


Figure 30. International reputation per round

National Vision and Strategy

Aspirations of a country are important: "Notions about "who we are" and "what we become" are shaped to a large degree from the shared identities that grow out of both extraordinary difficulties and extraordinary accomplishments in the social realm" (Neal 1998, 21). This dimension assesses the inclusivity of the country in creating their national vision; it does not, in any way, suggest what the national vision should be. Rather, it describes the extent to which the country collectively shares and participates in forming that vision. This dimension seems to showed significant disagreement (Figure 31), with a right skew (median 3, mean 3.29).

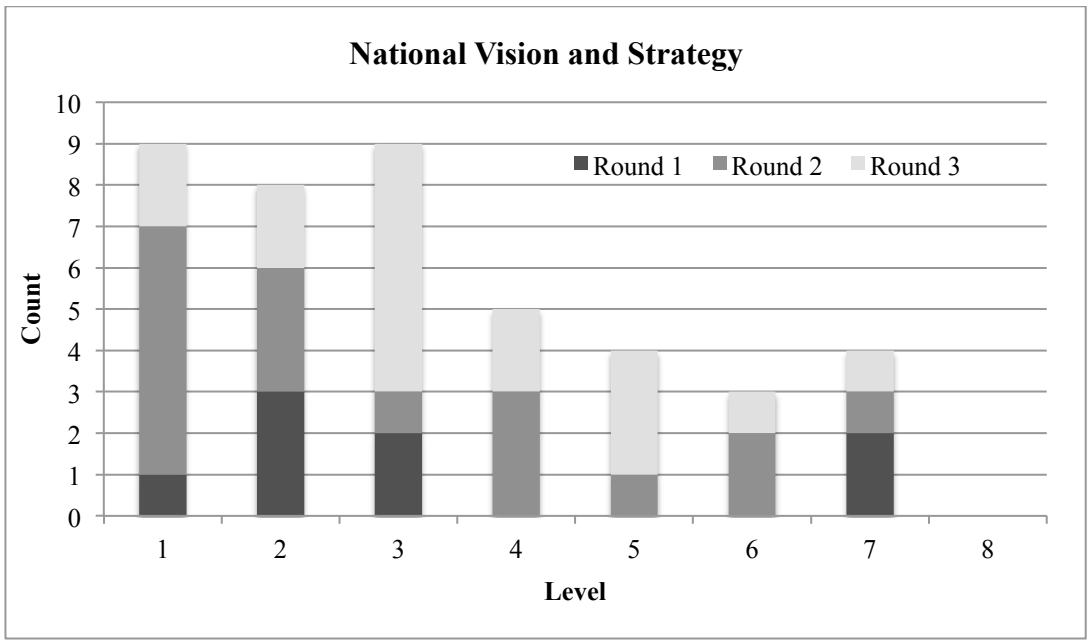


Figure 31. National vision and strategy per round

This dimension generated significant disagreement and misunderstanding among participants in the feedback rounds (e.g. "I don't know who they think is the mainstream or dominant subgroup"). Participants also disagreed on where the responsibility of creating a national vision and strategy lies, with one participant arguing, "It should be the job of a ruling elite." However, the major patterns emerging from this question is that even though multiple visions exist, only Asad's vision is enacted:

- "The Ba'th Party are the ruling party. T*hey do whatever Asad wants. They are similar to North Korea. It doesn't matter what opinion anyone has*"
  "*The government wants to murder everyone else. The vision of Asad is to murder*. There have been attempts from outside to develop a national vision, but it is extremely fragmented."

- "Even with the struggle between the three different groups, they all share the same national vision. *Everyone dreams of a day without Asad*."

International Vision and Strategy

Participants also disagreed strongly on the current existence of a cohesive international vision and strategy. The range was level 1 to 8, with slightly more participants choosing lower levels (right skew), as seen in figure 32 (mean 3.42, median 3).

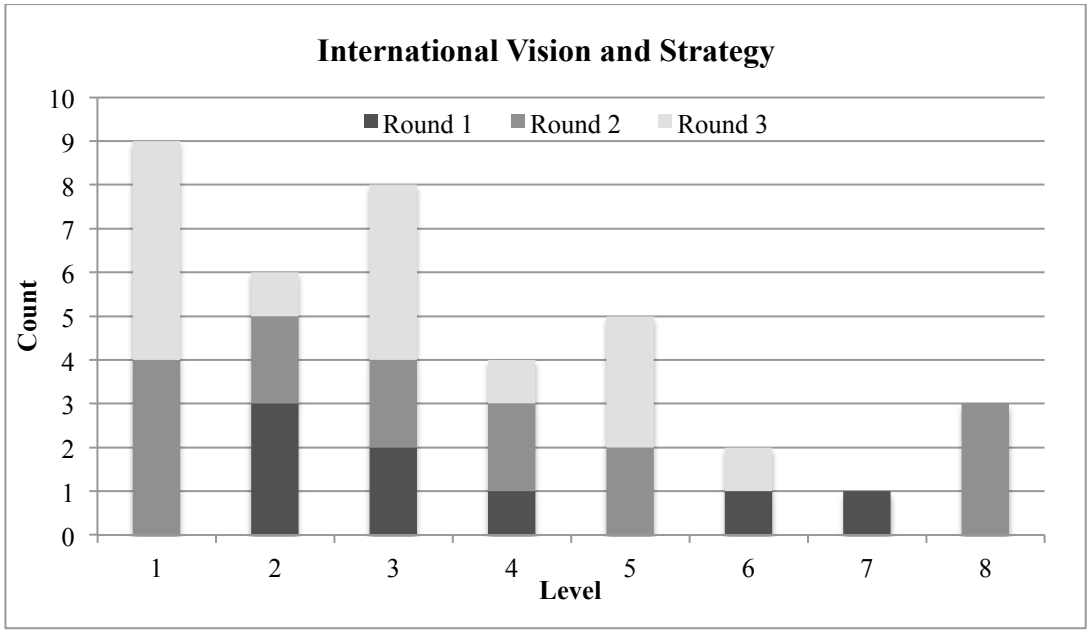


Figure 32. International vision and strategy per round

As with the national vision and strategy dimension, participants described fragmented visions, but instead of Asad, the parties in control are the United States and Russia ("*Syrians are not even present for these decisions*" and "if outside forces would decide there could be a future for Syria"). However, participants again disagreed in the feedback rounds on who is actually the dominant subgroup. Some with participants

describing either the Asad regime or the Opposition as dominant, and participants pushed back arguing neither group dominates (e.g. "The population is split. Many see the Asad regime as the protector of their rights and safety, largely the Shia minority") and that subgroups are only regionally dominant.

Economy

This dimension simply examines perspectives on the current economy in Syria. Participants' answers ranged from a level 1 to 5, although most participants agreed that the economy was between a level 1 and 2 (black and grey markets), and there is a large right skew shown in figure 33 (median 1, mean 1.4). There is strong agreement on this dimension from participants, and below are sample of the some of the most pointed comments:

- "About eleven years ago *Bashar al-Asad began to insert poverty into the Syrian populations*…fracturing in civil society, which led to the civil war. The silence of the international community allows the regime to commit more crimes."
- "The economy is *controlled by the gang, like mafia*."
- "…Pressure from the European Union forced Asad to impose a series of rules on Syria. 40% of the population went to below the poverty level…that contributed to the revolution."
- "… Under Hafiz al-Asad there were rich, poor and middle class. *Bashar killed the middle class*...."
- "The economy was always one of the arms of the Asad regime, therefore they tightly controlled finance mechanisms. The oil profits went exclusively to the Asad's. No one knew volumes or profits. Now there is no economy…."

- "…*Constant bombing prevents any market*."

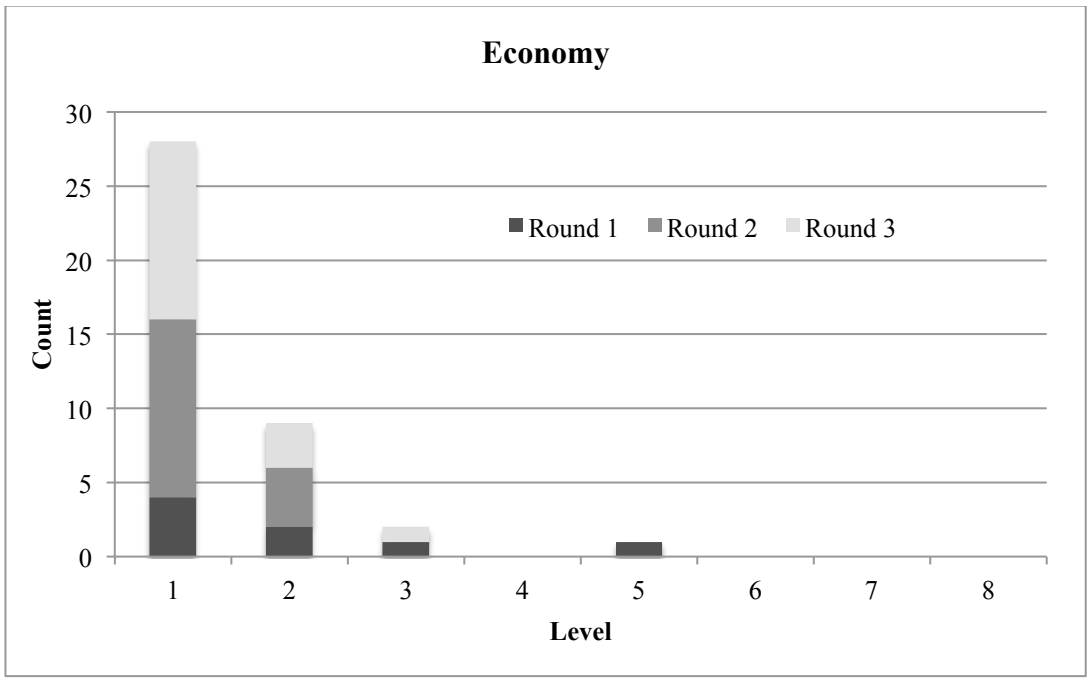


Figure 33. Economy per round

Distribution of Power

Distribution of power, as described in this dimension, focuses on political development with the three institutions as described by Fukuyama (2014): the state, rule of law, and accountability. These components comprise the institutions necessary for a proto-democracy. Simply, liberal democracies can be *a* form of stability with these strong, but balanced institutions, and this dimension examines the capacity of a country in relation to these three institutions:

> …These three sets of institutions becomes a universal requirement for all human societies over time. They do not simply represent the cultural preferences of Western societies or any particular cultural group… A liberal democracy combining these three institutions cannot be said to be humanly universal. (Fukuyama 2014, 37)

Institutions are the way in which behaviors are organized, and weak institutions correlate to instability (Fukuyama 2014, Easterly 2006). In fact, when strength of institutions is controlled, there is no link between ethnic diversity and conflict (Easterly 2006). Weak institutions are often the root problem in poverty and conflict traps – a common threat among many "fragile" or "failed" states. "Many failing or fragile states are thus caught in a low-level trap whereby poor institutions fail to control violence, which produces poverty, which further weakens the ability of the government to govern" (Fukuyama 2014, 49). This dimension illustrated nearly complete consensus, as shown in figure 34, with participants overwhelmingly choosing level 1 (median 1, mean 1.35), which given the ongoing war in Syria was not unexpected.

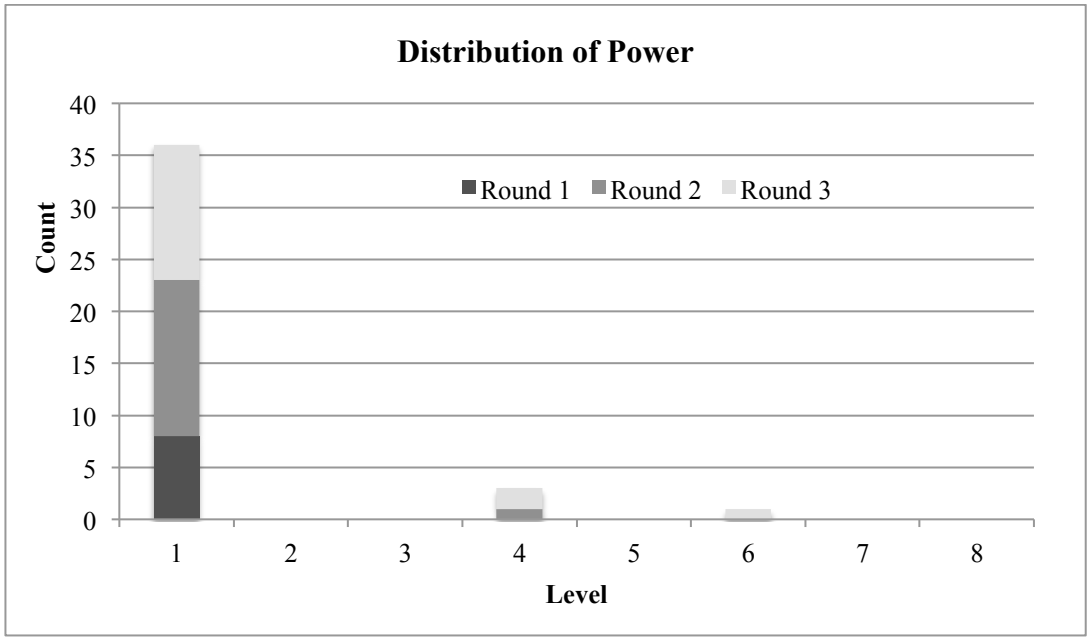


Figure 34. Distribution of power per round

Participants agreed that power is not distributed in Syria, and describe the Asad regime as "bandits" and "brutal dictatorship." However, some participants defined the

current conflict as a revolution, not a civil war, which is a linguistic and narrative distinction; for example, participants described the conflict as a "revolution for freedom" and emphatically rejected the concept of this war as a civil war. The Syrian Government, particularly Bashar al-Asad, has lost legitimacy with these participants, and use of the term civil war, or Syrian Opposition for the resistance, is offensive. One participant explicitly stated "Bashar al-Asad used these terms to make himself look legitimate," and with everyone "up to their elbows in blood," language enabling Asad's legitimacy matters.

Civil Society

The purpose of this dimension is to gauge the overall perceived strength of civil society[53] in a country. Civil society gives a credible, organized voice to the public to express their values, ideas, and interests. Organizations are more likely to influence policy than individual citizens.[54] And civil society is not isolated to any particular form of government; rather, a huge majority of countries have large numbers of organizations that form to help represent their interests to their government. Again, the range of answers was from level 1 to level 8, however, a majority of participants perceive Syria is either at a level 1 or 2, as shown in figure 35, and there is a significant right skew (median 2, mean 2.8).

[53] "the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations" (World Bank).

[54] The existence of an organization itself is a form of mobilized bias (Schattschneider 1960)

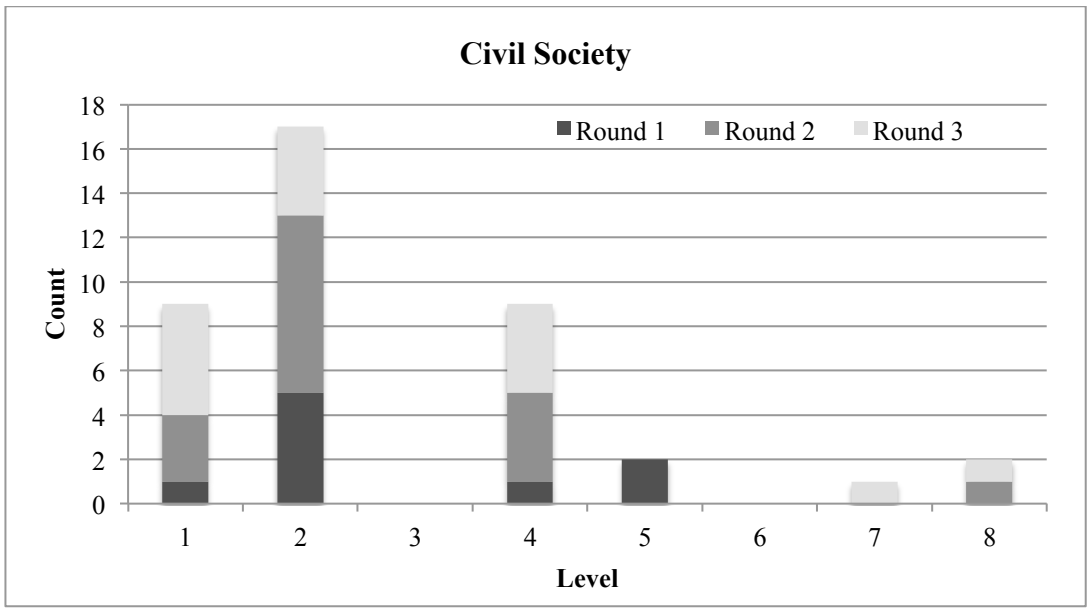


Figure 35. Civil society per round

A majority of participants suggested that civil society does not exist in Syria, and what does exist is controlled by the Asad regime. Even before the conflict, most participants stated that the Ba'th party and Asad regime only allowed organizations that served them (e.g. "The Ba'th party ran all of civil society like the North Korea system" and "There were NGOs in Syria before the war, but controlled by the regime and intelligence). Civic organizations that exist are not considered trustworthy, often assumed to be fronts for the government, and one participant declared, "even the United Nations organizations are corrupt." However, given that participants describe Syria as a society "built on fear" with little trust for organizations, building civil society is difficult. Yet, there are organizations still functioning in Syria, such as the Syria Civil Defence (also known as the White Helmets), who work to provide relief to victims of the conflict, civilian or otherwise. The remaining organizations, however, must rely heavily on outside funding. For some participants, the conflict actually engendered more civil society than before the war. These are described as not "classic" civic

organizations, but rather developed in response to a need, and function under brutal conditions and restrictions.

Arts and Humanities

Art can be a powerful influence on the collective identity of a nation, and its importance in understanding Syria comprehensively should not be overlooked. This dimensions was one of the two with the most disagreement (see figure 36, and figures 42 and 43 later in the chapter). Answers ranged from level 1 to 8, with a bimodal distribution centered on levels 2 and 7 (median 2, mean 3.66).

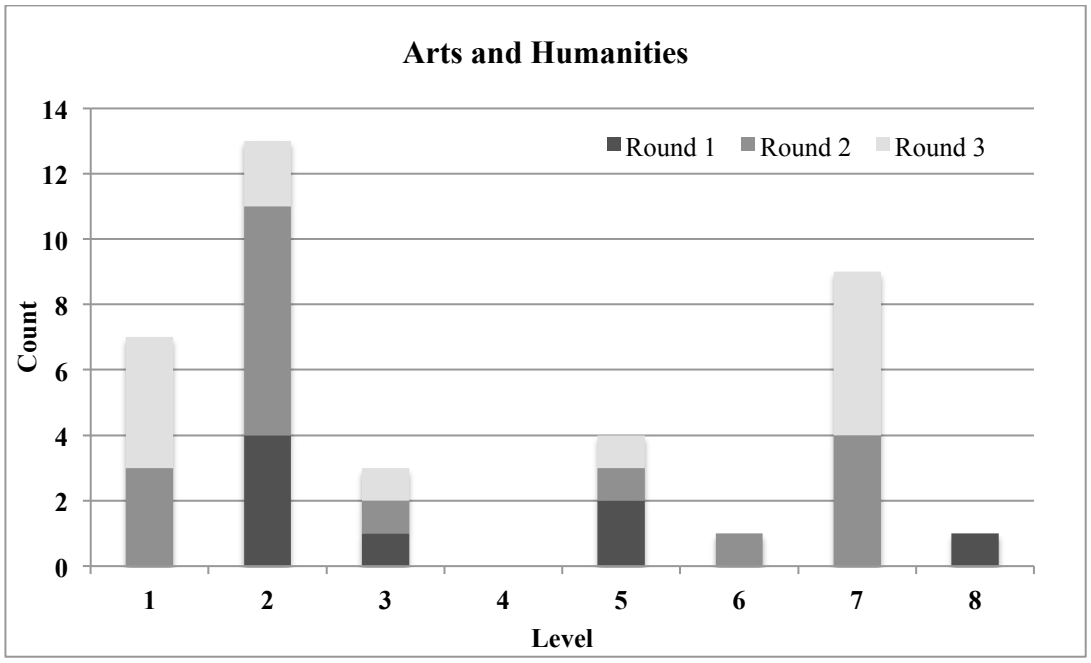


Figure 36. Arts and humanities responses per round

As with civil society, many participants describe artists and thinkers in Syria as serving the regime. Participants also described Bashar's Spring Club, which began shortly after Bashar assumed the office of President. The Spring Club provided a safe space for expression, providing hope to participants that a new Syria was on the

horizon. However, participants describe Asad becoming threatened by and turning against the Spring Club, which, participants suggest sparked the revolution. Participants depict artists not loyal to the government being forced to flee, or physically harmed (e.g. Well-known Syrian caricature artist Ali Farzat's hands were broken after drawing anti-Asad cartoons). The line from political artist and thinker to criminal is thin:

> Asad TV, newspapers, universities, movies, magazines, are all owned by [Asad's relatives]. The Asads *use both terror and lures*. *All of arts and humanities serve Asad. He funds them for their loyalty. If they refuse they are arrested*. In the 1980's the unions went on strike. They were all arrested and jailed for ten to thirteen years as terrorists. Tadmor Jail equals hell, people in coffins and chained. *Every Syrian household has a story about Tadmor*. People have to pay bribes to get thirty-second visits with their loved ones. *Sometimes the administration does mass killings in Tadmor as retribution for social activism on the street. Chemical weapons are buried around Tadmor. People know where the mass graves are.* If Asad could require Syrians to buy his air he would. Anyone who is arrested, his child would be told daily he is a traitor.

Activism or political critiques, from civil society organizations, artists, and thinkers, is dangerous in Syria. However, Syrian intellectuals, including the founders of the Ba'thist movement, were the first to champion pan-Arabism. The 1950's and 1960's were the height of pan-Arabism in the region, but the ideology greatly influenced contemporary history in the Arab world, and continues to play a role in Arab identity and nationalism (Seale 1989)

Social Trust

Social trust is essential for any development. For example, social contracts enable individuals to trust a doctor for a medical problem, instead of going to a family member (Fukuyama 2014). This dimension examines at what level does social trust exist in this country, which has huge implications for the development and implementation of any national initiative. As shown in figure 37, participants were in

rough consensus that social trust in Syria is at a level 2 or 3 (median 2, mean 2.56) with the data having a right skew and a range of level 1 to 6 (the highest level in this dimension).

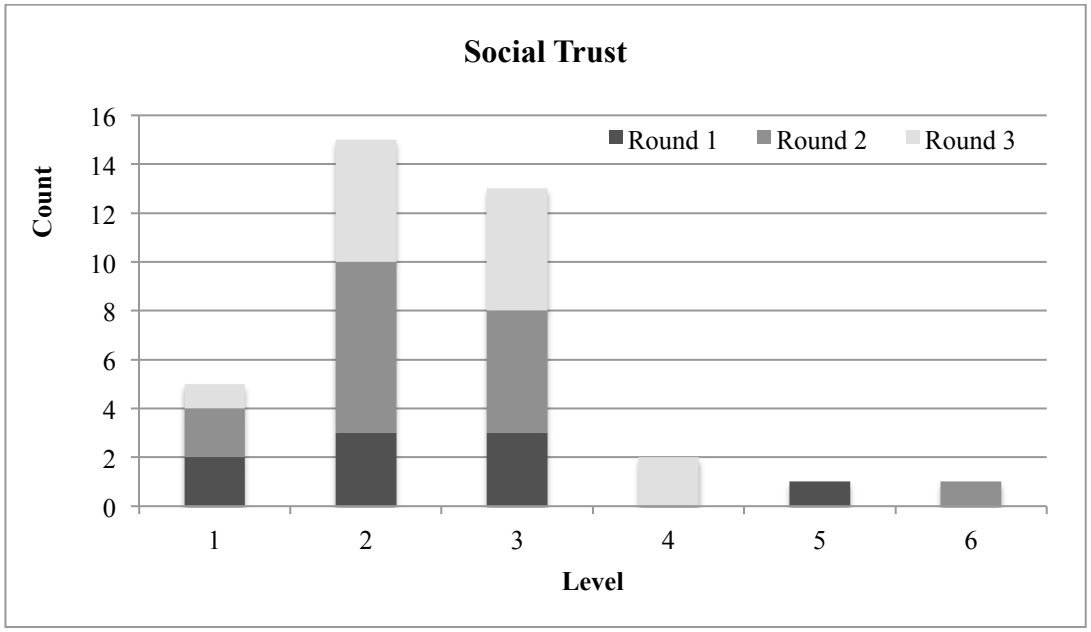


Figure 37. Social trust responses per round

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that there was no trust between the Syrian people and their government. The Syrian Government (Asad) is consistently reneging on promises (e.g. Stating that people can leave Aleppo, but "will rape, torture, and kill them if they do"). Participants describe the Asad family as working to break down trust between different groups over the years, and even though the people do not trust Asad, there is little inter-group trust. As one participant noted: "If there is fear there is no trust." The Asad regime rules by fear and people are "forced to "trust" by arms." However, some intra-group trust still exists, especially regionally with local councils

still performing important services such as trash collection and policing. Participants describe tribal and religious ties as still trustworthy.

Empathy Towards Marginalized Groups

Although participants answers ranged from level 1 to level 7, answers skewed right, particularly choosing levels 1 and 3 as shown in figure 39 (median 3, mean 3.65). Additionally, this dimension appears to have some of the most disparate views, but based on the comments, there may be more of a consensus than the numbers demonstrate. For example, many participants chose a level higher than 1, but then stated that the government (Asad) is killing the majority. Participants are equating marginalization with minority (e.g. "Abuse against most of the population, done against the dominant groups, not the marginalized"). The wording of this question can be confusing in a situation, like Syria, where a minority group is oppressing a majority group (e.g. "The majority is being killed by the government"). In addition, marginalization of Syrian Kurds was mentioned repeatedly. Participants noted that prior to the conflict, Syrian Kurds faced discrimination and marginalization (e.g. denial of citizenship); however, post-2011, Kurdish oppression has greatly increased.

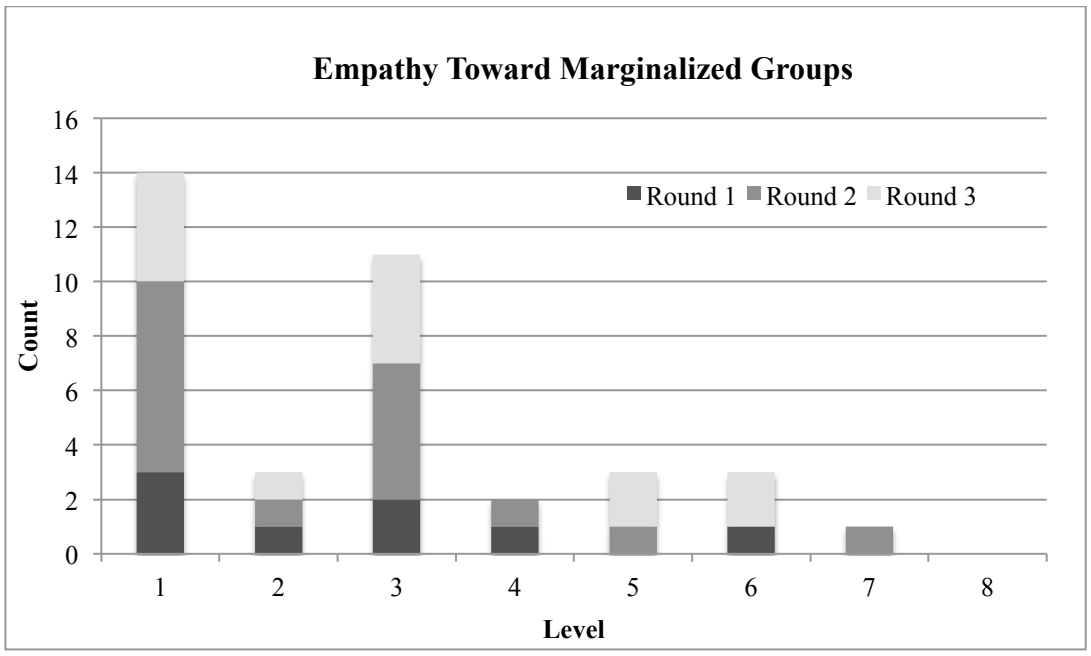


Figure 38. Empathy toward marginalized groups responses per round

Empathy Toward Women

Participants disagreed significantly when discussing Syria and empathy toward women. In addition to the arts and humanities dimension, empathy toward women generated the least amount of consensus. Answers ranged from level 1 to level 8, and the data is skewed right, as show in figure 38 (median 3, mean 3.65).

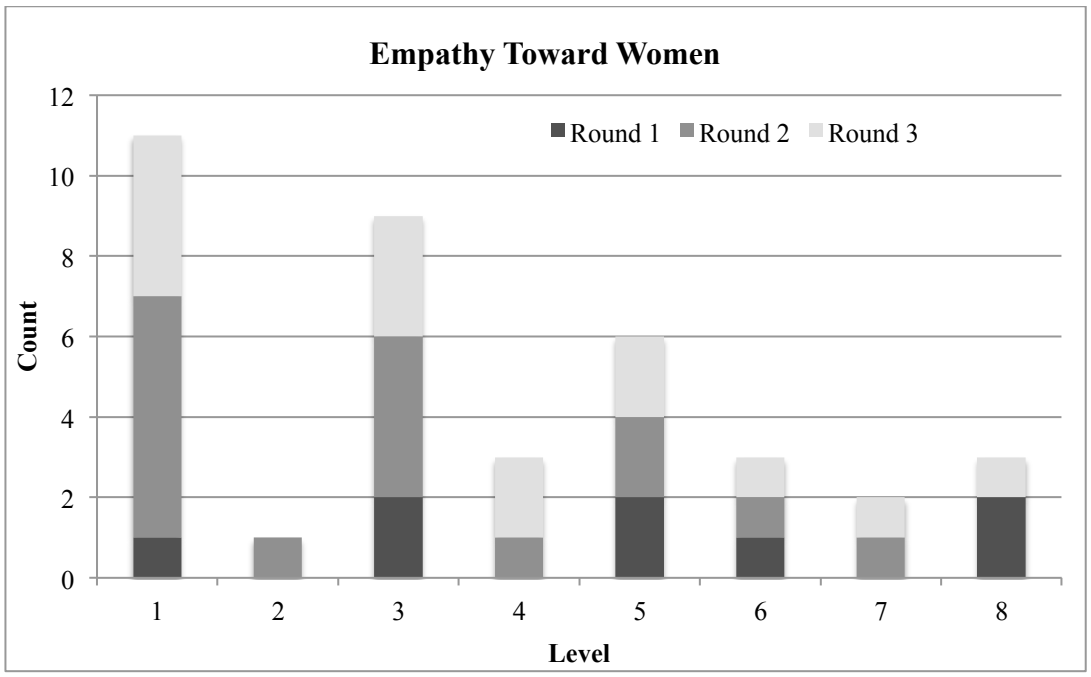


Figure 39. Empathy toward women responses per round

Many participants describe the experiences of women in Syria as filled with violence, including rape and murder. However, the perpetrator of the violence is not consistent, with participants placing blame on the government, the Islamic State, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. Below are a couple of quotes from participants describing the violence Syrian women are facing:

- "Half of the population is women and children who are being killed *and no one cares*… Women are raped…to shame their families. They are sold by their families to men from other countries to get rid of them."
- "…The government almost institutionalized rape against opposition held towns. *Violence against women is practiced against almost everybody*..."
- "…The situation for women is *catastrophic* now…"

A common qualifier of the violence is region, with participants stating that certain groups treat women with respect (e.g. "The Sunni respect women"), while other groups exert control and violence. In particular, participants describe the regional rural–urban divides as important in the treatment of women. Although, most of the urban population are Sunnis and many compact minorities (Alawis, Druze, Isma'ilis, Kurds) live in rural regions. An interesting example of this is one participant who stated "in all the four regions women are receiving their rights, except in regions controlled by ISIL, [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham], and some of the Kurdish regions." The participant describes four regions as all treating women equally, but then immediately excludes three of these regions. The implication is "we" treat women with respect and fairly, and "they" do not. Another common thread that often paralleled the regional divide is that women were treated equal to men prior to the war in Syria, for example:

- "Before the war women and men were treated the same. It's still there in urban areas, but less so in rural areas because of lack of education…"
- "Before the revolution...Women were treated as equals to men in education, jobs, voting. As of the revolution *it now depends on who controls the area...*" "*The culture before the war was not as oppressive as some other Arab countries.* The opposition supports women… In ISIL controlled areas women have no rights."

There were also a range of perspectives regarding women focused on unemployment among women and the potential demands of women in post-war Syria; however, these comments were in the minority. Additionally, a handful of participants

chose levels 7 and 8, which imply near and complete women's equality in Syria. For example:

> "*We have no problem with treating women well in Syria*. They have all the rights…"

The extreme variance in perspectives in this dimension is critical to consider when discussing and creating development initiatives geared towards Syrian women.

Empathy Toward Children

Participants answers skewed towards the right in this dimension, although the range was between level 1 and 8, the general consensus seems to be that Syria is currently around a level 1 or 2, as shown in figure 40 (median 2, mean 3). Women and children are commonly mentioned as the most vulnerable groups in Syria, and the most impacted by the conflict. Many Syrian children have been killed in bombings and chemical weapons, but there is more harm than physically surviving the war. Children are often recruited by armed groups, because they are malleable and easily brainwashed, and Syrian children can face extraordinary hardships (e.g. "Child labor, soldiers, sexual abuse, violence in general are treated as OK. They make a boy a man"). Inside Syria, and in the refugee camps, the economic situation is dire, and many parents depend on children to become the breadwinners ("It's a practice tolerated by everyone"). One participant stated, "…Many families give their children away for work, sex, or as soldiers…" The life of children in refugee camps is also difficult, as abuse, abandonment, and prostitution is commonplace. One participant captured the tragic situation as: "There are less children in Syria every day." Physically, there are fewer

children in Syria as they are displaced from their homes and are killed by the constant violence. And, psychological, there are less Syrian children experiencing childhood, as many are forced to be active breadwinners, soldiers, or are struggling to survive.

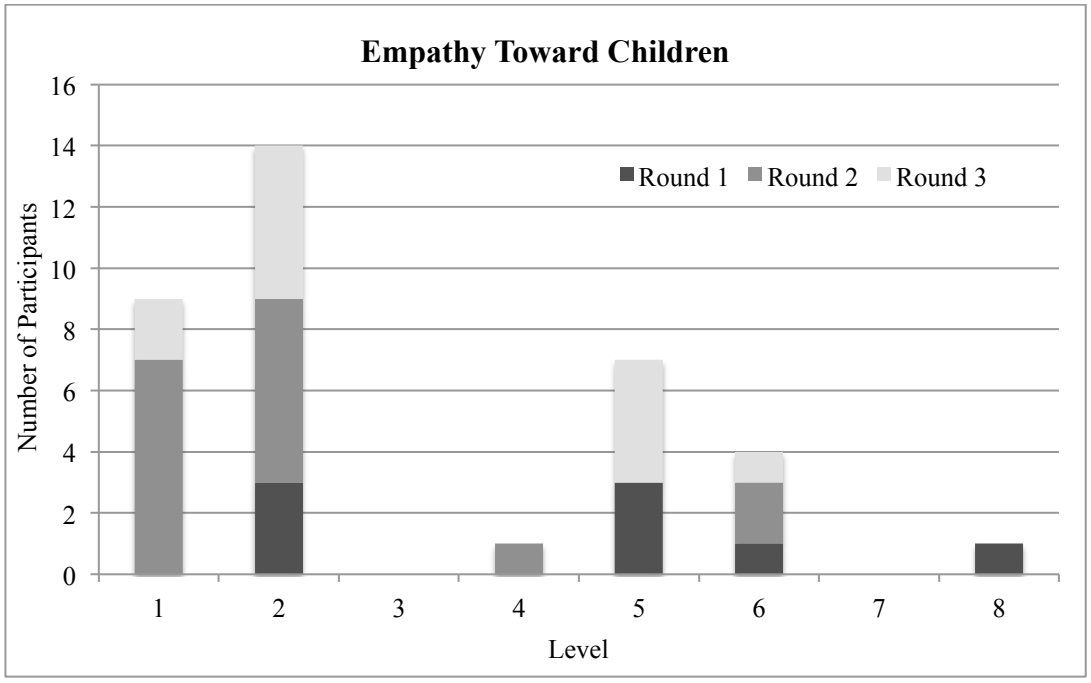


Figure 40. Empathy toward children responses per round

Religion

Participants' answers ranged from levels 2 to 8, but as seen in figure 41, a majority of participants chose levels between 2 and 5. The data for this round is approximately normally distributed (median 3, mean 3.38), with the exception of one mild outlier. Participants mainly focused on the lack of religious tolerance in Syria, particularly between the Alawis and Sunnis, and the abuse of religion, either by the government or armed groups. However, Imams and other religious leaders are

mentioned as important to their specific religious sects.

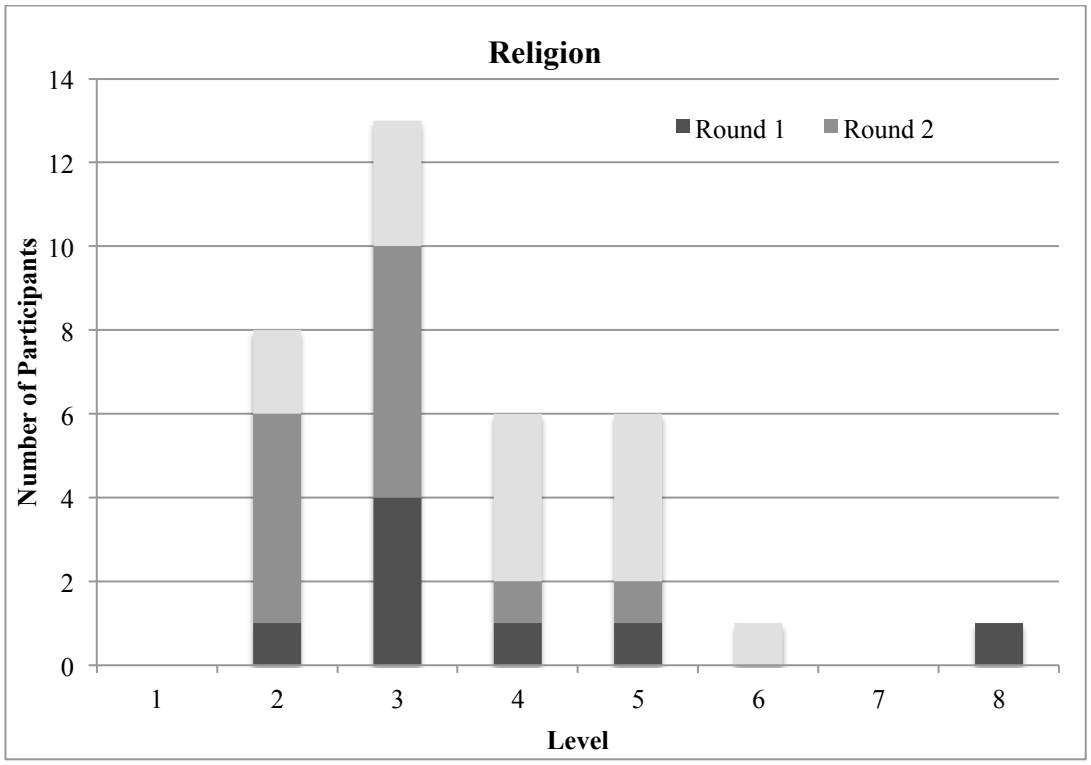


Figure 41. Religion responses per round

Discussion

These questions start a particular conversation, providing *a* starting point for discussion on the current state of Syria and henceforth can be used to discuss priorities and realistic interventions and timeframes. At times participants would not give a straight answer, or essentially ignored the question, and instead provided the narrative that was important to them. For example, when asked about group identity, one participant described the beginning of the revolution:

> The revolution started within the people. They started demanding simple rights, voting and improved laws. The regime refused and responded with violence. After 6 – 8 months the regime released 11,000 prisoners who were terrorists, so they could attack the citizens. The thought was to change the vision of the

> protesters; to convince them an Islamic government is better than a secular one, by use of force. It was done to make the people think that without the regime they can't control the terrorists. They seem to have been successful. The revolution is no longer peaceful, which gives Asad justification to use chemical weapons and other extreme violence.

Even though it is clear that the participant was not answering the question, this comment and others like it are still included to demonstrate the kind of dialogue that is possible with these interviews. The significance is not the questions, but the generated conversation, and these answers facilitate future dialogue. Further, some comments seemed contrary to the level that the participant chose. For example, when examining empathy toward marginalized groups, the only participant who chose level 7 essentially stated that everyone is marginalized by the government (hence implying that mostly everyone is treated the same), but not examining how the marginalized are treated compared to those not marginalized (in this case, the government). This may be the participant's way of getting their point across, or a poorly written question for this circumstance; regardless, these disconnects require more discussion in future rounds. Additionally, many contradictory ideas are often being held at once, which require more facilitated dialogue to understand and unpack. Although not uncommon, these incompatible beliefs can hinder productive dialogue if not addressed. The feedback mechanism for this process allows for these contradictory ideas to be addressed in a more subtle way, which may prevent participants from becoming defensive, and ultimately clinging more strongly to these beliefs.

Even though dialogue is the goal, the overall consensus (or lack thereof) on each dimension provides insight into the current perspectives and what kinds of interventions may be possible. Figures 42 and 43 illustrate which dimensions have the most

consensuses, with Figure 43 differing only in that extreme outliers have been removed. Dimensions with shorter boxes have more agreement, while dimensions with taller boxes have more disagreement. Only two dimensions – control of borders and distribution of power – had extreme outliers. Those outliers are incredibly important in the dialogue process, but were removed in figure 43 for clarity of the overall consensus. The dialogue can then be used to start to understand the depth to which these statistical extreme outliers are actual extreme outliers in understanding. For example, only one of the four statistically extreme outliers for the distribution of power dimension provided a rationale for their answer: Level 4 – "The government controls everything. There is no distribution of power." This rationale is conceptually in agreement with level 1, not level 4, which implies that complete consensus on this dimension may be possible. Complete consensus is not necessary, but it could aid in the discussions of priorities and possible interventions. In other words, given the degree of consensus in this dimension, if participants were asked about possible interventions and actions that could be planned in this area, at the very least, they would all be starting from the same point in understanding. This is a critical component of planning real, reasonable actions that match the priorities of the country's actors.

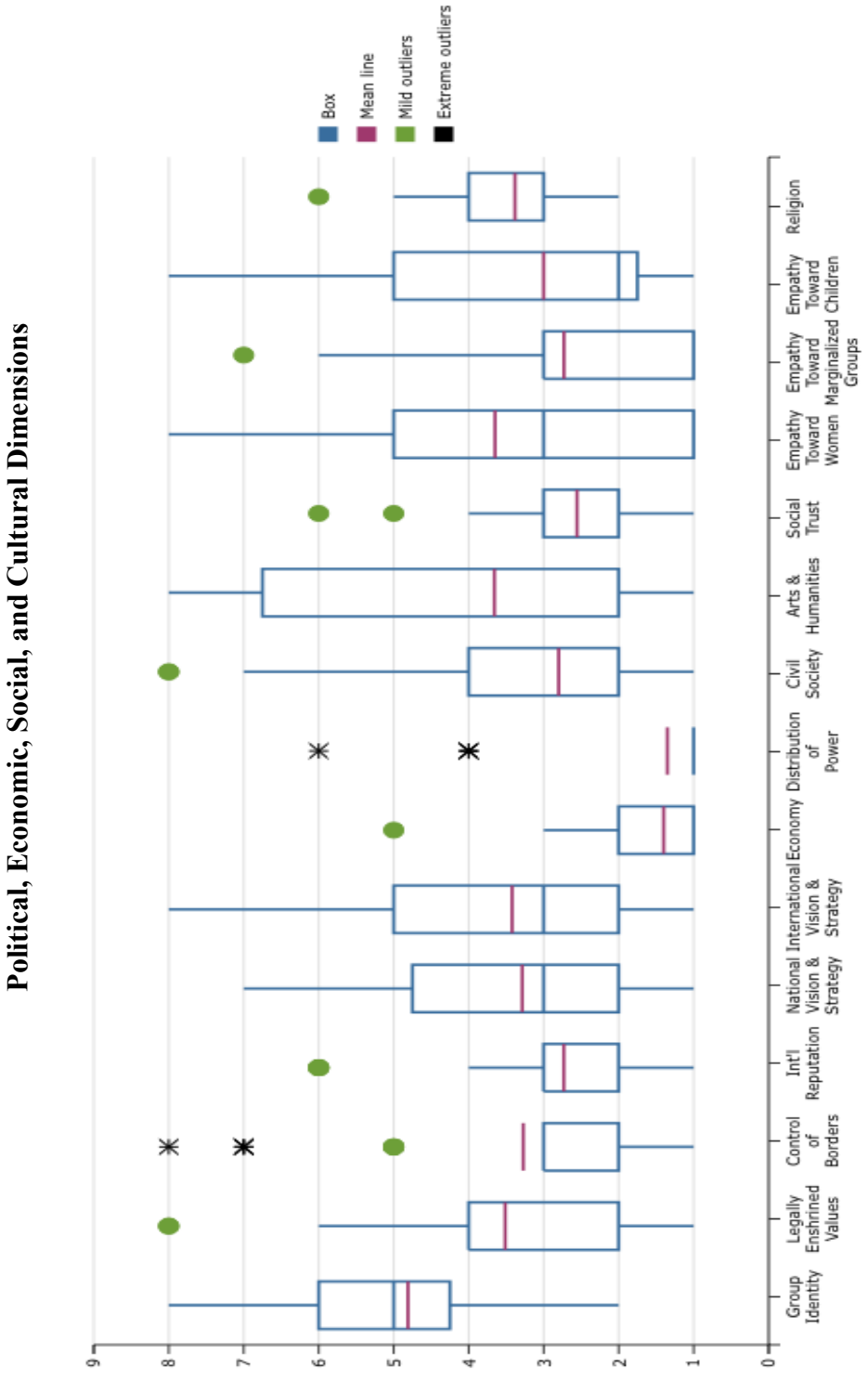


Figure 42. Dimensions, all data included

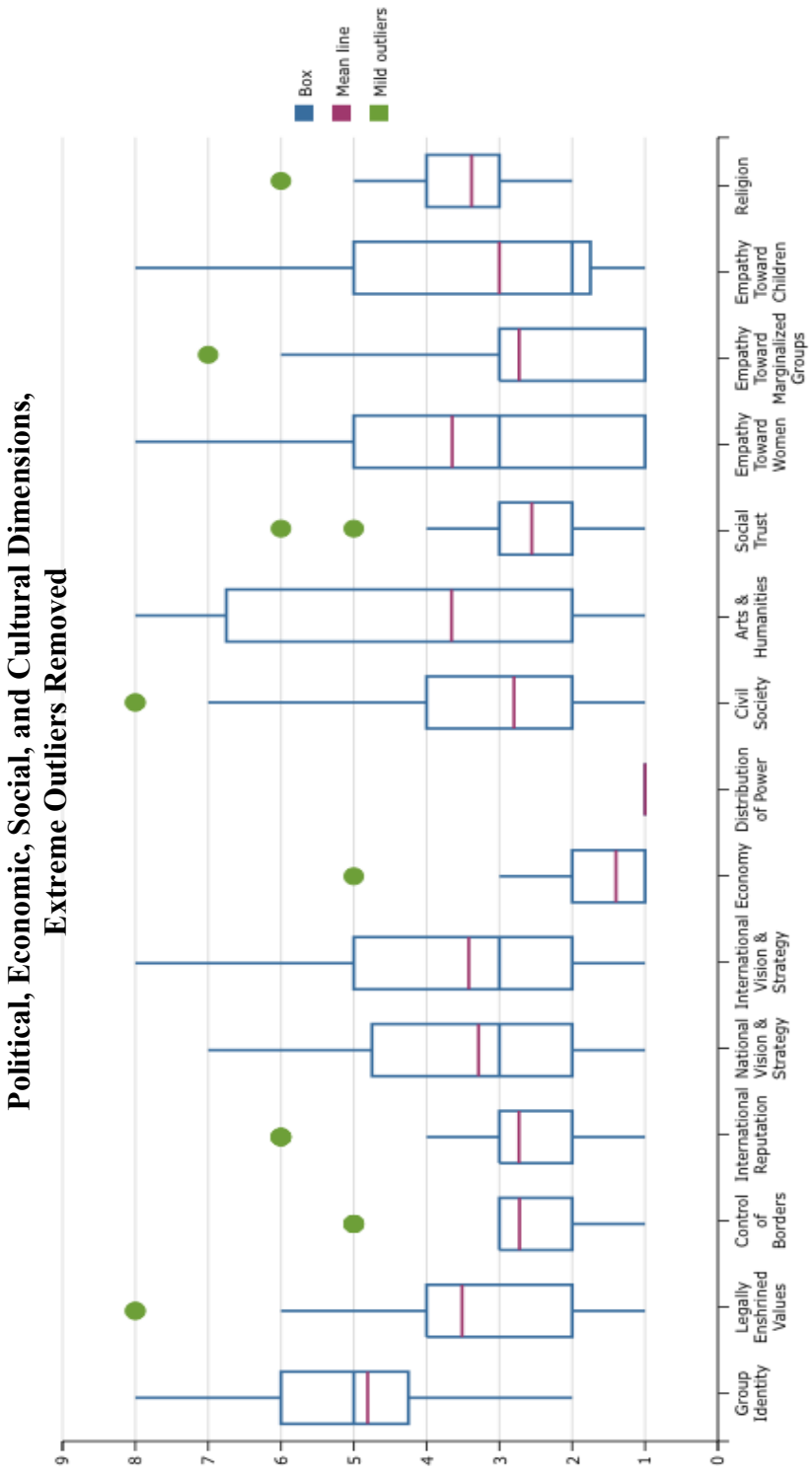


Figure 43. Dimensions, extreme outliers excluded

Beyond distribution of power, the box plots in figures 42 and 43 show a few dimensions with a high level of agreement. These dimensions have relatively short boxes: Control of borders, international reputation, economy, social trust, and religion. Whereas the taller boxes, in particular arts and humanities and empathy toward women, have the most disagreement. Dimensions with more agreement are better candidates to move forward with priorities and potential actions, whereas dimensions with less agreement may first require more dialogue around the topic to ensure that actors are on the same page. For example, imagine designing a project to empower Syrian women, but the actors involved do not even agree if, for example, women "are being killed and no one cares" or that "we have no problem with treating women well in Syria. They have all the rights, practically…" These participants imagine women to have incredibly different experiences in Syria – one in which they are being killed, and one in which they essentially have equal rights and are treated well. Creating a women's empowerment project supported by both actors seems unlikely, or at least certainly not the priority of the second actor. However, many development projects fail because of lack of community support and engagement. Instead of ignoring either actor, the more promising step forward, if increasing women's empowerment in Syria is the goal, is more in-depth dialogue and feedback on this topic *before* planning.

Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions

...Firstly [there is] the need to locate international development activities more fully within historical and political contexts, and to argue more forcefully for the reflection of such a perspective in the design of activities and policies; and secondly, the need for development practitioners to operate with as clear as possible an awareness of the histories of the ideas, concepts and experiences that they themselves are engaged in deploying through their work.
David Lewis (2009, 35)

For many scholars, development has been the mechanism for the continuation of colonial-imperial power dynamics between the global North and South. Others, view the field as a noble cause for ending poverty once and for all. But good intentions cannot construct successful projects. And, often, the intentions have been less than good. The United States, and much of the West, was focused on fighting communism and the Soviet Union through modernization (Sachs 2010). Further, development discourse has been a mechanism of creating and controlling "developing" countries (Escobar 1984). This discourse is powerful (Rossi 2004, Ferguson 1990), and mostly controlled by the "Big Five" in development – the United States, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France (Goldman 2005). Decisions surround development and post-conflict reconstruction are ultimately made by them to benefit them (e.g. differential lending standards, Strategic Hamlets in Vietnam).

Anthropologists have been at the forefront of criticizing development for its past and present failures and biases. For example, the economists and the technocratic elite leading the charge at multilateral organizations believe that poverty is a technical problem requiring a technical solution. It has been impossible for Westerners to imagine that poor "developing" countries are capable of helping themselves, which has historically led to exclusion of local communities in the planning process. And despite

all the available critiques – mainly from anthropologists – the World Bank and others continue to rely on this technocratic elite (Easterly 2013) that is inextricably linked to colonialism and imperialism (Goldman 2005). Worse, these projects only act to reinforce "developed" countries as "capable experts" while perpetuating the myth that "developing" countries are "incapable." This only serves to preserve the power imbalances that exist, which includes the value attachment of "developed" countries acting as "humanitarians." It has become clear: What development has been doing is not working. However, human development is still important (Nussbaum 2011), and therefore, new methods and approaches require attention and close examination.

The method outlined in this research – a modified Delphi method – attempts to change the conversation in development. Minimally, this method provides access to more diverse voices than the "expert" model. The application of the Delphi method has the ability to shake the power imbalance that exists within conversations by weighing all participants equally, and including a more diverse set of actors. Specifically, this research examined interviews from actors working in or with Syria in some context. Participation was anonymous, providing an opportunity for participants to speak more frankly about the situation, including perceptions of the current influential actors in Syria. The Delphi method relies on four features: anonymity, controlled feedback, iterative rounds, and aggregate data (Rowe and Wright 1999, Linstone and Turoff 1975). This research remained true to those four features while modifying the method, as appropriate, for this context. Although the questions were focused on the national level, the method was applied internationally since many international actors would impose themselves on Syria regardless, and therefore their inclusion is important. But,

international or even regional actors are not always necessary. The method could easily be applied on a smaller scale, and the interview questions could be as broad or specific as needed. For example, a modified Delphi could be an effective method for drawing out perspectives from community members on a water filtration system. The method can provide an initial understanding of the total perspectives on the system in that community, which can be feed back into subsequent rounds to potentially find common ground between the community members and developers. Given that many development interventions often go unused (or used not as intended) in many communities, this method could provide insight into what is the best way to move forward, if at all. Unfortunately, town halls to hear the community's perspective (common among many development organizations) are often ineffective, potentially because of the inappropriate nature of trying to elicit diverse opinions in a public space where only the most powerful voices in the community are likely to speak. Ideally, this process provides a better forum for those previously unheard voices.

However, a few problems arose during this process. Firstly, the implementing organization is an American company and the lead interviewers are American. This could have skewed the responses away from criticizing the United States, which received overwhelmingly positive comments from participants. Ideally, future applications of this method will address this potential for bias, although, some bias will exist regardless of nationality of the interviewer. Nationality is inextricably linked to bias in these contexts. However, at the very least, fluent Arabic-speaking interviewers would reduce the time required for every interview in which an interpreter was necessary. Reducing the time commitment would also mitigate some of the other issues

that arose during this process (e.g. participants not completing the interview, or dropping out after one round). In addition, the majority of these interviews occurred before the executive order banning travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Syria. This ban, and the American election more generally, could have a significant impact on how participants view the United States. Future research should also consider these potentially shifting relationships and examine perspectives pre- and post-travel ban, with particular focus on how the United States is viewed.

Another issue with this research was the *opposed* commitment stance. The commitment stances were mostly effective in elicited diverse perspectives on each influential actor. However, one problem with the stances was the confusion among participants regarding the stance of *opposed* and the Syrian Opposition. A few responses had to be removed from the data set because this confusion was clear. For example, a participant named a group as *opposed* and then commented about how good they are for Syria as part of the Syrian Opposition. Of course, some participants provided a stance and no comments, and therefore, any confusion could not be assessed. The lead interviewer relayed that this confusion was not significant, and was only evident in a few instances in the data, but ideally, there would be another term to describe the stance in Syria to avoid these terms being conflated.

Additionally, this process was designed to enable anonymous feedback between participants across rounds; however, the interview team reported only a small portion of participants willing to address the feedback provided in rounds 2 and 3. Participants were mostly ignoring the feedback and simply reiterating their views. Participants responded more to feedback in the collective memory and dimension sections of

interview than in the actor mapping section, but still not as much as anticipated. Unfortunately, because of scheduling constraints, most participants did not participate in all three rounds. The implementing organization tried to contact and schedule interviews with all round 1 participants in the subsequent rounds; however, only four were able to schedule an interview for both rounds 2 and 3. Given the time constraints, an unfortunate consequence of longer interviews was that many participants were hearing the questions for the first time, and especially considering the traumatic events in Syria, the participants wanted to share their stories, which often excluded responding to feedback from other participants. This dynamic was one of the reasons for the length of the interviews. Although the average interview time was roughly two hours, several lasted upwards of seven hours and a few occurred over days (sixteen and seventeen hours). These long interviews often bonded the interviewers to the interviewee, who frequently provided connections for other interviews. Particularly in the Middle East, as an American organization, this was critical step in obtaining more interviews.

Although feedback was possible in some of the interviews, more returning participants are an important component of feedback mechanism. Each round ran for roughly five months, and given the intense schedules of many participants, longer rounds may be more appropriate going forward. Feedback is one of the critical components of this process to help engender real dialogue from participants otherwise unwilling or unable to speak to each other. Without much feedback, and given the number of participants in each round, this method instead served to ascertain more perspectives from diverse actors, which creates a better understanding of the totality of

available opinion; however, this research could not analyze the effectiveness of the process at shifting perspectives over time though feedback.

However, on the whole, this research provides some important insight into the complexity, and at times contradictory, relationships that are essential to understanding the current situation in Syria. Most of the major development organizations are Western, and they hold biases regarding certain groups and organizations. But, creating and implementing any development or post-conflict reconstruction plans in Syria requires consideration of more diverse perspectives to enable a better understanding of the complex relationships and situation. For example, it is important to recognize that participants predicted that the United States (average 4.17), Turkey (average 3.81) and local councils (average 3.71) will be the most influential actors in Syria in ten years, while the Syrian Government's influence is drastically reduced. Although the participants cannot predict the future, these ratings, with the comments about local councils, demonstrates how essential these councils are to Syrian development. Many participants predict local councils will be the future governing body in Syria. If this is any indication of how Syrians feel on a larger scale, than any post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts that do not center on these local councils may be destined to fail. Further, combining that data with the near consensus on the distribution of power dimension, there is a great opportunity to discuss priorities in governance and power to enable better planning for potential interventions. More in-depth research on local councils is important, but without this research as a starting point, the right questions regarding those councils would not be possible.

The information gathered from this research can, and should, be applied to help contextualize the current situation in Syria before any development plans are created and implemented. However, more importantly, this research demonstrated a new approach in to the field of development, which successfully drew out a wide range of perspectives from participants. With only sixty-three participants, a huge range of perspectives emerged. For example, in the actor mapping portion, this was not only evident in the incredibly diverse comments regarding each influential actor, but also in the range of their influence ratings. Nearly all of the influence ratings had a range of one through five, highlighting the improbability of a few "expert" voices capturing reality.

The Delphi method is an effective method for eliciting perspectives and raising the voices of previously silenced and marginalized individuals and organizations. More diverse perspectives are critical to starting to improve the development and implementation of projects. The most successful post-conflict reconstruction and development plan in history – the Marshall Plan – was based on a foundation *dialogue*. But dialogue between the "development experts" and "developing" countries is fraught with problems. The power imbalance that exists between "developed" and "developing" countries, created through colonialism and reinforced in development, ensure that a Marshall Plan for any "developing" country is not possible. However, what is possible is better dialogue with more diverse voices. Better dialogue requires mitigation of those current power imbalances between participants; in other words, participants require a better forum for their voices to be heard. This research provides one way of mitigating the impacts of those imbalances by anonymously weighing all voices the same. Further,

it sidesteps the issue of actors that are incapable of hearing each other because of their histories by ensuring participants only respond to pure ideas, rather than the person or organization.

In addition, the dialogue produced in this research fills current conversation gaps in development: collective trauma and memory, actor mapping, and perspectives on the current state of Syria. Collective trauma and memory of a country are imperative components of creating and implementing post-conflict reconstruction and development projects, and stems from the dislocations that most societies experience. Chronic traumas, such as the current conflict in Syria, act to redefine Syrian identity and break down inter-group social trust. Traumas redefine identities of both in-groups and out-groups, and identity plays an important role in participation and enacting social contracts. National traumas and the collective memories surrounding them inform what is possible, and what is necessary. Rebuilding post-trauma must include consideration of the collective narratives and memories of that trauma. Collective memories are also essential for contextualizing historical narratives. Participants' strong memories of Syria as a victim are critical in understanding how Syrians view themselves, and how plans, for example in Golan Heights, must be contextualized.

The actor mapping portion of this research presents the political context required to better understand the unintended consequences of potential development work. The results provide an in-depth examination of the complex relationships between actors within and outside of the country. The peer-assessment gathers necessary information about the reputation of influential actors, and their overall influence, which is an essential component of understanding how to implement national development

initiatives in a country. Finally, this research starts the necessary dialogue to understand a country's current state and priorities. Again, the questions provide *a* starting point, based on Western ideas of inclusive nationalism to fulfill the vision and values of the implementing organization. Inclusive nationalism is inherently problematic to many development scholars; however, these questions start a particular conversation, and were necessary to enable examination of the Delphi method in this context.

Layered together, using this method, the research questions on collective trauma and memory, political actor mapping, and priorities of those "being developed," work to generate dialogue that is more comprehensive and productive, between actors that were previously unable to communicate. This dialogue helps avoid the all too common development mistakes by providing fuller historical and political context, with more endogenous dialogue. In the end, diverse perspectives are required to create and implement development initiatives that are *for Syria by Syrians*, and generating these perspectives is possible and practical through dialogue facilitated by this process.

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Appendix A: Acronyms

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
EU	-	European Union
HNC	-	High Negotiating Committee
IBRD	-	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
IS(IL)	-	Islamic State (of Iraq and the Levant)
GNP	-	Gross National Product
KAP	-	Knowledge, attitude, and practices
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
SAMS	-	Syrian American Medical Society
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	-	Social soundness analysis
STDP	-	Southern Transport Development Project
TTDP	-	Thabo-Tseka Development Project
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
UAR	-	United Arab Republic
UN	-	United Nations
US	-	United States
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
WC	-	Washington Consensus

Appendix B: Interview Prompts and Questions

Below are the interview prompts and questions for all three sections. All of the text is read to the participants in either English or Arabic, and provided in written form as a reference or if they prefer to read the prompts and questions. Interviews are semi-structured and where applicable participants are asked to provide rationales.

National Trauma and Collective Memory

Section prompt: Every country has national stories or myths. Some of the most powerful are "chosen glories" or "chosen traumas." These are myths about national crises and the meanings a country attaches to them. Countries remember some events and ignore others (we remember one war, one assassination, one great humanitarian effort, and forget others). Because these myths are selectively distorted, they create blind spots and attitudes that can create new national crises.

1. Syria as a hero or savior question: On a scale of 1-5, how strong is the national memory of playing the role of Hero or Savior?

> *Follow-up question*: Can you give an example of one or more widely shared memories of a national trauma involving this country in which the country played the role of hero or savior toward the residents of the country, refugees, or the residents of another country? What are the events and how are they remembered?

2. Syria as a victim question: On a scale of 1-5, how strong is the national memory of playing the role of Victim?

*Follow-up question***:** Can you give an example of one or more widely shared memories of a national trauma involving this country in which the country played the role of victim from other residents of the country, refugees, or the residents of another country? What are the events and how are they remembered?

3. Syria as a bystander question: On a scale of 1-5, how strong is the national memory of playing the role of the passive Bystander?

Follow-up question: Can you give an example of one or more widely shared memories of a national trauma involving this country in which the country played the role of passive bystander while other residents of the country, refugees or the residents of another country, were killed or died? What are the events and how are they remembered?

4. Syria as a perpetrator question: On a scale of 1-5, how strong is the national memory of playing the role of the Perpetrator?

Follow-up question: Can you give an example of one or more widely shared memories of a national trauma involving this country in which the country played the role of perpetrator against other residents of the country, refugees, or the residents of another country? What are the events and how are they remembered?

Actor Mapping

Specific questions vary based on current list of influential actors. The prompts in this section are less structured than in the Collective Trauma and Memory section and the Dimensions section, because of the evolving list of influential actors.

Actor Mapping: Influence

Section prompt: None

5. List of influential actors question: Please list the top twenty to forty most influential actors (countries, organizations, and individuals) relative to Syria

> [The interviewer will also ask the participants to rate the influence and identify the commitment of an established list of influential actors even if the participant does not mention these actors in the interview]

6. Current influence rating question: How would you rate the current influence of each actor in this list on a scale of 1 to 5, with rating of 5 having the most influence?

7. Predicted influence rating question: Looking ahead ten years, how do you rate the predicted influence on a scale of 1 to 5, with a rating of 5 having the most influence?

Actor Mapping: Commitment

Commitment question prompt: I am going to describe five roles describing the commitment of an actor to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria. These roles are core, champion, ally, neutral, and opposed. For each actor rated as influential in the last question, please identify the role of this actor based on the following categories [a written list of the categories is also provided]:

- *Core*: Actors that are fully committed towards the development of a stable, inclusive Syria. This is the primary purpose of the individual or organization.
- *Champion*: Actors that are committed towards the development of a stable, inclusive Syria, but it is not the exclusive purpose of the individual or organization.
- *Ally*: Actors that offer transactional support for the development of a stable, inclusive Syria; in other words, they only support this development when their interests are also served.
- *Neutral*: Actors that are neither for nor against the development of Syria.
- *Opposed*: Actors that are actively opposed to the development of a stable, inclusive Syria, which could be for personal gain or ideological reasons.

8. Commitment question: Based on these descried roles, can you identity the role of each influential actor? [Interviewer will typically read the list of actors and record any additional comments]

Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Dimensions

Section prompt: None

Dimensions: Group Identity

Group identity question prompt: We all have multiple group identities and loyalties—as family members, workers, members of ethnic and language groups, communities of faith, of shared history, and of different geopolitical units.

Group identity question: If there were a conflict of loyalties and the people in this country had to choose between the pull of one level of their identity and another, which identity would win the tug-of-war?

1. Individuals, who only think of themselves.
2. Their families.
3. Their village or tribe.
4. Their region or province.
5. Their ethnic or religious group.
6. Their country.
7. Their supranational geopolitical group (e.g., the European Union).
8. Humanity as a whole.

Dimensions: Legally Enshrined National Values

Legally enshrined national values question prompt: The people of this country might aspire to a higher set of values. Our interest is in those aspirational values proclaimed in the country's laws—its founding documents, constitution, or statutes—that are progressively enforced over time.

Legally enshrined national values question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? In this country:

1. Different sets of values are scattered among the villages and tribes. There are no "national" values.
2. Regional, ethnic, or religious factions hold different values from each other. There are no "national" values.

3. National values are enshrined in law, but exclude certain classes of residents.
4. The national values are enshrined in law, but apply differently to those with and without political or financial power.
5. The legally enshrined national values include all citizens of the country, but not all residents.
6. The legally enshrined national values apply to the citizens, but not to foreigners.
7. The legally enshrined national values are extended, in practice, to include some foreigners when they are in this country.
8. The legally enshrined national values are extended, in practice, to include any persons when they are in the country.

Dimensions: Control of Borders

Control of borders question prompt: Of the components of national sovereignty considered in this assessment, the most basic is the ability of the country (or self-identified people, or "nation") to control its national boundaries.

Control of border question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? (If two or more seem true, choose the lowest.)

1. The country does not exist as a legally recognized, independent nation-state, but is partially self-governing and is consumed with a struggle for survival, or to gain more sovereignty.
2. The country does not exist as a legally recognized, independent nation-state, but is partially self-governing (e.g., autonomous areas, overseas or dependent areas, or territories) and stable.

3. This legally recognized country is not able to protect itself against the mass murders of parts of the population by outsiders (invasion or bombing) or its own people (civil war).
4. This country is not able to manage its guest worker, immigration or refugee flows.
5. This country is not able to protect its economic system against unwanted foreign influences.
6. This country is not able to protect its political system against unwanted foreign influences.
7. This country is not able to protect its society from unwanted cultural foreign influences.
8. This country is able to protect its society from most unwanted cultural foreign influences.

Dimensions: International Reputation

International reputation question prompt: This question looks at a country's international relations through a simple lens of attraction or repulsion.

International reputation question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? This country's relationships with other countries are generally:

1. Negative.
2. Negative with most countries, mostly neutral with others.
3. Negative with most countries, mostly positive with others.

4. Neutral with most countries, mostly negative with others.
5. Neutral with most countries, mostly positive with others.
6. Positive with most countries, mostly negative with others.
7. Positive with most countries, mostly neutral with others.
8. Positive.

Dimensions: National Vision and Plan

National vision and plan question prompt: A country's national *vision* describes a desired future for the country. A national plan is how the country intends to pursue that vision.

National vision and plan question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? In this country:

1. To the extent that there are national visions, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.
2. The elite share a vision for the future of this country; the rest of the citizens are passive, excluded, or disagree.
3. The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, shares a vision for the future of this country; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.
4. Almost the entire population of the country shares a vision of its future.
5. To the extent that there are plans to move the country toward its national vision, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.

6. The elite are engaged in forming and implementing a strategy to move the country toward their vision of its future; the rest of citizenry is passive, excluded, or disagree.
7. The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, participates in forming and implementing a strategy to move the country toward its vision; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.
8. Almost the entire population of the country participates in forming and implementing a strategy to move the country toward its vision.

Dimensions: International Vision and Plan

International vision and plan question prompt: A country's international vision describes a desired future role for the country in the international community. A country's international plan is how the country intends to achieve its desired future role for the country in the world.

International vision and plan question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? In this country:

1. To the extent that there are international visions, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.
2. The elite share a vision for the future of this country in the world; the rest of the citizens are passive, excluded, or disagree.
3. The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, shares a vision for the future of this country's role in the world; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.

4. Almost the entire population of the country shares a vision for the role of the country in the international community.
5. To the extent that there are plans to move the country toward its international vision, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.
6. The elite are engaged in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward their international vision; the rest of citizenry is passive, excluded, or disagree.
7. The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, participates in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward its vision for the country's role in the world; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.
8. Almost the entire population of the country participates in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward its vision of its role in the international community.

Dimensions: Economy

Economy question prompt: When people trade freely with one another, they gain personally through the exchange, which helps them, and enables them to help others.

Economy question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of the economy this country? (If two seem equal, name the lower level.)

1. Dominated by barter or black markets.
2. *None* of these three features exist at the national level: Markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts.

3. *One* of these three features exists at the national level: Markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts.
4. *Two* of these three features exist at the national level: Markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts.
5. *All three* features exist at the national level: a well-regulated economy, with markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts, but the features are new and not yet tested.
6. Well-regulated locally and nationally.
7. Well-regulated locally, nationally, and regionally.
8. Well-regulated locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Dimensions: Distribution of Power

Distribution of power question prompt: Power (in the political or social meaning) is the ability to influence or control the behavior of people. There are different ways to earn or maintain power.

Distribution of power question: Which of these levels of is most characteristic of the country—is the dominant mode? (If two seem equal, name the lower level.) The distribution of power in this country is, to a significant degree:

1. Fragmented, with ongoing civil war.

2. Fragmented, with little violence. None of these three features exist at the national level: a strong central state, rule of law, or democratic accountability
3. Rule by an elite, with one of these three features: a strong central state, rule of law, or democratic accountability.
4. Rule by an elite, with two of these three features: a strong central state, rule of law, or democratic accountability.
5. An emerging democracy, with a strong central state, rule of law, and democratic accountability. But, the institutionalization of the practice of democracy is not yet fully established and there is fear of regression to an oligarchy in the next twenty years.
6. A stable democracy with little chance of regression to an oligarchy in the next twenty years.
7. A stable democracy that chooses to be substantially ruled by an emerging or mature regional democracy, with a satisfactory balance of power between national and regional forces (e.g., the EU).
8. A stable democracy that chooses to be substantially ruled by a proto-, emerging, or mature global democracy, with a satisfactory balance of power between national, regional, and global forces.

Dimensions: Civil Society

Civil society question prompt: Civil society includes: independent civic associations, unions, professional associations, charities, non-profits, lobbying and advocacy organizations, and think tanks. These can be secular or religious organizations. They

can include “public-private partnerships,” in which some government funding is combined with private donations.

Civil society question: Which of these levels is the dominant mode of the country? (If two seem equal, name the higher level.)

1. Civic associations are almost non-existent.
2. Civic associations that threaten the governmental or economic interests are forbidden.
3. Civic associations that threaten governmental or economic interests are mostly tolerated.
4. Civic associations exist, but outside NGOs and outside funding are essential supports.
5. There are many independent civic associations, with freedom to operate, but weak capacity. Outside NGOs and funding are supplemental, not primary supports.
6. There are many civic associations, with freedom to operate and strong capacity.
7. There are many civic associations and non-profits that are active in a few other countries.
8. There are many civic associations and non-profits that are active globally.

Dimensions: Arts and Humanities

Arts and humanities question prompt: The arts and humanities include the disciplines of ancient and modern languages, literature, philosophy, visual and performing arts. These disciplines explore, share, and recreate expressions of the human

experience. We are considering the influence of writers, filmmakers, and artists in this country.

Arts and humanities question: Which of these is the dominant mode of this country? (If two seem equal, name the higher level.)

1. There are no artists or thinkers in the country who shape national identity.
2. There are artists and thinkers whose work reinforce and justify the identity and practices of a predatory elite.
3. There are artists or thinkers whose work reinforces and justifies the identity and practices of a benevolent elite.
4. There are artists or thinkers who unite the majority of people in the country, and who explicitly exclude all others.
5. There are artists or thinkers who unite the majority of people in the country, and who strengthens tolerance toward minorities.
6. There are artists or thinkers who unite the whole country.
7. There are artists or thinkers from this country who have strong influence in regional culture.
8. There are artists or thinkers from this country who have strong influence in global culture.

Dimensions: Social Trust

Social trust question prompt: Social trust depends on the ability to predict the behavior of others. To the extent trust is strong, people can predict each other's behavior, plan for, and invest in the future accordingly.

Social trust question: Which of these levels is the dominant mode of this country?

1. Agreements between individuals can be trusted.
2. Agreements between family members can be trusted.
3. Agreements between village or tribal leaders and their people can be trusted.
4. Agreements between city or town governments and their citizens can be trusted.
5. Agreements between provincial or state governments and their citizens can be trusted.
6. Agreements between the national government and the citizenry can be trusted.

Dimensions: Empathy Toward Marginalized Groups

Empathy toward marginalized groups question prompt: Marginalized groups are those extended from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life, for example: particular ethnic, religious, geographic, or socio-economic groups, those without housing, the mentally ill or physically disabled, or prisoners.

Empathy toward marginalized groups question: Which of these levels is the dominant mode of this country? (If two seem equal, name the lower level). The country tolerates – which is to say, for the most part, has not put an end to – the following practices, but the government or other citizens toward marginalized subgroups:

1. Mass killing of the population.
2. Neglect, while large numbers of the population die needlessly.
3. Violent abuse of much of the population.
4. Formal discrimination against much of the population.
5. Informal discrimination against much of the population.

6. Informal discrimination against some of the population.
7. None of the above. All of these subgroups are treated as well as most other citizens.

Dimensions: Empathy Toward Women

Empathy toward women question prompt: Women constitute half of the population of a country. Their protections, liberties, and responsibilities are one component of the development of the country as a whole.

Empathy toward women question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? (If two seem equal, name the lower level.) The country tolerates—which is to say, for the most part, has not put an end to the following practices:

1. Killing of women, or female children by the state, strangers, or family.
2. Abandonment of women by the government and their families (i.e., the treatment of widows).
3. Violence against or rape of women by the state, by their families or husbands, or by other citizens.
4. Consistent, legally enforced, rigid social rules and expectations of women's behavior, in the home, or in society.
5. Women have a right to education, property rights, and inheritance, but these rights are not necessarily available in practice, in which there is strong, informal discrimination against women (i.e., in hiring practices or salary).

6. The rights of women who are citizens are legally and practically equivalent to those of men—but the rights of guest worker, immigrant or foreign women are not.
7. The rights of women who are citizens, and some who are guest workers, immigrants, or foreign, are legally and practically equivalent to those of men.
8. The rights of all resident women are legally and practically equivalent to those of men.

Dimensions: Empathy Toward Children

Empathy toward children prompt: Predicting the behavior of other people requires empathy (the ability to imagine what another person is thinking, feeling, or intending). The capacity for empathy is primarily developed through the parenting of children.

Empathy toward children question: The country tolerates—which is to say, for the most part, it has not put an end to the following practices, or the following social norms are accepted? (If two seem equal, name the lower level.)

1. Killing of children.
2. Abandoning children or child labor. (Answer for the one that is more tolerated.)
3. Sexual behavior with minors or beating. (Answer for the one that is more tolerated.)
4. Consistent, severe discipline of children.
5. Parents or family impose goals on the child, such as career, or forced marriage.
6. Parents are expected to encourage their children's choices for their own careers.

7. There is universal, high quality care for all pregnant women, and for all infants, in the country, who are citizens.
8. There is universal, high quality care for all pregnant women, and for all infants, in the country, including those who are non-citizen residents or visitors.

Dimensions: Religion

Religion question prompt: Emile Durkheim defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (Durkheim 2012, 47). Religion has served as a strong binding force for societies.

Religion question: Which of these levels of development is the dominant mode of this country? (If two seem equal, name the higher level.)

1. In this country, religion is understood to provide for short term needs of not more than a year, primarily related to providing for the needs of the faithful. For example, "If I am faithful the deity will give me the food I need for this crop cycle."
2. In this country, the political leader or leaders control the public's faith practices. (The leader might even be the deity.) Religion provides for medium range needs, up to a generation. For example, "If the people are faithful we will be victorious in battle and be a safe and powerful nation state."
3. In this country, religious intermediaries—priests, imams, saints, gurus, rabbis, and others—translate and explain God's will to citizens. The believer hopes to meet needs beyond the immediate life.

4. In this country, citizens have individual relationships with the divine. There is one dominant religious community, which is intolerant of other religions and atheists.
5. In this country, citizens have individual relationships with the divine. There is one dominant religious community, which is tolerant of other religions and atheists.
6. In this country, the religious and scientific communities cooperate well, and the major religious communities have integrated findings from group altruism, group selection, and evolutionary psychology research.
7. In this country, the religious and scientific communities are partners in a large-scale initiative to address a global threat (e.g. global warming, environmental degradation, or plagues).
8. In this country, the religious and scientific communities are partners in a large-scale initiative to address two or more global threats (e.g. global warming, environmental degradation, or plagues).

Appendix C: Interview Data Collective Trauma and Memory

This appendix details the collective traumas and memories described by participants for Syria in each role: Hero/savior, victim, bystander, and perpetrator. Memories under each role are listed from most to least mentioned, with comments from participants when applicable.

Syria as the Hero or Savior

- Armenian Genocide
  - Saving Armenians from the Ottoman government
- Israeli
  - "Wars with Israel"
  - "1948 against the formation of Israel. Considered Palestine to be part of Syria."
  - Helping the Palestinians
- Iraq
  - Supporting Iraq in 2003
  - Syria took in Iraqi refugees
- Helping liberate Kuwait
- Lebanon
  - 2006 Lebanon War (also called the Israel-Hezbollah War)
  - Syria took in Lebanese refugees
- Against the French
  - Battle of Maysalun
  - "Damascus rebels protected Druze from the French occupation in 1925. It lead to the first Syrian Revolution."
  - Forcing French to leave Syria in 1946
- Current war
  - "Syrians are dying for their country"
  - "Regime shelling Homs and Derzor - local resistance defended"
  - *Signing the treaty banning chemical weapons*[55]
- 1982 Hama Massacre
  - "Massacres in Hama – protested in Idlib, Aleppo, and Derzor"
- "Syrians protected Christians and Jews attacked in Damascus in Ottoman Empire."
- "Fighting between Kurds and Arabs, tribal commanders came to solve the issue."

Syria as the Victim

- Israel
  - 1948 Arab-Israeli War (the first Arab-Israeli War)

[55] This interview occurred before the chemical weapons attack in Syria in April 2017

    - 1967 Arab-Israeli War (the Six Day War)
    - 1973 Arab-Israeli War (the Yom Kippur War)
    - Golan Heights occupation by Israeli
    - "Conflict with Israel, targeted by Westerners for it."
- Current war
    - "Early in the revolution Alawite *militias were armed by the regime* and occupied homes in Homs. They arrested people, kidnapped others, and generally promoted sectarianism."
    - "Alawi attacked Sunni neighborhoods in Homs"
    - "Syria did not start the conflict. In general people came up against the regime peacefully. *The government countered with bullets*. It transformed from peaceful to armed. The whole country became a victim. Even the regime has no say. *Outside forces, Russia and Iran are in control of all the killing.* The opposition leaders are ready to put down their arms and return to civilian life. *The government brought in ISIL*. 'Syria' means the people, not the government. The government is standing by watching."
    - "On the news it said the United States and Russia were bombing them. It later became apparent it was Asad and Russia."
    - "Civilians are victims of the civil war, 450,000-500,000 have died, 5 million have fled Syria, there are 6 million internally displaced people, and the country's infrastructure is gone."
    - "Some would say the civil war was caused by outside groups. We are all victims. Asad regime claiming the Alawi and other minorities will be persecuted if they don't control the government or support Asad.
    - "In opposition areas, there is a sense the world has abandoned them. The government will complain of outside meddling."
- Iran
    - Hezbollah – supported by Iran
- Islamist uprising in Syria 1976-1982
    - Muslim brotherhood
    - 1982 Hama Massacre
        - Rebellion against the state by the Muslim Brotherhood (round 1)
        - The state against the Muslim Brotherhood (round 2 feedback)
- Russia
- British occupation
- Ottoman occupation
- Turkey
- PYD
    - Attacks on Arab villages

Syria as the Bystander

- Iraq
    - al-Qaida in Iraq

    - American Wars on Iraq
- Kurds
    - 1988 Halabja chemical attack (also known as Bloody Friday)
    - 2004 Kurdish prison uprising
    - 2008 Turkish incursion (northern Iraq)
- Current war
    - "Regime silently armed the Shabiha [militias] and did nothing"
    - "Militias killing people – current"
    - "People have been pretty active in standing up for each other. Early on though, many stood by as people were being arrested."
    - "The government knows the refugee situation, and isn't doing anything about it, even allowing humanitarian assistance. The rebel groups were selfish, too, by not sacrificing more for the sake of civilian lives that would be lost."
    - "They suffer for what they cannot do."
- Lebanese Civil War
- Palestine
    - Palestinian displacement after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War
- 2003-2006 Arabs in the South
- The Druze almost had an internal war
- Green Revolution
- United States
    - September 11, 2001
- "Allowed international criminals to find safe haven in Syria (supported them), then sold them to other countries."
- Turkey
    - Natural disasters/earthquakes in Turkey

Syria as the Perpetrator

- Current War (2011-)
    - The regime
    - "Regime attack with army"
    - Bashar al-Asad
        - "There is one clear perpetrator, and many lesser ones. The killing, displacements, arrests, Sednaya Prison, Russian invasion, refusal of humanitarian assistance, ISIL, other extremist groups. The level of brutality between ISIL and the government is the same, but the scale is greater for the government."
        - "Lela Surah visited Asad. Asad had her father, Michel Surah, killed for writing a negative book about Asad, Barbarous Regime."
        - "Asad blackmailed other countries (Jordan). Caused trouble in other countries (Black Wednesday in Amman) to force them to support him and to pay him."

        - "Chemical weapon attack on civilians from Asad regime."
        - Syrian Prison
- Kurds
    - 1960 The Amoudah Theater was burned. 300 children were burned alive.
    - 2004 Kurdish demonstrations
- Muslim Brotherhood
    - 1978 - 1982 Rise of Muslim Brotherhood
    - 1982 Hama Massacre
        - 1980s state aggression against the Muslim Brotherhood
        - 1980's "accidents" in Hama
- Lebanon
    - "Systemic interference with Lebanon"
    - Lebanese Civil War
- Iraq War
    - Syria was a perpetrator in the Iraqi War "by facilitating entry of jihadist."
    - Syria was a perpetrator to Iraq after the United States invasion.
- ISIL attacks
- Druze
- Arabs
- Israel
    - 1967 Arab-Israeli War (the Six Day War)
    - 1973 Arab-Israeli War (the Yom Kippur War)

Appendix D: Influential Actor List

This list shows every actor mentioned in the interviews as influential (listed in alphabetical order) by at least ten participants. Not all actors in this list are commented on in the research, but this provides a more comprehensive view of all the potential influential actors currently involved in Syria.

1. Ahrar al-Sham
2. Alawites
3. Druze
4. Egypt
5. European Union
6. France
7. Free Syrian Army
8. Germany
9. Hezbollah
10. High Negotiating Committee
11. Iran
12. Iraq
13. Islamic State
14. Israel
15. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
16. Jaish al-Fateh
17. Jaish al-Islam
18. Jordan
19. Kurds
20. Lebanon
21. Local Councils
22. Muslim Brotherhood
23. National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces
24. Qatar
25. Russia
26. Saudi Arabia
27. Shia
28. Southern Front
29. Sunnis
30. Syriac Orthodox Church
31. Syrian American Medical Society
32. Syrian Government
33. Turkey
34. United Arab Emirates
35. United Kingdom
36. United Nations
37. United States

Appendix E: Interview Data Actor Mapping

This appendix includes detailed comments from participants regarding each influential actor cited in this research.

Russia

- "They are the most important influence in Syria now. *They decided whether there is war or peace.* If they decide it was Assad's last day it would be."
- "[The Syrian Government is] *controlled by Russia*"
- "Largest foreign presence in Syria. They have boots on the ground in one navel and two air bases"
- "Air force. 30,000 personnel. Vetoes Security Council resolutions."
- "Russia and Iran control the country now, especially Russia"
- "There are countries who do not take sides because of their relations with Russia, for example. China is keeping a balancing act."
- "Russia is taking over the country."
- "Largest foreign presence in Syria. Boots on the ground. 2 - 3 military bases (1 naval/2 air) Prime supporter of the regime."
- "Syria has always been a strategic partner with Russia. It provides Russia with access to the Mediterranean. [Russia] will want to keep the partnership. It is defending its national interest in Syria. It wants to keep Islamists out of power. They do not differentiate between moderate and extremists. They want to terminate all extremist movements."
- "Wants to demonstrate Russian authority to shape the global governance process and global conflict resolution. It could be more important by demonstrating a willingness to participate in a negotiated settlement."
- "The only thing that can threaten a country is another country. Even terrorists are controlled by countries. *ISIL's threat to Syria is nothing compared to Russia's*…. 95% of the bombing is directed to civilians, not terrorists."
- "They have the upper power right now. They make decisions. They are leading in both politics and military. They are the most powerful military in Syria. They have shifted everything to the government's favor."
- "They have played a huge role in *keeping Asad in power and keeping the war going.* They are politically influential, though not as much as they might like. They called the shots 6 months ago, maybe not so much now."

Below are some of the reasons participants provided for citing Russia as *opposed*:

- "Side with the Asad government"
- "Russia has had armed bases in Syria and are trying to protect that interest. They destroyed much of Syria. With all their weapons, they killed thousands. It's still going on. They are the closest ally to the regime and ISIL. They will disappear with the regime."

- "They are occupying Syria. When we were children we watched Tom and Jerry. Now it's Lavrov and Kerry. They are only playing games"
- "Controls funding for Syrian Government and airstrikes change the map of control on the ground."
- "They export arms to Syria, want control, a veto right… criminals."

Participants also viewed Russia as an *ally* or *champion*, as shown in some quotes from participants below:

- "Supporting the only party taking responsibility for governance"
- "Russia keeps Asad in power and the government on its feet"
- "They are an ally to Syria. They provide arms and strategizing support on the ground and in the air."
- "They decided to intervene in Syria. They support the Asad regime with bombs, etc. more than any other ally. It freezes any peace solution without them."
- "They have troops on the ground, air basses, and provide money"

Turkey

Turkey as a *champion*:

- "They are a border country. They offered the Syrian people a lot, opened its borders to all Syrians at a most difficult time for Syria. It gave a lot of space, more than they dreamed of at home."
- They help Syria more than any other country. They treat the immigrants well. The Syrian people feel that Erdoğan[56] will be a good leader."
- "Opposes sectarian policies of Iran. Tried to mediate between Israel and Syria in the past. Wants stable united Syria, not fragmented state."
- "Turkey is the country that has done the most for Syria and its refugees."
- "They are the second largest presence in part of the country. They are prime supporters of moderate opposition groups. They are the main conduits for supplies. They will remain important because of the Kurds and vested interests in Aleppo and Mosul."

Turkey as an *ally*:

- "They border Syria in the north. They are a power in the region with influence in Iraq… agree with the Round 1 comments, but *they do what they do for their own benefits.* They are reacting to what Iran did in taking over Iraq. Doing the same in Syria. They are only interested in protecting their border."
- "They support the Opposition and have the largest number of refugees. They are a party to the negotiations."
- "They maintain a conduit of arms to the opposition and are its largest sponsor"
- "Supported the opposition since day 1 before the revolution. When the Muslim Brotherhood was banned in Syria they went to Turkey. Most opposition groups hold their meetings in Turkey. They are one of the most important players in the

[56] The president of Turkey.

conflict. The war is a national security issue to Turkey. They finance it. They take in refugees. The Turkmen are a minority in Syria. They support some fighting brigades. *They do not want Turkish and Syrian Kurds to unite. Fighting ISIL is a lie to cover fighting Kurdish advancements.* They place the refugee camps to separate the Syrian and Turkish Kurds."

- "They did a great thing by taking in so many refugees. Still, they are influenced by the United States. They are now more concerned with the PKK and PYD."
- "Turkey took part of Syria after WWII – İskenderun. [Hafiz al-Asad] gave it to Turkey. Alawi living there moved to Syria. The Alawi were sent to Russia and Eastern Europe for higher education. Replaced county officials with them. *Sparked the current revolution. People were disappeared and killed with acid*."

Iran

- "Like Hezbollah, *killer of Syrian people*. They have an agreement with the Asad regime."
- "Supports Asad regime. Iran doesn't care about Asad or the Syrian people, only increased power."
- "They are occupying Syria. They are bringing a new religion, changing the demographics of Syria."
- "Extension of Syrian government. Has manpower Syrian government lacks. Brings soldiers from Afghanistan and other places to support Syrian government. *In some places they command more respect than the Syrian Army*."
- "Supports the Syrian government. It has troops on the ground and influences Hezbollah, which is also on the ground. It has strong relations with Russia. Its army on the ground and its ideological support of Shia."
- "$500M/month supplies Hezbollah and likes having a foothold near Israel. Opportunistically taking over land."
- "*Exporting revolution*"
- "Main supporters of Asad."
- "Ally to Russia. Feeds arms to Syria. They don't help with rebuilding or strategy, only weapons."
- "Major supporter of Asad both militarily and economically"

Despite the overwhelmingly sense that Iran hold *opposed* stance, not all participants view Iran in a negative light:

- "[Iran is] *not interested in inserting its own national interests*"
- "They are important, even to the United States, because they *provide strategic balance* between the Shia and Islamists. They are very influential in Lebanon and Iraq. Syria is one of their most important bases. There is talk of the Shia Crescent."
- "They want a Shia crescent, Iran, Iraq, and Syria."

The United States

- "The most important player in Syria. It is *the puppet master to everything*. They can make it go on for another 50 years, or end it tomorrow. It can take a big role in the future."
- "*Controls fate* of Syria"
- "Strongest country in the world, if they want. They usually get involved near the end. Most Syrians love them."
- "Controls funding for civil society, civil defense, medical, and Free Syrian Army"
- "The largest donor for Syrian humanitarian response. Supports a significant number of armed groups. They have vested political interest in opposing Russian expansion. They are the leader of the International Coalition Against ISIL."

Below are some of the responses regarding the US as *champions* and *allies*:

- "They are the largest humanitarian aid provider and the largest arms provider"
- "The opposition is not satisfied, but the United States is still the most dominant player in the conflict. It is not involved in the conflict to bring democracy. It's there to fight terrorism. They want a new political map in the Middle East. They also went to protect the national security of Israel as one of the few democratic states in the region. They also want a balance between Sunni and Shia to prevent wars."
- "Member of P5, has no ability to mediate. One of most powerful nations in the world if it chooses to act."
- "They are trying *to impose their will on Syria and in direct opposition to Russia*. They support the Opposition. It condemns the way the war has been fought."
- "The most important player in the Syria situation. *This is the player which can and will resolve the Syrian conflict*… We are convinced they will take their rightful role soon. If Mrs. Clinton wins she will build peace, not wars. If the Republicans win they will send ground troops and end the Asad regime. Syria is ready for such intervention with the help of American troops. 70% of the Syrian people will back them and welcome them with flowers. *They expect the United States will stay a maximum of 10 years, then leave Syria to Syria*."

There were a couple participants who viewed the US as *opposed* to Syria, which can be summed up in the comment below:

- "We hope they will stand by the revolution. We used to like jeans and western movies because they are American. *We were surprised by the role they have taken in this. They could have resolved this a long time ago.* They could have unseated Asad since he lost his legitimacy a long time ago. *They only seem to be concerned with ISIL, who killed a few thousand, rather than Asad, who killed millions.*"

Syrian Government

Below are some of the reasons participants noted as the Syrian Government as *opposed*:

- "Controls 14% of the land and population. Preparing for disintegration of Syria. *Only in power with Iranian and Russian support*."
- "Controls everything. Controls Syria. *They are killing the people of Syria*."
- "They possess the strongest and most committed allies to the conflict. They still control the state. The have the strongest command and control structure."
- "Epicenter of corruption"
- "The plague has 2 origins, either bacteria or virus. Take an antibiotic. It will cure a bacteria. Not true for viruses, but they have a limited lifespan. The government of Syria is a virus, which will end when its lifespan is over. It may be years now. No one knows."

With a particular focus on the actions of the Syrian Armed Forces, which is the army of the Syrian Government:

- "They are influential where the regime is. They have a bad reputation. *Their members are mercenaries acting aggressively*."
- "Sometimes thugs or whatever with carte blanche government support"
- "Elite engineers… *killing machines*. Knows regime secrets… largely Alawite"
- "Iranian project… Easier to manage than a state."
- "They operate in a paralegal world where the government can't."

Below are some of the reasons participants noted as the Syrian Government as an *ally*, *champion*, or *core*:

- "They have the network and know-how. *A lot of people trust them* more than the radical groups."
- "Still paying for government services in occupied area. Opposition not taking similar responsibility"
- "They want a strong, united country. Any political solution requires negotiation with them."
- "They have a lot of experts and experience. They have not let the government services fall apart. *They want a strong, democratic state, are against terrorism,* and the majority do not support Asad. The round 1 answers were not deep in understanding. The opposition has no problem with the government. They Syrian government is still paying salaries in the regions they have access. Protecting the government services is a big plus for the government. The Iranians are trying to change the demographics around Damascus."

The Islamic State

- "They control lots of territory, money, weapons. They are the enemy of the world, which makes them attractive to some. Expanding to Aleppo, Homs, Palmyra, Damascus/south. *Syrian government negotiates with them, but no other armed groups*."

- "They have a lot of territory, weapons, and external support."
- "They force their beliefs on people, terrorizing them, hiding behind Sharia and Islamic laws, *abusing religion to the maximum for its own benefit.* They don't believe in government."
- "Its role has shrunk. They have an agenda with the Syrian and Iranian people. They support both. They always wanted to fight the revolution, not the regime. They support the regime-besieged areas with aid, supplying the regime. *They don't understand the religion, but kill in the name of it*. They killed for more in Sunni regions. Within a few months they will be kicked out of Syria. In 10 years they will be barbeque in heaven."
- "*They are under control of intelligence organizations* (Syrian or other). It will disappear the same way it appeared."
- "They have a huge number of fighters, huge resources including oil, and an unprecedented ability to attract fighters."
- "Expected to disappear when Syria resolved."

Hezbollah

- "*They do all the massacres of the Syrian people*. They are a terrorist organization."
- "Criminal"
- "One of the most important players. Strong because the regime is there. They support the regime because it's in their best interest."
- "Supports Asad. *Without them the government would have failed. The war would have ended within 3 years. There would be a democratic government in Syria today.* They were made to support Asad, not to fight Israel."
- "They oppose the idea of Shia's, Sunni's, and Alawi's living together."
- "Armed by Iran. They are as dangerous as IS and al-Qaida. They are fighting for their own interests, defending the regime. *They have committed massacres against the Syrian people*."
- "They are the prime foreign militia supporting the regime. This is existential to them. They are an Iranian implementer on the ground."
- "They earned the respect of Syria before the revolution because of the war with Israel. It dropped when they interfered with Syria."
- "They would fail if not for Iranian support."

Free Syrian Army

- "Only the Free Syrian Army is *standing up for the people*, because they fight on all fronts, against the government, terrorists, and outside countries."
- "Army that represents most of the Syrians. The people trust them."
- "In the beginning they were Syrian officers who left the government, but most have joined Islamist groups now. Many are unemployed now. They are not

influential at all. In the recent attacks on Aleppo the Free Syrian Army was barely represented."

- "Oldest of all rebel groups. They are a loose umbrella, which allows for easy affiliation. 100s, maybe 100s of groups affiliate. They get support from US through the CIA because they are seen as moderate. They can also stop Asad tanks with US support."
- "Most trusted military group in the opposition. Not tied to Islamists."
- "The Free Syrian Army is not like it used to be, even in 2013. They get support, and can stand up to any faction, including IS and [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]. The Free Syrian Army is supported by Turkey and most active in the north."
- "They are an armed group. They are the moderates we can talk to. They are non-ideological. They are the ones who can integrate into a national army."
- "They were not made from the outside, al Qaida was. They were made up of people who refused to stay with the Asad government. They are made up of people adopted by the government, then left it. That means they are people of good reputation. They are candidates for the next government. Give them arms, not money."

Saudi Arabia

- "Supports humanitarian aid and the military, and supplies arms. It is regionally important."
- "On oppositions side" and "Supports opposition"
- "It is one of the biggest donors to opposition armed groups. It finances, in part, the opposition."
- "Major supporter of the opposition. Has an ideological rift with Iran. Ideological influence in the region with resources"
- "Anti-Daesh/Anti Asad Coalition"
- "Religious ties, oil, money supporting groups on the ground, fighting ISIL, ally to the United States. Financial and economic growth in construction."
- "They find Islamist groups in the greater Sunni/Shia conflict of the region. Less interested in Syria now that Yemen is consuming their energy."
- "They help in the humanitarian field only. 99% never gets to the people."
- "Lots of money. Influences UAE, Qatar, Jordan. Wants non-Iranian controlled regime in Damascus. Would prefer Russian puppet."
- "Sides with US/France/UK against ISIL but *supports other extremist groups*."

Ahrar al-Sham

- "Slaughters Alawite villages"
- "The largest armed group in Syria. *They have an ideology*. They are the only one who is part of international agreements. They are *95-98% Syrians*, and not

classified as terrorists by the United Nations or the United States, only the United Arab Emirates."

- "They play a role in the conflict. *Many are foreigners*. They are classified as a *terrorist group*. It's one of the reasons it's difficult to reach an agreement between Russia and the United States. They are tied to al Qaida"
- "Financially strong, backed by regional countries. Their reputation is not as savage as [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham] or ISIL"
- "20,000 – 40,000 fighters. They cover all of Syria. They have command and control. They are not as ideological as [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]."
- "Very influential in the north of Syria. There are not 20,000 – 40,000 fighters anymore. Now they are much weaker."
- "They are *an armed terrorist group*, affiliated with [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]."
- "They have big numbers. They represent *the moderate Islamic movement*. They are the only ones who can stop [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham] from expanding. They have a strong army, but not the support of the people."
- "They have no ideology. *They aren't really Muslim.* They smoke. They drink. They sleep with women. They use Islamic sayings and imagery for the public image."
- "Turkish Forces in Syria. Bridge from al Qaida to jihadists"
- "Want an Islamist state"
- "There are 3 subgroups. One is close to the Free Syrian Army. One is between al Qaida and the Free Syrian Army. The third is variable between the others."

Alawis

- "They are part of the Syrian population. *Some support Asad, but others are forced*. They are given guarantees they will not be harmed, unless they don't support Asad. If they had assurances from Russia or the United States they might renounce Asad."
- "They are important because they are 10% of the Syrian population, a part of the Syrian community. *Will always oppose the Asad regime even though they are forced to support him for his support now*"
- "They *belong to the President's sect*."
- "They have power."
- "They are an essential part of the Syrian population, 5 - 8%. They were used by the Asad regime. He convinced them the rest would bury them if they didn't support him."
- "They have been *hijacked by the regime*. They seem unable to influence the regime, and pay a heavy price for it."
- "Divided into poor (the majority) and rich. *The Asad mafia* confiscated the will of the poor. The remaining elite have no influence, but if Asad were to disappear they would be very influential."
- "They are the *governing elite*. They have the highest ranks in the military."

- "They controlled the whole country for the last 5 years. After the revolution a gap formed and widened between the Alawi and the rest of the country. Asad wanted to divide and conquer."
- "Historically the ruling party. They gained power, expertise, and international connections. The *only group with experience in running the country*"
- "Shia are using them to take over then will discard them."
- "Not 100% supportive of Asad, but afraid of future without Asad protection. Could influence by defecting."

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

- "*They created ISIL in Syria*. Some people believe in their Islamic principles."
- "They are under control of intelligence organizations (Syrian or other)."
- "Ideological. They want to attract people to their way of thinking. They want an Islamic state ruled by Sharia Law."
- "They are also *pro-government*. The head is the former head of Syrian Security. *It will not exist long*."
- "Terrorists are only minority"
- "This group is new, only 3 years old. It will disappear. They want to stay to get more support and influence. *The more killing they do the more influence they have.*"
- "Not good. Some are good people. Ideology is not good. Better than ISIL by 1000x. They don't assassinate people. They are a big fighting force, especially lately. 90% are Syrian nationals, not foreigners. They don't join because of ideology. *They join because they are so vicious in fighting the Asad regime*."
- "They didn't confront the Syrian people, so it will take longer than ISIL to disappear."
- "The leader is bad, a part of al Qaida, but the members are good people. *They fight Asad*."
- "Largest or 2nd largest non-ISIL, non-Kurd opposition group. Dominant in Idlib. They recruit more effectively than the Free Syrian Army because they have an ideology."
- "2 sections, one ideologically tied to al Qaida, the other moderate."

Kurdish Democratic Union Party

Many participants focused on the separatist debate associated with the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD):

- "Trying to divide Syria to make their own country."

- "Trying to gain recognition and carve out territory. US is supporting them [resisting] Daesh[57] [IS], but they evicted non-Kurds from Syrian territory. *Syria supports their Daesh resistance but not territory*"
- "They want their own controlled area."
- "They are the main fighting force against ISIL. They could be an element of destabilization for Turkey if they are not contained in Syria. They want autonomy, but not total separation. *The separation debate is overrated*."
- "Syrians loved them when they were part of the Syrian Union. *Now they hate their intention of having a separate country*."
- "Influential because the United States supports it and only powerful in the north of Syria. *There will come a time when everyone will fight them*. They use the revolution to their advantage. They never fought the regime."
- "Will have autonomy in their own region. Example of Syria's likely future as collection of federated states."
- "A component of Syria. They have some legitimate demands, and some not legitimate. They ask for rights, but also autonomy and independence. We should all be one united country. They receive a lot of military support from the United States. They are strong in their region of the north."
- "Influential in controlling and suppressing other Kurdish groups. Supported by the United States with weapons. They are the only Kurdish group in Syria with a military wing. The PKK also provides for them. The United States thinks they are a democratic group. They use the PYD because they are a simple solution for a military presence."

While some participants viewed them more negatively – specifically as a terrorist organization:

- "Same as PKK… It's *a terrorist organization* made by Hafiz al-Asad. It is used when needed to pressure Turkey and for internal conflict. It was a militia to be used as needed, run by Salah Muslim, a man of destruction. Even the Kurds recognize this."
- "They are the same as the PKK. *They are terrorists*. They destroy the villages of Arabs and Turkmen, even opposing Kurdish groups. They are the same as ISIL, only Kurdish. They are the political arm of a terrorist group."

Yet, other participants believe that PYD is not extreme at all, and are important to the future development of Syria:

- "They control a large piece of territory in the north of Syria, economically and politically. They want Syria to be federal. They are not extremists. They are not democratic, despite their name. They are less extremist than any other group in the area."
- "They greatly improve the quality of life in areas they control, which generates support."

[57] IS is also known as Daesh. Crudely, Daesh is more often the name used by supporters, while IS or ISIL is used by non-supporters.

- "One important component of the Syrian population. They cover a large region across Syria. They have a long-term history in Syria. They are an open community. They have never been radical. They will be important to the future of Syria."
- "…Instrument of the international community. They were never recognized until today. They will have a future role if Syria is federated. They will have autonomy. They have prepared by opening a census office. The regime is also preparing for it."
- "They control about 16% of Syrian territory in a resource rich area (oil). They have some relations with all parties even though they are fighting them at the same time. They are a prime force against ISIL. They will have an important role in reconstruction."
- "The United States is supporting them because of ISIL, even though they evicted non-Kurds from the Syrian territory."

European Union

- "Influential because they and their member are the largest contributors to the Syrian response. Interested in funding peace-building efforts that show merit."
- "They are the major source for humanitarian assistance."
- "[do not] trust what I hear about them"
- Influential because "the funds they provide, and the number of refugees they are hosting, or afraid of hosting."
- "Impact on refugee crisis"
- "They are working on the humanitarian aid side along with the political. They have good contacts in Syria in the humanitarian direction. One of the most important things they are doing is taking the refugees."
- "They provide money for humanitarian aid and have political weight in the international arena."
- "Turkey is taking over the EU interest. A wave of nationalism is overtaking Europe, which affects its potential influence in 10 years."
- "They take on refugees, and take a role in finding a solution."
- "Very important economic role"
- "Our friends"
- "They play an important humanitarian role, but they aren't effective politically. As Syria stabilizes they will probably help in reconstruction."

Local Councils

- "They are the main providers of basic resources in their areas."
- "*They are replacing the government*. They offer a lot of types of services, like water, food, survival needs. In the north it is a very successful idea. They even have some agreements signed with France. They are the only opposition to the

Islamists and Jihadists. There is a conflict between the councils, [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham], and Ahrar al-Sham. Each has their own future policy and wants legal authority."

- "Real example of small Syria trying to develop unified system of government"
- "Since the government is absent these councils were formed to help people and provide all the services they can. Usually they are financed by the international community."
- "They will be part of Syria's future."
- "*They are a sign society is still breathing*. The only downside is that *they are controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood*. The people have a lot of hopes in the local councils."
- "The prime form of governance in Opposition held areas. Model to build on for the rest of Syria. They are anchors of civilization. They can be prime tools for counter-terrorism by resourcing people so they don't have to resort to terrorist groups."
- "Increase funding to their donor programs and operational costs. Continue mentoring, encouraging them to include civil society in public discussions regarding their areas."
- "Used to have influence in early revolution by documenting violations."
- "They are doing great work in Syria. The actual base of the people in the freed region. They offer more assistance than [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]. They will play a bigger role in the future. They are prepared for transition, including the federal potential."
- "Clear and defined seat at the table to define policies and shape local application"
- "Supported by Qatar, US, Turkey. Provisional Council oversees Local Councils."

However, not all participants viewed local councils as core, or an important part of Syria's future:

- "*Most of the members are corrupt*. They are not fit to be part of the transition."

France

- "They made the Alawi. They are the power, which brought them to the presidency. All the Christians in Syria love France."
- "*Very powerful country*. They used to help the Syrian people a lot before the revolution. There are strong historical ties since the 1945 agreement. They are considering sending troops in Syria."
- "*France couldn't even pass its resolution in the Security Council*. It was important as a colonial occupier, but not so much anymore."
- "Big influence on Christian Syrians."
- "Sort of influential."

- "From the beginning they supported the revolution… France supported Bashar al-Asad when he came to power, but they changed. They are against him now. They will be a part of helping Syria in the future."
- "Close to Qatar, Saudis, Turkey. Always in step with the US. Do development. Provides political cover to meet with lots of opposition leaders. Gulf connections in absence of US leadership."
- "*France is still important to Syria*. Sykes-Picot is still important."
- "They are the best country dealing with Syria, but *they are not decision makers*."

Qatar

On Qatar's support of the Syrian Opposition:

- "70% of the Opposition is on Qatar's payroll"
- "Supports government opposition"
- "They arm the opposition and host some of them. They can be spoilers."
- "They are trying to influence the situation with money. They also provide humanitarian aid. They support the local councils, were financiers of the opposition coalition, and supported the interim government."
- "Fully supports the Muslim Brotherhood. They have an important role in the media. They negatively impact by supporting Islamists and polishing the images of radical public figures. They also support the interim government."
- "Financially supports some fighting groups and provides humanitarian aid"

On Qatar's importance in the conflict and level of influence:

- "They aren't important. The participant doesn't know why they are involved. Why them, not the United Arab Emirates or Kuwait?"
- "The United States assigned roles to each of the countries. They do what the United States says. Kissinger said, "It's not in the interest of the United States to resolve any conflict in the world." They will control it for its own benefit. Applies to all Middle East countries."
- "They wanted to abort the Syrian revolution with a directed type of finance and media (Al Jazeera). They have close ties with Salafists. They were even allowed a bigger role than deserved by the media. They supported armed factions.
- "They have an important role, which should be bigger in the conflict."

Jordan

- "Huge refugee population"
- "They have only a little affect on the southern part because of the border. It is a place to train revolutionists. They don't have their own policy toward Syria. They just do as told by the international community."
- "Support Opposition"
- "Only [influential] because they are a border country."
- "Not important, but recognized"

- "Influential in the south. They received a lot of refugees. There are tribal connections between southern Syria and Jordan."
- "*They are playing mostly a security role for Israel*. They did train some of the revolutionaries to fight IS and al Qaida."
- "They control the Southern Front so they get the biggest say in what happens in the south of Syria. They take in a lot of refugees. They provide humanitarian support. *They benefit from Syria's weakness by rising as a major actor in the region*."
- "They are hosting refugees, but not taking any other role. They can't control the flow of refugees."

High Negotiating Committee

- "Most inclusive representative of the Opposition"
- "Mandated by international community and Security Council"
- "Represents Syrians in exile and people previously part of the regime."
- "*Controlled by international influences*. No one is helping them."
- "From a political negotiating perspective they are important as a path to start a peace process. The members have debatable influence on what is actually happening in Syria."
- "Get them stronger ties to the fighters. *The politics are separated from the fighters*."
- "This is a temporary measure. They did a good job within their mandate. The members are very qualified people. Most used to work for the Syrian government."
- "It has been imposed on the Syrian people. They have no say on the ground. Most used to work for the Syrian government. *They just changed uniforms*."

The United Nations

- "Good as an idea, but not used in the right way. The negotiators don't represent anything near the Syrian people. The Muslim Brotherhood controls who is sent as representatives."
- "They were unfair to Syria. All their decisions helped to stop the revolution."
- "Hosts all the talks. Has access to government and opposition groups"
- "They have been able to pass resolutions lately. They have observers now to watch the evacuation of Aleppo."
- "No influence. Only a mediator."
- "The United Nations mandated body to solve the Syrian crisis. Among the few who can talk to everyone except ISIL and [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham]. They have enforcement mechanisms. They have the ear of the P5."
- "[UN OCHA] is the only coordination body that works across lines."
- "They provide for a lot of Syrian refugees, mostly in neighboring countries."

- "Movement is limited by regulations and the amount of money they have."
- "They look after the refugees."

Iraq

- "They *send terrorists* to Syria."
- "They are part of the Shia Crescent, therefore always interested in Syria. Iran uses Iraq to keep balance."
- "They will always have influence in Syria. They will have good relations, not opposing, not tight."
- "On the ground fighters making gains. *The challenge will be sending them back.*"
- "Deeply involved in ethnic and sectarian policy. *They are a highway for Iranians coming to Syria*."
- "They are replacements for the failed Hezbollah."
- "Closest to the Syrian regime of the Arab countries, so they can carry messages. Also their role in the fight against ISIL"
- *"Iraq is an instrument in the hands of Iran*. They are fighting IS, but they will be affected by the international sanctions on Iran."

Appendix F: Interview Data from the Dimensions

This appendix includes the detailed dialogue from participants by level and round on each dimension. Responses to particular comments are noted.

Group Identity

Level 1: Individuals, who only think of themselves.

Round 1

- "Over the past five years everyone thinks now only of themselves. They don't think of tribes, countries…*There are no loyalties*. They even have people on opposite sides within families"

Level 2: Families.

Round 3

- "Family is considered in an extended sense, including perhaps 5th cousins."
- "There wouldn't be any infrastructure beyond the family."
- The refugees the participant speaks to describe being interested in their families as most important.
- "Families matter the most, but some members may prioritize the ethnic/religious group as a bigger family."
- "Mostly families are all pretty connected. People are not connected regionally, 30% Asad, 30% Free Syrian Army, 33% ISIS, so people cannot identify by region."

Level 3: Village or tribe.

Round 1

- "The fabric of society is disintegrated beyond that."

Level 4: Region or province.

Round 2

- "*Syria has always had a problem with group identity*, between rural and urban, religion, rich and poor, and nationality, because *the constitution was not made by all the people*."

Level 5: Ethnic or religious group.

Round 1

- "Sometimes [a national identity] depending on region"

- "Depends on region and degree of urbanization. More urban areas may choose [national identity]. More rural will choose [regional or provincial identity]. The same with the Kurds and Alawi."
- *Reponses to round 1:*
    - "It depends on the region they came from. It may relate to the Kurds, for example… *most people are loyal to the country*."
    - "Very few places cut on ethnic or religious lines."

Round 2

- "Over the past 50 years of *the Asad regime the regime failed to make a national identity*. The loyalties of people stayed in the old ways…[Syria] needs to develop a national identity."
- "Particularly the opposition is working for territorial integrity of the country, but evidence shows everyone fighting for ethnic or religious groups… cannot speculate on Asad's wishes to keep Syria unified."
- "When the war *started most Syrians went to their pre-country identity*. In the north it is ethnic. In others it can be village or religious."
- "We have mixed ethnic groups in Syria. *It's wrong to choose a narrow area. We should look at the entire country.*"
- "Although displaced people don't necessarily join their ethnic/religious groups. Some go to Damascus."
- "We are starting to have civil work within Syria and finding sectorial discrimination. For instance, the Kurds support PYD because it protects them. The Alawi support Asad for the same reason. Tribes also play an important role, but ethnic groups even more."
- "After 5 years of war in Syria the conflict is becoming more sectarian, so they are each recruiting more of their own sects to join them. Since the government is no longer there people draw closer to the people around them. Now everything is sectarianism and nationalism. Syria is divided among Shia, Kurds, and Arabs. The Riyadh group is ignoring minority rights. There is not an urban/rural divide. The committee is trying to push out the Yazidis, Kurds, etc."
- *Response to round 2:*
    - "The Riyadh group is not pushing out minorities. *There are no minorities any more*. The Alawi, the Druze, Kurds, Christians have improved their lives since the war. Only the Yazidis are hurt because of ISIL. The war affects the majority."

Round 3

- "*There is a growing ethnic divide.* To some extent the Syrian government targeted all the groups outside government control. Those targeted groups became vey wary of the government. The division among opposition groups and armed groups is also growing."
- "The *Kurd's ethnic affiliation has become even more important* over the last years."

- "In the five years *since the war everyone has gone back to their roots*. It is divided. The Kurds are loyal to the Kurds first, regardless of where they are. The Arabs are divided by religious lines."
- "There are a few radical religious, but most don't want a religious leadership. *Syria itself was never radical. Bashar divided the country between Sunni and Alawi. In general the Syrian people love the Kurds and all minority groups*."
- Did not think people wanted to be separated into groups, but "*there is no larger entity, so they have no choice.* International concerns have changed everything. If it had been left to Syrians they would have reached an agreement early on. Outside support fed it."

Level 6: Country

Round 1

- "The hope of the country is to be one country with its current borders. The citizenship is important to Syrians."
- "There may be more homogenous conditions now, but not necessarily addressing identity.

Round 2

- "*Loyalty should be to the country, not the whole world*."
- "This is the most important thing for the country. It's for everybody. It's what we hope for."
- "They always identify first as Syrian, but lately ethnic and religious divides are growing. This did not exist before the war."
- "*The revolution started within the people. They started demanding simple rights, voting and improved laws. The regime refused and responded with violence*. After 6 – 8 months the regime released 11,000 prisoners who were terrorists, so they could attack the citizens. The thought was to change the vision of the protesters; to convince them an Islamic government is better than a secular one, by use of force. It was done to make the people think that without the regime they can't control the terrorists. They seem to have been successful. The revolution is no longer peaceful, which gives Asad justification to use chemical weapons and other extreme violence."

Round 3

- "There was no difference between the tribes before the war. When they came to Lebanon they were all the same. The religious relations are the only things that make them worry about their country. The religion gives a shared sense of home."
- "*In Syria we don't speak about ethnicity or groups, only the country*."
- "Since the war started five years ago everyone is remembering their roots, whether it is ethnic or religious. That's why it has become sectarian. The Kurds want autonomy. In the south they want their emirate. This can't happen without international will. There are now at least four sectors, Kurds, ISIL, Opposition, and Regime. The majority wants Syria to remain unified, besides ISIL. Each

sector wants to expand for influence. The people have no say. There are at least nine foreign military bases in the country. There are foreigners from at least forty different countries fighting in Syria. Whoever has arms and money dictates the rules. This is a normal result from five years of war."

- "The doctors continue to work because they see it as their duty to the country and people. *Everybody is thinking of their country as a whole*."

Legally Enshrined National Values

Level 1: Different sets of values are scattered among the villages and tribes. There are no "national" values.

Round 3

- "*There is no law right now*. There used to be a law, but it was imposed on the people, not reflecting their values, and imposed differently for different groups."

Level 2: Regional, ethnic, or religious factions hold different values from each other. There are no "national" values.

Round 1

- "The current Constitution requires that the President must be Muslim. A Christian can't be President. Women do not have core rights. They cannot rent property without a husband, father or brother; and are only registered on the census with a man."
- *Responses to round 1:*
    - "There are some people not covered under the constitution at all."
    - "*The Round 1 comment is not true*. There are no laws like that against women owning property or being unregistered on the census without a man."

Round 2

- "This applies to the Asad regime, family, and friends, who benefit from the current political system."
- "Between Kurdish and Islamic there are different thug groups on the regime side, all fragmented on both sides"
- "The Syrian government is throwing people out of their homes, and bringing bus loads of Iranians, and giving the homes to them, all the way to Damascus. It was good for Turkey to open the doors to the refugees, but it also drained the Syrian population. Erdoğan has offered them citizenship. It changes the entire demographics of Syria."
- "*There have never been national values*. It was only a political investment. Subgroups have their own values."

Round 3

- "Under Asad control it would be level 3 or 4, now it is level 2 because it is still pretty scattered."
- "There are things which should be included in a future constitution that everyone should be allowed, generally in the areas of human rights. For example Freedom Charter asked Syrians what they wanted in their constitution."
- "They are very engaged in writing a new constitution for an autonomous Kurdish region. They have very different opinions on decentralization than Arabs. The Kurds are more interested in a federal system. *This doesn't mean they can't be one country*."
- "There are national values. What we had in the 1950's has all been replaced by the Asad family regime. Due to the absence of those values this is one of the reasons for the revolution. *Even the revolution couldn't come up with a law that everyone accepts*. People come out on the streets for freedom and justice, but the revolution turned into a struggle for power. There has been no uniting as a nation."
- "*The conflict divided everything, including the values. People have taken up weapons despite the normal value of not killing*. People support Asad because they think he's defending the country against terrorists. Others think the opposite."
- "The Syrians in the United States describe Syrians in Syria as thinking differently. The refugees in the United States are from a specific class with a specific viewpoint."

Level 3: National values are enshrined in law, but exclude certain classes of residents.

Round 1

- "The Alawi are above the law."
- "Asad now has Syria for Asad, not Asad for Syria. People struggle, intellectuals, TV, Internet, look outside Syria. This is evidence that the Syrian people have a lot of national values. When children in the south killed people from all over the country tried to save them. Syria today is smashed. Since 1963 it has emergency law only. Everything is broken. People are arrested for gathering in groups."

Round 2

- "Equality does exist in theory, but in application the elite control everything."

Level 4: The national values are enshrined in law, but apply differently to those with and without political or financial power.

Round 1

- "The Alawites are an example."
- *Responses:*

- "The Alawi only came to power recently. Asad arrested Alawi who opposed him too. The majority of the army are Sunni. *The power was in the Asad family, not the sect. This is one of the biggest mistakes of the opposition. It brings about what Asad wanted to happen*."
- "Even before the civil war this was an oppressive regime which was violating the philosophy which was governing the country. Unless they are referring to ISIL or al-Qaida affiliates. There are some groups very much rooted in Syria with different values than the opposition or the regime. There is a sense among most Syrians agreeing on the 1952 constitution format. There is an interest in rule of law. Transitional Justice will be the key to next steps."
- "Whatever is written in the law is dominated by the Secret Police. They are only ink on paper. In Syria's constitution the most power is given to the President, and one group is given more power than others. If you want a country where everyone is equal at least we can agree on certain human rights. The Riyadh Committee is reintroducing Asad's values. They are still trying to impose power over certain minorities. The majority ethnic group is Arab. The majority is Muslim. Still, they cannot rightly govern by themselves. Syria has always been the home of many groups who lived together. It was the birthplace of many religions. Before [Hafiz al-Asad] there were four Kurdish Syrian Presidents."

Round 2

- "*The laws are perfect*. It's one of the best constitutions in the world. The implementation is as a dominant group over the others."
- "The constitution favors some people over others. The strongest rules."
- "The legal values are enshrined in the constitution, but it's never implemented. It's like a nice painting. They do the opposite."
- "The law doesn't separate people, but a lot has to do with who you know. The gives the Alawi an advantage. Other powerful elite Sunni, for instance, also benefit."
- "There has always been a clear Arabist identity exclusive of Kurdish groups. The political and financial power has also always played a role in access to justice. There are problems with the constitution, but its application has always been the bigger problem."
- "The law is written, but the regime does not apply it. T*he regime decides what happens and what doesn't happen*."

Round 3

- "There will probably need to be amendments to the legal system for peace going forward, but first and foremost, it's the application."
- "There are laws, but their application depends on who you are. They are like a caste system."
- "Russia has just issued a new constitution requiring the people to respect the arguments of the Asad regime in which he sold rights of all their natural

resources to Russia. They also want to reduce the power of the president and establish a parliament."
- "The Kurds were not given rights. Bashar al-Asad jailed and oppressed them before their holidays."
- "Before, there were national values. The meaning of national values is elastic. They have been affected by personal values and benefits. Usually they are dominated by the views of the national security groups, how much they value a person. This regime, Bashar, tried to reinforce the national values."

Level 6: The legally enshrined national values apply to the citizens, but not to foreigners.

Round 2

- "The people who can really appreciate the role of Syria are few and the elite. The others can't determine the national values."

Round 3

- "National values are not all included in the law. Foreigners have more flexibility."

One participant declined to provide a level, but provided an aspirational desire for Syria's legally enshrined values after the conflict: "Syria will be for all the people. Whatever constitution will govern the people will be for everybody, not distinguishing anyone from the others, except people who are not Syrians."

Control of Borders

Level 1: The country does not exist as a legally recognized, independent nation-state, but is partially self-governing and is consumed with a struggle for survival, or to gain more sovereignty.

Round 3

- "*There is no country now*. The decisions belong to Iran and Russia. It used to be the Alawi. No longer. *It is all outside. There is no border*."
- "Culturally it can protect its border, but not politically. The universities, schools protect the Arab culture successfully."
- "Syria doesn't control any borders except with Lebanon. In the north the borders are controlled in part by the PYD, in part by the Turkish government, and in part by the Islamists. The eastern part is controlled by ISIL. The south is controlled by Islamist military factions"
- "The country is struggling to regain its power and legal recognition."
- "The Russian intervention made things much worse. The war started because the people wanted freedom, justice, and sovereignty. Once Asad started killing people the revolution started to fight to defend themselves. In the third year sovereignty became an issue when Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, etcetera came in

under Asad's invitation. Refugees started to migrate out because they wanted to live. *They had to choose between arrest and death, or to join the Asad regime in killing children and civilians*. Sixteen to forty year olds obligated to join the Syrian Army. The American Ambassador told the people to do a revolution and told Asad to step aside. *The silence of the United States now helps Bashar al-Asad kill women and children. The United States is not supporting the Syrian people well. They only support Russia in killing more people*. They do not keep Hezbollah and others out of Syria. The United States has not made a serious decision on this matter. Women are raped. People are killed. No one is helping, especially in Aleppo. Syria asks to have a transitional phase, changing the President and having fair elections. They want a regime that treats all people fairly, and gives the population its rights."

Level 2: The country does not exist as a legally recognized, independent nation-state, but is partially self-governing (e.g., autonomous areas, overseas or dependent areas or territories) and stable.

Round 1

- "Syria, the UN recognizes its legal borders, including the Golan Heights now occupied by Israel. *There is foreign occupation on Syria now, but Syria is still one*. Hezbollah and Iran and Russia are occupying part of Syria. Asad gives Syrian sovereignty to other people. The people are at war to liberate those areas from foreign occupations. ISIL rapes the Syrian national sovereignty, also PYD. A constitutional assembly will represent all of Syria, including the liberated areas. Immigrants will need to return for elections. The law requires all to be decided by the Syrian people."

Round 2

- "*There is no country that controls its borders*. Even the United States can't control its border with Mexico. Through social media you can cross borders anywhere. We are all in contact with each other. There are no real borders. The Syrian regime managed to isolate the people under Hafiz, but Bashar could not continue it because of technology. Most nations are affected by Wall Street. Loyalties and education differ from one country to another…The conflict started as internal, then became regional, then international. At that point Syria can no longer control its borders. Syrians are stripped of the right to speak their opinions. The borders are a secondary concern…The world is connected now through a lot of pacts, EU, G7, etc. Nationality is weak. You can be a "citizen" of any country through the media. Terrorism hit, throwing everyone back to nationalist roots."
- "We used to live in a country whose leaders had the mentality of the mafia. They called it Asad's Syria. Some people were his slaves. Others were left with nothing."
- "*The borders are not a matter of a big problem, ISIL is a big problem, but it's diminishing. It's only a matter of months until they are suppressed.* It's not a matter of the neighbors."

- "We are trying to spread the freed regions all over the country. They are connecting the local councils, preparing in case the Asad regime vanishes so they can continue governing, assuming there are no terrorist organizations, including the Asad regime."

Level 3: **This legally recognized country is not able to protect itself against the mass murders of parts of the population by outsiders (invasion or bombing) or its own people (civil war).**

Round 2

- "The country does not have control over its borders."

Round 3

- "There are parts of Syria that are more stable and self-governing, but by and large that is not the case."
- "The legal part of the country (the south) is involved in its own mass murder."
- "Prior to 2005 Syria was strong and a player in the region. It absorbed Iraqi jihadists, trained them, and returned them to fight the United States until there was an agreement with the United States to stop. As of 2005 Syria began falling under Iran's influence."
- "*It is a legally recognized country, but controlled by other groups*, and easily infiltrated by other countries."
- "The West has avoided getting involved. Iraq has avoided the war for no real reason. ISIS is trying to fill the power vacuum. *If Westerners were going to get involved they should have years ago, now there is nothing to be in place*."

Level 5: This country is not able to protect its economic system against unwanted foreign influences.

Round 2

- "Since we are living under a dictatorship, the dictatorship has loyalties to other countries because it can't make decisions by themselves."

Level 6: This country is not able to protect its political system against unwanted foreign influences.

Round 3

- "During the Hafiz al-Asad regime and the Iranian revolution Iran exported the idea of the Shia Crescent. In most of Syria the Alawi (supported by Iran) opened centers to encourage people to convert from Sunni to Shia. They had salaries and monthly rewards. It was run by Jamil al-Asad (brother of Hafiz). It is still running, called Imam Mortada. It is going on in Egypt now."

Level 7: This country is not able to protect its society from unwanted cultural foreign influences.

Round 1

- "Globalization (media) is having a big affect on society. The Russian system of government is being adopted by Asad. We need to use the wider use of the Internet to push people to move."
- *Response to round 1*:
    - One participant agreed with the Round 1 comment, but "the Internet may not be very useful. It can influence for Russia as well as anywhere. Russia has some programs on YouTube that are much more influential than any the United States has"
    - "Bashar al-Asad tried to open the media to the Syrian people after his father. He gave educated people the Spring Club. They had freedom to meet and discuss cultural issues. There were open discussions on politics on television. The Iranian influence was that it would negatively affect Syria, so Bashar al-Asad withdrew the privilege. It was the same time as the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. Soon people were arrested for speaking openly. It was the beginning of the strangling of Syrian democracy."

Level 8: This country is able to protect its society from most unwanted cultural foreign influences.

Round 2

- "The Asads did this over the past 20 years by claiming conspiracies by Israel and the illusion of democracy."
- "During the past 20 years Hafiz al-Asad built a strong dictatorship controlling Syria. He could not totally protect from interventions."
- *Responses to round 2:*
    - "The world is moving to weaker and weaker borders by trade, media, internet…There is a greater fear of developing countries by the more developed ones."
    - "People with power in Syria want to repress the people's influence."

International Reputation

Level 1: Negative.

Round 1

- "Asad is a criminal, threatens national sovereignty, sells Syria to Russia for himself."

Round 2

- "Relations with others were not done to build the economy, only to protect the regime."
- "Publically it's negative, but secretly it's good. The United States, Russia, and Iran help Asad. When Rafik Hariri was assassinated many believed the Syrians did it. Asad said it would take at least three years to take all the Syrian military

out of Lebanon. Condoleezza Rice told him to get it done by April 30. They were out by April 27. They will do what the United States tells them to do. A decision from Obama could make Asad finish the war. Condoleezza Rice said one day Obama will be tried for his lack of decision."

Round 3

- "Syria has client type relations with Iran and Russia."

Level 2: Negative with most countries, mostly neutral with others.

Round 3

- "Fifteen nations of shame support them. Countries that oppose almost anything in the UN."
- It's only positive with three, Russia, Iran, and Lebanon, neutral with Egypt, and they still have an Ambassador at the United Nations.
- "It is mostly negative depending on what faction you are in. Asad has good relations with Putin, Russia wants the foothold in Syria. Turkey backs Syrian Rebels. Syrian Rebels have had U.S. funding at some point, not anymore."

Level 3: Negative with most countries, mostly positive with others.

Round 2

- "Syria can't make balanced relations in the region or the world. It only has relations with countries supporting Asad, Iran and Russia"
- "Negative with Europe, United States, Arab countries, but good with Russia, China, Venezuela. This regards the formal relationships with the Asad government."
- "We have the perception of ourselves as the Arab country that always welcomes other Arabs, including refugees. The government's relations with other countries has always been fraught with problems. They seem clever in manipulating other countries to maximize Syria's importance."

Round 3

- "Asad is negative with a lot and positive with some. The same for the opposition. Each have their own backers."
- "They see Russia, Iran, and North Korea as allies. The rest are generally negative. Some countries don't want to be associated the Asad government as it exists."
- "Practically now Syria is under the influence of Iran and Russia. Syria is no longer making its own decisions. The same is true for the opposition. They have no say. They follow orders."
- "Positive with Iran and Russia. With others it mostly has to do with what they can get from it. Syria has no diplomatic relations with most countries."

Level 6: Positive with most countries, mostly negative with others.

Round 3

- "Negative with Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah"
- "With its allies in Iran and Russia. Alliances are based on interests and change."

National Vision and Strategy

Level 1: To the extent that there are national visions, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1*:
    - "Not everybody should be asked to develop a national vision. *It should be the job of a ruling elite*"
    - "There would be grounds for consensus at some point, but we have seen, for the past several months, that there is a mistrust of each other and they only seem interested in military gains, especially for the Asad regime, but also the opposition"

Round 2

- "There is no proper national vision from any side. *The government wants to murder everyone else. The vision of Asad is to murder*. There have been attempts from outside to develop a national vision, but it is extremely fragmented."

Round 3

- "There is no single vision. There may be two or three. There is a need for leadership on the ground. The visions don't vary widely except in ISIL controlled areas. They do not want a united country and in peace with civil rule. There is no agreement on how."
- "There is no one national vision. They wear it very widely. Even the Ba'thist/reformist neo-liberal, more Syrian, divide. Now there's a vision for a more Islamist country with varying expressions. Kurds are asking for semi-autonomy in their region."
- "There must be a future that combines all Syrians regardless of ethnicity or religion. There has to be a vision from the UN, for instance, not Syria or the Syrian government, as a transition until the public can have a conference, maybe in two years. All Syrians will be able to form a vision then. For now the people have lost their right to engage in a vision. Everyone is under the spell of other countries or Islamist groups. *There is a group who is trying, but they are failing. There is an educated elite, but no one is listening. The regime imprisons them. The opposition kills them. So they leave*."
- "There is no single vision"
- "There are three main visions: Asad Regime, Free Syrian Army and ISIS."

Level 2: The elite share a vision for the future of this country; the rest of the citizens are passive, excluded, or disagree.

Round 1

- "The Asad and [Talal] Maklouf[58] and Asaf Shaukat[59] (head of Republican Guards) regime controls everything in Syria. They impose a national vision. Ministers etc. are assigned for show. Their terms of reference are very restricted and directive. It's all a tool for power. They lead the country by secret security systems. They control banks and the economy. All jobs require a letter from security (intelligence). Oil and Petrol are both owned by Rami Maklouf,[60] yet claim to be competition. The main reason Asad is at war is to hold that degree of power. They don't know why he attacked Lebanon are was against Sadam Hussein, Kuwait, or Turkey."
- *Response to Round 1*:
    - "One group has a vision of a democratic Syria, a multi-ethnic united Syria. Most Syrians agree."
    - "*I don't know who they think is the mainstream or dominant subgroup. It is neither Asad nor the opposition*."
    - "Who's the elite. *There are no elite anymore in Syria*. *Only those who control by the gun.*"

Round 2

- "The country did not have any choice in electing the President. He was elected by the Syrian intelligence agency. Elections were for appearances only."
- "The Ba'th Party are the ruling party. T*hey do whatever Asad wants. They are similar to North Korea. It doesn't matter what opinion anyone has*"
- *Response to Round 2:*
    - "The comments under 2 are valid, but may be more appropriate for 5."

Round 3

- "Even with the struggle between the three different groups, they all share the same national vision. *Everyone dreams of a day without Asad*."

Level 3: The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, shares a vision for the future of this country; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.

Round 2

- *Response to round 1:*
    - "The government and opposition share a vision of national sovereignty."
    - "Mostly Islamists would choose 3 because they hide behind others. The Islamists cannot make a vision only for the Islamists. This would be bad."

[58] Cousin of Bashar al-Asad
[59] Brother in-law of Bashar al-Asad; Shaukat died in 2012.
[60] Cousin of Bashar al-Asad

- "The regime stripped the rights from the majority of the people, especially minorities."

Round 3

- "There is only one group. They act regardless of anyone else's wishes."
- "The mainstream is the Ba'th regime."
- "There does not seem to be an elite now. If they exist they are not in control. There are several groups, all in control of their own region."
- "The mainstream has an Islamic vision. Everyone else is marginalized."

Level 4: Almost the entire population of the country shares a vision of its future.

Round 1

- "500,000 are crazy on either side. 22 million have a common dream. Islamists tell people secular means anti-religion. We should use the term, 'civil' instead. *I would like national laws allowing local laws to be set according to local values*."
- *Response to round 1*:
  - One participant agrees with the round 1 comment, but does not agree that almost the entire country shares a vision for the country.
  - "Maybe someone thinks the Asad regime has a plan for the future of Syria."

Round 2

- "Only 20% of Syria is involved in the current conflict. The rest want peace, a future, and don't care who rules."

Round 3

- "There are two national visions. The elite share one, the mainstream the other."
- "The future of Syria is not in the regime hands or the opposition hands. The conflict is regional and international. The internal parties are only instruments of the international interests. *Most of the people are marginalized. Half fled the country. Many are jailed or dead. There is no trust for anyone. Most people want to live in their own regions in peace and share governance. They are coming to agree that Syria should be federated.*"

Level 5: To the extent that there are plans to move the country toward its national vision, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.

Round 3

- "The uprising is because the people realize they don't have to be passive."

Level 6: The elite are engaged in forming and implementing a strategy to move the country toward their vision of its future; the rest of citizenry is passive, excluded, or disagree.

Round 3

- "For awhile at least, a lot of the United States refugee Syrians seemed content with Asad's administration. *They thought he mishandled the revolution, but loved him.* They didn't think he paid greater favor to some than others. *When government bombing started their opinions turned against him.*"

Level 7: The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, participates in forming and implementing a strategy to move the country toward its vision; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.

Round 3

- "Specifically leaving out marginalized citizens."

International Vision and Strategy

Level 1: To the extent that there are international visions, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.

Round 2

- "Most people in Syria have a vision, but each group (ethnic, etc.) has their own"
- "There are *too many parties involved, each with their own vision*."
- "When we go from ISIL and [Jabhat Fateh al Sham], who want to destroy the whole world, to others who want to form partnerships with other countries, you can see the divisions. The Mufti threatened jihadi bombings in Europe in 2012. There are elements of exclusion on all sides."
- "Kerry and Lavrov are deciding Syria's international vision. *Syrians are not even present for these decisions*."

Round 3

- "Things aren't being actively planned. It's more *survival mode for now*."
- "Russia fought against the vision of Iran. Iran had essentially taken over."
- "They probably have goals, but not necessarily a vision."
- "The international visions change constantly, based on who they connect with on the ground."

Level 2: The elite share a vision for the future of this country in the world; the rest of the citizens are passive, excluded, or disagree.

Round 1

- "The elite are the gang (Asad, Maklouf, Shaukat). The people watch the real news about Syria from outside sources. Everything internal is redacted. *If someone in a crowd does not clap for Asad they are arrested.* They are sacrificing the Syrian country for the sale of their power."

Round 2

- "The government had good relations with many countries, but the price was paid by the citizens."

Round 3

- "Dominant subgroup controls the vision. They dictate everything. The rest of the people are watching, but they can't do anything. This is normal."

Level 3: The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, shares a vision for the future of this country's role in the world; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.

Round 1

- "There is no one current view. Some want a Sunni state with strong ties to Russia. Some want another kind of state with ties to Iran. Some want peace with Israel, the United States, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Germany."
- *Response to round 1*:
    - "This was probably someone who believes either the Asad regime or the opposition is the dominant subgroup. *Neither assumption is correct. The population is split. Many see the Asad regime as the protector of their rights and safety, largely the Shia minority*."
    - "*Only uninformed people would choose 3*"

Round 2

- "The government definitely has a different vision than most of the country.

Round 3

- "The Ba'th Party represents the mainstream."

Level 4: Almost the entire population of the country shares a vision for the role of the country in the international community.

Round 2

- "Syria is skeptical of the west and pro-Palestinian sovereignty. *They do not want to normalize relations with Israel*. They are skeptical of American aid or intervention. They are not happy about dependence on Iran, Russia, or Saudi Arabia. It's practical alliances rather than a vision of greater pictures, like being part of the Shia alliance."
- "The law supports the Alawi and the rich"
- *Response to round 1*:
    - "This is not possible. Part of the regime is with Russia, others with Iran. The opposition wants better ties with the European Union, Qatar. The Asad regime only wants relations with countries that do something for them. That is why there is no unified vision. *If outside forces would decide there could be a future for Syria*."

Round 3

- "*The population actually shows more international vision than national*, not including the extremists."

Level 5: To the extent that there are plans to move the country toward its international vision, they vary widely, and exist in separate factions of the population.

Round 2

- "In terms of an international coalition it will be very difficult to align opposition groups with Russia, but some role with Russia needs to be found. It's secondary to finding a way of reuniting the country."

Round 3

- "What international vision do they have in place? The vision is so varied right now because of the civil war. Syria is not thinking of what they are doing in the international community, they are thinking what the international community can do for them."

Level 6: The elite are engaged in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward their international vision; the rest of citizenry is passive, excluded, or disagree.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1*:
    - "Someone probably assumes the Asad regime is the dominant subgroup and everyone else is marginalized."
    - "The Asad's should not be the elite. The three dominant subgroups, Sunni, Alawi, and Kurds, should govern by rule of law."

Level 7: The mainstream, or dominant subgroup of the country, participates in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward its vision for the country's role in the world; marginalized citizens are passive, or disagree.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1*:
    - "*Everyone should not participate*."
    - "There is no dominant subgroup in all of Syria, only regionally"

Level 8: Almost the entire population of the country participates in forming and implementing a plan to move the country toward its vision of its role in the international community.

Round 2

- "Syria is a founder of local laws."

- "This is exactly what's going on. Groups from Lebanon and Syria are working together on this. The strength of any country comes from the people who live in the country. Everyone working together is the right way to proceed."

One participant declined to answer, as it depended on "who controls the region: Government areas – 1, Opposition – 6, ISIL – 1, Kurds – 2"

Economy

Level 1: Dominated by barter or black markets.

Round 1

- "The economy is *controlled by the gang, like mafia*."
- "Even the regime-controlled areas have no working economy."
- "A group of families (Asad and relatives) control all of economy and trade."
- "For now there is no economy in Syria. It never had any foundation. The GDP etc. were always on the minus side. A few families controlled trade. A lot of people were unemployed and outside investors were not interested. The economy was never good. Pressure from the European Union forced Asad to impose a series of rules on Syria. 40% of the population went to below the poverty level…That contributed to the revolution."
- *Response to round 1:*
    - The participant agrees with the comments from round 1. "Most business men were Sunni and were rich. Asad started to shut down imports. People started importing through Lebanon via animal caravans, selling in Syria at double price. As they were caught they were jailed. Asad started preventing money from leaving the country. A black market was forced to develop, but business people were jailed for long sentences, so another level of business was eliminated. The Alawi started partnering with the other Syrian business people. They learned how the market worked, the undercut the Syrian partners with international providers, offering better deals as brokers. Mercedes, Peugeot, and Renault were all stopped or directed through Alawi brokers."

Round 2

- "There is no real economy other than these. *Under Hafiz al-Asad there were rich, poor and middle class. Bashar killed the middle class*. Some became rich, some poor. The middle class is always the strength of an economy."
- "The economy is completely controlled by the regime. It's totally black."
- "Areas controlled by different factions barter between themselves. Otherwise the black market dominates."
- "There is also the arms dealing, which influences everything. That is the currency now."
- "There is a way of enforcing contracts and *a strong regulatory mechanism in the government controlled areas*, but not at the national level"

- "The economy was always one of the arms of the Asad regime, therefore they tightly controlled finance mechanisms. The oil profits went exclusively to the Asad's. No one knew volumes or profits. Now there is no economy. Trade is mostly contraband. The government does some governed by the United Nations. The exceptions are with Iran and Russia. Oil is controlled by local powers. There is no economy policy. Everything is barter. A lot of goods from Turkey go to the Syrian Army. They take an extortion cut. Anyone they sell to does the same."
- "It's definitely dominated by black and grey markets, less so by barter, except in the besieged areas. The regular market on both sides has collapsed. Both sides are profiting from the war market. Sometimes pay-offs have to be made to both sides to cross borders. The Syrian pound is still the currency in use. It might be because of the amount of cross trade."
- "The President comes from a political organization which controls and benefits from all the economic sectors."

Round 3

- "The regime is a closed clan. Everything is allocated to them. *They have a monopoly*. They have a few people in every city."
- "There was a recent water strike because of poor quality water. There is no established market in the non-government controlled areas. There are stores, but the black market competes. There are no regulators. They do have competition."
- "ISIS has control over oil fields and that is a problem for the economy. Damascus and ISIS controlled areas are economically benefiting the most right now. Champagne and caviar is sold in Damascus right now and people are buying it."
- "There are local markets, but based on what we hear, the price of goods is volatile. There doesn't seem to be anyway to control the market."
- "About eleven years ago *Bashar al-Asad began to insert poverty into the Syrian populations*. It caused fracturing in civil society, which led to the civil war. *The silence of the international community allows the regime to commit more crimes*."
- "Iran has been involved in the Syria economy for the past few years."
- "Before the revolution the economy was totally controlled by the Syrian government and a few holdings established by the Asad family. There is no economy now, but there is a trade market between regions. The regions have different laws. Cities, villages, towns all have different law. The Kurdish region has consistent law within itself. Most of the territory is black market. Oil from the ISIL areas goes to the regime through brokers."
- "Syria is very dependent on other countries right now… Before the revolution Sunni businessmen were very rich. Asad started imposing restrictive conditions." [The participant does not think they are trading.]

Level 2: None of these three features exist at the national level: Markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts.

Round 1

- "A groups of Asad relatives control all of the economy and trade."

Round 2

- "There are no regulations. Each does whatever they want. They are implementing a market economy, but in a wrong way. There is no regulation or consequence."
- "The features could exist where the regime is in control, but they may not exist in opposition controlled areas. Enforcement there is not possible."

Round 3

- "They build businesses, but not big enough to be noticed and eaten by bigger ones. There is no regulatory mechanism of rules."

Level 3: One of these three features exists at the national level: Markets that are generated to incentivize inclusive growth, a strong regulatory mechanism, and predicable rules and enforcement of contracts.

Round 1

- "Strong regulatory mechanism."
- *Response to Round 1:*
    - "As areas were freed only a few people benefitted from the openness."
    - "There are pockets of self-government, but countrywide it is war-torn and dominated by black markets."
    - "This would be true, but only on a regional level."

One participant declined to choose a level because of the regional differences: "In the freed region there is no market, not even a black market. In the government area there is a market, but only a few benefit. *Constant bombing prevents any market*."

Distribution of Power

Level 1: Fragmented, with ongoing civil war.

Round 1

- "*There is a democracy, but it is very small* because the country isn't stable. The freed regions have almost the same democracy in all regions. You gain the power from the people, not to implement it on the people. The government is the opposite. *Bandits rule Syria now*. The freed people want to develop the democracy and make it better. The local councils are freely elected. Everyone participates, even women."
- "The people living in the liberated areas are building local democracies, as in Local Councils. Local projects on the ground are not coordinated and sometimes clash. Syrian want second independence to rebuild a second republic."

Round 2

- "Every piece of land in Syria is controlled by a different party."
- "Power is now dispersed between the government, ISIL, the Free Syrian Army, the Islamists, and the PYD. There are sub regions within them. The government areas are controlled by militias, Iran, Hezbollah. The same with the Kurdish regions. They are divided too. There seems to be a power struggle within ISIL. Islamists are divided between radical and moderate."
- "*It is not a civil or sectarian war. It's a revolution for freedom*. People are fed up with the dictatorship. When the people rise up Asad responds with killing."
- "Reflects the reality on the ground."
- "As long as the civil war continues we can't move to anything else."
- "It's an *unprecedented level of violence*, the worst since WWII because of its sustained level of violence. It increases over time. In Lebanon it was cyclical."
- "This is not a 'civil war.' *This is a revolution*. The government is no longer legitimate. *The military coups have legality, but that didn't happen here*. The regime stole authority not due to them. Hafiz al-Asad had some legitimacy by military coup, but Bashar used corruption. Bashar used international and national elements. He initiated the term 'opposition' to legitimize his own authority. He trained the Islamists in the prison of Sednaya, then let them out. This started the armed component of the revolution, thus burying the rightful term, 'revolution.' There should be a conference to define the terms of what is happening in Syria. We are a revolution, not opposition. People are willing to participate, but there's no money... It isn't an uprising, opposition, or Islamist movement. It is a revolution. A lot of money has been invested in recruiting Islamists to undermine the concept of revolution. Bashar al-Asad used these terms to make himself look legitimate. The Alawites got in to make it look sectarian. Everyone is up to their elbows in blood. The Alawites are against him, as are many Christians."
- *Response to round 2:*
    - "Interesting that someone would say the Alawites are against [Bashar al-Asad]."

Round 3

- "There's still a lot of violence across the country."
- "There are regions of government control, ISIL, PYD, and Islamists. The first three regions control large territories. The Islamists have smaller territory which itself is divided among parties…the Islamist area will diminish. ISIL may also. No one knows about the Southern Front…there will only be 3 regions. Turkey probably agrees. Their only interest is in not letting the Kurdish regions connect."
- "A cock crows on his own dunghill."
- "At the moment Syria is divided between Kurds, ISIL, Opposition, and Regime."
- "It is a two front war, civil on one side, and against outside terrorists on the other."

- "*It's not yet a civil war*. They are not equivalent powers. The government and its allies are fighting the people in general."
- "There is a *mix of brutal dictatorship and complete brutality* (ISIL). It depends on where you are regionally in Syria, you are ruled by who ever has control of where you are."

Level 4: Rule by an elite, with two of these three features: a strong central state, rule of law, or democratic accountability.

Round 2

- "The government controls everything. There is no distribution of power."

Civil Society

Level 1: Civic associations are almost non-existent.

Round 1

- "Civic associations are almost non-existent."
- *Response to round 1:*
    - "There is a lot of grassroots activity with rescuers and people trying to organize themselves in a society that used to be well educated. People are prepared to take on these roles."

Round 2

- "Civil associations are non-existent in Syria. *The ones that exist are completely controlled by the Secret Police of the regime.* Unions are controlled by the regime. There are over 900 organizations founded for and by Syrians outside the country. The Asad regime created civic associations, even in Turkey, that have humanitarian fronts, but are regime controlled."
- "There were NGOs in Syria before the war, but *controlled by the regime and intelligence*. There are no INGOs."

Round 3

- "There were no civil society organizations before the revolution. The Ba'th Party controlled every area of society. There were attempts to start organizations. Founders were followed and arrested. After the revolution the people began to support them because they needed them. Now there are a lot of associations, but they are facades for foreign governments and other interests. There are more business organizations for personal gain or to fund Islamist groups. The Muslim Brotherhood backs, and is supported by Watan for example. *Even the United Nations organizations are corrupt*. Some are honest and hard working."
- "Before the revolution there was no civil society. There were some organizations controlled by the Ba'th Party, unions, and societies. After the revolution civil societies grew much stronger, but still, in some regions they

have some influence, in others none at all. In the regime controlled areas they are very controlled by the government. In the freed areas they are controlled by opposition groups. Some organizations were formed later in the conflict in the government controlled areas, but only to fund the government. There are none in ISIL controlled areas."

Level 2: Civic associations that threaten the governmental or economic interests are forbidden.

Round 1

- "The society is built on fear."
- "*Everything is under regime and gang control. People are arrested if they try to start anything the regime does not sanction.* Even outside funded organizations, organizers get assassinated and funding goes to Asad's wife, even if the government "approved" in advance. The Ba'th party ran all of civil society like the North Korea system. Summer holidays were for training camps for the Ba'thists."

Round 2

- "Civic associations only exist as allies of the government and its intelligence agency."
- "But they do exist underground or in areas outside of government control."
- "The government totally controls all trades and associations. They were never independent."
- "Before the revolution there were civic associations. They were allowed if they served the regime. After the revolution they multiplied to help the revolution. They depend on international funding."
- "Before the revolution the civil society was controlled by the Ba'th Party. It's why they (civil society) didn't have any influence. There are many groups of civil society in Syria. In government regions civic organizations are controlled by the regime. The Kurdish regions have had a growth in society. The government regions are very controlled."
- *Response to round 1:*
    - "By government we mean Asad"

Round 3

- "There are a lot of civic groups doing fantastic work all over the country, but it's challenging to do that because of the *degree of violence or repression where they work.*"
- "True for the whole country, including the Kurdish region. There is hardly any left. *What does exist is restricted or forbidden*."
- "Civic associations exist outside of government control. They aren't registered or are in regions outside government-controlled areas."

Level 4: Civic associations exist, but outside NGOs and outside funding are essential supports.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1:*
    - "Not allowed by law"

Round 2

- "Civic associations inside Syria *exist in name only*. They do not deliver what they say, except perhaps nominally. The rest goes to the pockets of a few. Most of the international aid inside does not go to the people. Most support for civil associations is in relief (food baskets) and financing the fighting, as in supporting fighters with food, medicine, etcetera"
- "Only applies to the government controlled areas"
- "Four years ago it would have been number 1. Bashar al-Asad made the term 'civil society' illegal as too western. The charities, which existed, could not be political or professional organizations unless they were associated with the Ba'th Party. There is an explosion now. There are 1033 organizations in Gaziantep alone. They have turned into a movement. They provide the services, which would usually be provided by the government. The growth of local councils is really good, providing quasi-governmental functions, and civil society organizations doing political and humanitarian work. In Damascus there is an explosion of government related NGOs."
- "*No country allows civic associations which threaten the government and economic interests*."

Round 3

- "There are still small functioning NGOs (UNICEF, Red Cross) with the amount of security and logistics to get in Syria it makes it hard to get in the country. It also depends on where they are located in Syria. Aleppo is harder to deliver to than Damascus. There is also funding from people with outside interests"
- "Groups like the White Helmets do humanitarian work, but definitely get outside funding to operate. There are some that aren't necessarily legal."
- "There are quite a lot in the opposition areas and the areas freed from ISIL."

Level 5: There are many independent civic associations, with freedom to operate, but weak capacity. Outside NGOs and funding are supplemental, not primary supports.

Round 1

- "There has been an explosion in Syrian organizations, some very successful, but not always free to operate without restrictions. The civil war has actually strengthened civil society."
- *Responses to round 1:*
    - "These are not civic associations in the classic sense. There is a lot of self-organizing. There is no civil society in government controlled or ISIL areas."

- "The Round 1 comment is referring to organizations, but actually promote interests of the other groups. Only about 25% are actually independent."

Level 7: There are many civic associations and non-profits that are active in a few other countries.

Round 3

- "Fifty to sixty workshops have been facilitated for people starting NGOs there. Many who attend do so from outside the country."

Level 8: There are many civic associations and non-profits that are active globally.

Round 1

- "If diaspora count"
- "They are forming and improving, but they are still weak."

Round 2

- "There are charity organizations in the freed regions. The organizations in the government regions are controlled by the government. They exist to fund the government. Recently The Guardian posted an article regarding the scandal of misappropriated aid money."

Arts and Humanities

Level 1: There are no artists or thinkers in the country who shape national identity.

Round 2

- "There are supporters of the regime and the opposition. Most independent, influential artists left the country. They surfaced under Bashar's Spring Club, but that turned against them later. They had an important role in the revolution when it was peaceful, before Islamists took over. They had Friday gatherings, but honored 'Great Friday' for the Christians. They had special Fridays for each group. 'One, one, the Syrians are one.' These artists still exist, but can't influence anything."

Round 3

- "Most of the artists and thinkers have been *forced to flee*."
- "There are people, but they don't have the capacity to shape national identity."

Level 2: There are artists and thinkers whose work reinforce and justify the identity and practices of a predatory elite.

Round 1

- "Asad TV, newspapers, universities, movies, magazines, are all owned by Maklouf etc. The Asads *use both terror and lures*. *All of arts and humanities serve Asad. He funds them for their loyalty. If they refuse they are arrested*. In the 1980's the unions went on strike. They were all arrested and jailed for ten to thirteen years as terrorists. Tadmor Jail equals hell, people in coffins and chained. *Every Syrian household has a story about Tadmor*. People have to pay bribes to get thirty-second visits with their loved ones. *Sometimes the administration does mass killings in Tadmor as retribution for social activism on the street. Chemical weapons are buried around Tadmor. People know where the mass graves are.* If Asad could require Syrians to buy his air he would. Anyone who is arrested, his child would be told daily he is a traitor."
- "The regime controls the majority of artists and thinkers, directing them as they want."
- *Response to round 1:*
    - "The comment for level 2 in round 1 is correct, but is more appropriate for level 1. If artists and thinkers are forced to do propaganda they aren't doing art or independent thinking anymore? There was a caricature artist, Ali Farzat, who did illustrations for the government. He was published for years until he did one that made people laugh at the government. They broke his fingers."
    - "They certainly had an influence in the Arab world, not necessarily the global culture"

Round 2

- "On the opposition side they also have artists and thinkers with more creative space, but only about political freedoms, because of the nature of some of the Islamist groups."
- "2 is closest, but not exact. Artists on both sides support both the government and the opposition."
- "Some of the thinkers and artists tied their interests to the government. They legitimize the government."
- "There are artists who used to be seen as icons, but are now aligned with one side or the other. Even Fairouz,[61] her son said she sides with Hezbollah." "Some are with a benevolent elite and some are with a predatory elite. More are with the predatory elite."

Round 3

- "There are only a few artists who were allowed to make fun of the government, but only under government control."

Level 3: There are artists or thinkers whose work reinforces and justifies the identity and practices of a benevolent elite.

[61] Fairouz is a Lebanese singer

Round 1

- "The regime controls the majority of artists and thinkers, directing them as they want"
- "Templates of pro-Asad graffiti is available for spray painting."

Round 2

- "This applies to 40% of the population. Most of art expresses the interests of the government."

Round 3

- "Most of the organizations related to the arts were under the regime. Before the revolution they worked for the government, but weren't happy about it. They also believed, for the most people, that the people should have a new Syrian identity, all as one. When the Spring Club opened it was their first chance to speak openly. [The participant was a member.] They tried to revive the meaning of civic associations. They opened a bridge of communication with Lebanese artists. From 2000 to 2005 artist movements started to revive. The regime felt threatened by the acceleration and turned against it…this was the spark that eventually led to the revolution. In 2004 a group from the Spring Club went to Aleppo. They mobilized 250 lawyers to join them. They were later arrested on April 14, 2005. Most were freed quickly prior to trial. People from all over Syria gathered in front of the courthouse in support of them. "One, one, the Syrians are one!" The people arrested were from a cross section of Syria, Sunni, Christian, Druze…"

Level 5: There are artists or thinkers who unite the majority of people in the country, and who strengthens tolerance toward minorities.

Round 1

- *Response to Round 1*
    - "Not more than 20% of Syrians would choose this level."

Round 2

- "The number of thinkers and artists have increased dramatically recently in the freed region. There are geniuses appearing in literature, music, poetry. Everything was forbidden or limited to intelligence clubs. Kids in school are drawing the violence of the war. They play war games with play guns. They draw bombings. If this continues it will warp society. In the free areas there are a lot of psychosocial support options."

Round 3

- "Syrians have been doing art about the civil war, artists who have left Syria have a stronger influence and people are more interested in the art since it is from Syrians. Syrians put a more emotional element on their own experience of Syria

and can show the reality of Syria while overcoming the politics of the war."

Level 7: There are artists or thinkers from this country who have strong influence in regional culture.

Round 2

- "They still have artists and thinkers and elites in the refugees and the diaspora. It was a very influential country in the Arab world. It would not end from one day to the other. *There were a number of these people in civil society before the war. That's why the war started*."
- "Artists and thinkers exist, but are only allowed public exposure if the Syrian CIA allows it. Even a suspicion keeps them from working."
- "This is an active community of artists and writers who tread very lightly regarding the government."
- "Syria has a lot of artists. In the few years before the revolution they were improving TV and broadcast work. They were well known throughout the Middle East. *Syrians have been leading thinkers in the pan-Arabic movement*. Their actors and singers still influence the culture in the region."

Round 3

- "Especially on music and performing arts."
- "It is a very old culture. It used to have remarkable arts and thinkers. There was an old jail in Damascus where they brought in musicians to do music therapy, and nearby a water feature for its therapeutic value."
- "There are more artists than thinkers with influence. There is an opportunity for more thinkers in the future because the diaspora is being exposed to think tanks outside Syria."
- "They have some of the well-known actors and singers. Syrian intellectuals have been the main influences in the region."

Two participants declined to choose a level, instead simply stating: "All the comments are correct, because at every level there are a few examples. No level is dominant." and "They were a leading country."

Social Trust

Level 1: Agreements between individuals can be trusted.

Round 2

- "The trust between people or organizations and the government is totally absent."

Round 3

- "There is no trust between the people and the regime. There is a small group of people who work with the government. The government is telling the people of

Aleppo they can leave, but they believe the regime et al. will rape, torture, and kill them if they do."

Level 2: Agreements between family members can be trusted.

Round 1

- "Before the revolution Syrian people made agreements between each other, but the security became so strong it was difficult. Now it is weakening again. Now lots of courts, social agreements are on the rise. There is an increasing sense of belonging because of the revolution. Now there is a need to keep property rights. Local Councils are important to this and religious leaders, engineers, tribal leaders. The new constitution will organize it all. Economy and tourism will return. *Confidence will return with the new constitution and with Asad gone*. Courts are now meaningless in the regime area. People are just arrested and jailed. If you have property or cash over a certain amount you go to jail. Martial law is used to remove enemies from the street. Participant was arrested for working with Israel with no evidence. They made false stamps as evidence. Adnan B. Hassan is head of political intelligence. Everything was taken from them for five years based on a single page of evidence. Palestinian security is a branch of government and can accuse anyone of aiding Israel."

Round 2

- "Tradition historically has been very important to Syria."
- "In many places it's difficult to have clear leadership. There's a patchwork of opposition, [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham], and government controlled areas. There are attempts to have civic councils… doesn't think there is huge trust between the citizens and Asad himself."

Round 3

- "Some consider their Imams as family. There is trust in Imams."

Level 3: Agreements between village or tribal leaders and their people can be trusted.

Round 1

- "Optimistic choice. I'm not sure there is trust."

Round 2

- "You get to trust to put aside fears. If there is fear there is no trust. In the forty years the Asads have been in power *they have built walls to break trust between groups*. There is work to overcome that now." [The participant does not trust the government at all. The participant will support the local governments.]
- "The national trust level, and even the local level is completely eroded. Village and tribal leaders still have significant influence."

- "There is no trust between the people and government in all Arab countries. There is a trust between the people. The tribes are dominant in the north and east. There is less trust around Damascus."

Round 3

- "In a few cases 4. The Local Councils are still doing garbage collection and running police forces, but it depends on where in the country they are."
- "People need hope, so they place some level of trust in the people they know, or who they think can relate to them. The tribes are the groups they marry within."
- "Trust never existed in the cities."

Level 4: Agreements between city or town governments and their citizens can be trusted.

Round 3

- "There are four pockets of trust at different levels, but it depends on location, security of the town, and level of development. There are some with no trust. This opinion is based on dealings with Health Directorates and Local Councils."
- "*There has never been any level of trust, before or after the revolution. There was fear. Still only fear. They are forced to "trust" by arms*."

Level 5: Agreements between provincial or state governments and their citizens can be trusted.

Round 1

- "All of them exist in Syria, but in varying proportions. 5 is the strongest."
- *Response to round 1*:
    - "Maybe because of the Asad controlled areas. There is a certain level of trust between the opposition and the opposition held areas."
    - "The government cannot be trusted, even at regional levels."

Level 6: Agreements between the national government and the citizenry can be trusted.

Round 2

- "This is aspirational. Currently there are bits of trust at all levels, but only a little."

Four participants declined to choose a level, stating:

- "I think you need to be Syrian to answer this one."
- "All of them. There are many cultures in Syria. There is a degree of trust everywhere, but it varies from region to region."
- "All the answers could apply, depending on which region. In the north to Homs there is government trust. The government should be the guarantor of agreements."

- "There are no agreements at all. There isn't any trust within Syria."

Empathy Toward Women

Level 1: Killing of women, or female children by the state, strangers, or family.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1:*
  - "The killing of the population, disproportionately women and children, or maybe because of ISIL."

Round 2

- "Only a small proportion does this."
- "*Only the government kills women*."
- "*Half of the population is women and children who are being killed and no one cares*. ISIL rapes and kills them. Women are raped by ISIL and [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham] to shame their families. They are sold by their families to men from other countries to get rid of them."

Round 3

- "A lot of Syrian women run organizations. They do fantastic work. It is hard not to imagine them as the future of Syria. The violence is current though."
- "It applies to the whole society, but even more to women and children because they are so defenseless, and often targeted in the opposition areas by the government… hospitals and school were targeted so fighters were less exposed than women and children."
- "There was discrimination against women and children before the revolution and now. The regime established organizations for women's rights, but they were only for appearance. *The situation for women is catastrophic now*. They have no rights now except in the PYD/Kurdish areas. There they have full rights. Polygamy is illegal in Kurdish regions."
- "Aside from dying because of the conflict, *many families kill women who have been raped because the family is disgraced*."

Level 2: Abandonment of women by the government and their families (e.g., the treatment of widows).

Round 2

- "Unemployment among women is huge. Most lost husbands and sons. No one is looking after them or helping them."

Level 3: Violence against or rape of women by the state, by their families or husbands, or by other citizens.

Round 1

- "The war has the biggest impact on women. The situation for women in Syria today is smashed. Women lose children, sons, husbands, financial support. *The majority of women didn't have anything to do with the war. They are weak humans.* Rape is now frequent, and young marriages in the refugee camps. The majority of women were in their houses. Now they have to be in everything, get jobs, be refugees. Before the war women needed education and a lot of care. The woman owns the family. If someone rapes or does violence against her it is shameful for her to talk about it. Asad soldiers rape a lot of them. In war she is left alone to protect and care for her children."

Round 2

- "Women have been stripped of their rights and exposed to rape, etc."
- "It applies across the spectrum. The government almost institutionalized rape against opposition held towns. *Violence against women is practiced against almost everybody.* A woman subjected to domestic violence has no place to go. Violence against women is becoming a serious problem across the spectrum."

Round 3

- "There is no state to properly protect women. If women are in ISIL-held territory, they are in danger, have to be completely covered, and have no rights. Some women have more freedom depending on which region they are in."
- "Stories about the treatment of Yazidis by both government and opposition, raping women and selling the kids. In Qatar women have very little influence politically, none with a minister's position. There are some powerful women, but very few in public. It's even less in Syria."

Level 4: Consistent, legally enforced, rigid social rules and expectations of women's behavior, in the home, or in society.

Round 2

- "Women aren't equal to men although the law says they are. Women are marginalized and neglected in families."

Level 5: Women have a right to education, property rights, and inheritance, but these rights are not necessarily available in practice, in which there is strong, informal discrimination against women (e.g., in hiring practices or salary).

Round 2

- "Syria has different cultures and education levels in each region. Traditions vary. The government bears some responsibility for this by not educating people in some regions better. Employment in Syria is 35 - 40%. If women were also in the market it would skyrocket."

Round 3

- "*Before the war women and men were treated the same*. It's still there in urban areas, but less so in rural areas because of lack of education. Some families also practice discrimination. Now it is worse because of declining education."

Level 6: The rights of women who are citizens are legally and practically equivalent to those of men—but the rights of guest worker, immigrant or foreign women are not.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1:*
  - "This used to be the case."

Round 2

- "Before the revolution it was at number 6. Women were treated as equals to men in education, jobs, voting. As of the revolution *it now depends on who controls the area. [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham] and ISIL controlled areas are different than other areas. Number 6 is the closest expression of Syrian culture*."

Level 7: The rights of women who are citizens, and some who are guest workers, immigrants, or foreign are legally and practically equivalent to those of men.

Round 2

- "*We have no problem with treating women well in Syria*. They have all the rights, practically. Even the Ba'th Party didn't discriminate against women. For instance Asad hired the sister of the head of the Muslim Brotherhood, Najah al-Attar, as a Minister even though her brother is a wanted criminal."

Level 8: The rights of all resident women are legally and practically equivalent to those of men.

Round 1

- *Response to round 1:*
  - "The constitution says this, but it's not in practice."

Round 3

- "In all the four regions *women are receiving their rights*, except in regions controlled by ISIL, [Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham], and some of the Kurdish regions.

Four participants declined to choose a level, instead providing these comments:

- "Only a small number of women are treated okay. They belong to the elite. Any scholarship goes to them even if they are not qualified. *There was no violence against women. There is some violence, but not to a great extent*. The Sunni respect women."
- "There are four regions regarding this: regime – 3, Free Syrian Army – 6, Kurds/PYD – none, ISIL – 5. The worst is the regime and ISIL. They can rape,

lock women away. She can't do anything. The PYD is better, but they use women as soldiers. The Free Syrian army is the best. There are some restrictions, but only because of the war."

- "Women and children are very often targeted by Asad attacks since they account for most of the civilian casualties and civilians are targeted. *The culture before the war was not as oppressive as some other Arab countries. The opposition supports women.* They don't have equal footing. In ISIL controlled areas women have no rights. *In post war settings women might become more important because the men were killed*."
- "There has always been discrimination against women before and after the revolution, even with the Islamists. Now it is doubled in all aspects of life. The women are getting rights in the Kurdish region. The PYD has a lot of women fighters. All the government both men and women heading them. It improves the trust of the people."

Empathy Towards Marginalized Groups

Level 1: Mass killing of the population.

Round 1

- "It is used to justify Asad. It's contributing to the dissolution of the European Union. *Fascism is on the rise along with nationalism*."

Round 2

- "In Syria it is not against a certain economic group. It's against the political side. *Even before the uprising there was a huge issue with the Kurds who were denied citizenship*. It dealt the same way with the mentally ill, locked into asylums without proper treatment, or using outdated treatments."

Round 3

- "For example the Islamic State parts. The Arab populations governed by the PYD and PKK get kicked out of villages with accusations they collaborated with the government."

Level 2: Neglect, while large numbers of the population die needlessly.

Round 1

- "*The majority is being killed by the government*."

Round 2

- "With the large number of displaced people, it can't be said it's mass killing, but there is difficulty in getting assistance where needed. Neither the government nor the opposition allow it."

Level 3: Violent abuse of much of the population.

Round 1

- "All of it happened even before the war, but in varying proportions."
    - *Response to round 1:*
        - "It's looking only at what the Syrian government (Asad) is capable of doing. It doesn't factor in the opposition groups or Kurds."

Round 2

- "Asad is mass murdering, but he is only able to reach parts of the country."
- "Abuse against most of the population, done against the dominant groups, not the marginalized. 10 million are now homeless. 1 million are dead. *The marginalized (Alawi) control everything.* They are only 1 million."
- The participant could talk about this "for days…The damage done to children by throwing their parents in prison, barrel bombings…*People outside can't imagine or understand the degree of violence*."
- "There is violence toward the majority of the population from the regime, before the war, during, and now. Nationalism exists everywhere in Syria."

Round 3

- "When Hafiz al-Asad came to power the Ba'th Party leading the country was put into the constitution. It has not changed. This is why people demanded freedom and rights in the revolution. The groups united against the regime. The Kurds were double marginalized.
- "Depends on which part of Syria."
- "Disability is not taken in as a factor in emergency situations. There is a huge lack of data of people with disabilities in the Arab region. Being a woman or child with a disability causes them to be more vulnerable. Many NGOs do not prioritize disabled people and including them during emergencies."

Level 4: Formal discrimination against much of the population.

Round 1

- "The regime imposes a type of equality, but mostly to torture them. Asad burns Alawi when he puts them in front of the Syrian people. They are a shield to him. The Syrian people don't want war, but Asad forced it. Now there are more than 10 million refugees or displaced who left so as not to fight. He got Hezbollah, ISIL, Iraq, Iran, Russia to help to subjugate the Syrian people for him."

Round 2

- "*Empathy does exist.* The government is killing the population. A minority is killing the majority."

Level 5: Informal discrimination against much of the population.

Round 3

- "There was formal discrimination against the Kurds. It changes after 2011 because the context shifted. *There may be many informal discriminations we are not aware of.*"
- "Before the revolution there were marginalized groups, economically, politically, by health. Whole regions were marginalized. They didn't get education, or health care."

Level 6: Informal discrimination against some of the population.

Round 3

- "It's not possible to know how many people are marginalized, or what is happening specifically to them."

Level 7: None of the above. All of these subgroups are treated as well as most other citizens.

Round 2

- "*The regime marginalized everyone in the country*. The mentally ill, the handicapped, raped have become the majority. The war in Syria is worse than WWII. Even the millions of refugees are voiceless now."

Empathy Toward Children

Level 1: Killing of children.

Round 2

- "Genocide doesn't discriminate between children and adults. Even in the camps parents force their children to do all these things."
- "It's *the regime that kills children of all ages*. Bombing, firearms, . . . most of the dead are women and children."
- "A lot of children have been killed in the bombings. A lot have been killed in displacement. The media focused on a few, but there are thousands more no one talks about."
- "Most of the victims are children, proportionally"
- "1 through 4 are common in Syria now."

Round 3

- "It depends on the area of the country, but people would report a higher level than what actual practices show. They may admit to 5, but function at 1."
- "A lot of children are being killed in the conflict, or in immigration attempts. *Some are used as child soldiers*."

Level 2: Abandoning children or child labor. (Answer for the one that is more tolerated.)

Round 1

- "The war doesn't include children or women. The bombs destroyed everything. There are places with no education. They are shelling schools. Parents are afraid to send their kids to school. Parents now need their children to help get water, etc. A lot of parents need the children to work to provide for the family with the father dead or injured. Marriages happen young. Work starts young, factories, shops, everywhere, hard work. *A lot of criminals use children as fighters and as criminals*. Children are easy to shape, refugees especially. Many children are unregistered. Husbands abandon wives when they get pregnant."
    - *Response to Round 1*:
        - "Children are largely neglected, but it's the overall situation. Before the war it was a relatively modern society. Children were probably allowed to pursue their choice of career and so on."

Round 2

- "*Child labor, soldiers, sexual abuse, violence in general are treated as OK. They make a boy a man*. Violent groups like to bring in children because they can be brain washed."
- "Child labor is wide spread due to the economic situation."
- "Nobody wants to go to school. There is no education. Minors are used for janitorial work. *Many families give their children away for work, sex, or as soldiers*."
- "This is becoming a huge problem across the country. There are more and more child soldiers on both sides. Checkpoints can be manned by 14 year olds. Child labor is common practice. A lot of the men are dead, fighting, or in prison. The children take on the breadwinning role. It's a practice tolerated by everyone."
- "The parents send the children to work even if they are very young. They are also very strict with discipline."

Round 3

- "Children often have to provide for families. The are abused, often abandoned in country and in refugee camps as prostitutes in Jordan and Lebanon."
- "Child labor (soldiers, working in the place of parents, gathering food/water)"
- "The most marginalized groups in Syria now are children and women. When Hafiz Al-Asad came to power he established a scout program (ages six to twelve). Then they started with youth (ages twelve to eighteen), then brought them into the Ba'th Party. *It was a brainwashing exercise*."
- "The child labor part is true. The economic situation forces parents to make their children earn money."
- "The refugees are trying to educate their children, but in Syria they are abandoned and forced to work. Often there are no schools. Children are often abandoned because their families are killed. This resulted in child trafficking for

labor."

Level 5: Parents or family impose goals on the child, such as career, or forced marriage.

Round 3

- "There is severe discipline too."
- "Especially Girls"
- "The majority of children on Syria are deeply affected by parents' decisions."

Level 6: Parents are expected to encourage their children's choices for their own careers.

Round 1

- *Responses to round 1*:
    - "Most Syrian fathers want their children to be like him, or what he wants for them."
    - "Because of the refugee situation. Within Syria some may have left children behind."

Round 2

- "*Sexual Abuse of children is much higher in the United States than in Syria*. It's rare."

Four participants declined to choose a level, instead providing the following comments:

- "All the previous comments are correct. It varies from one region to another, but many of the children are not in school. They have to work to feed the family. Children are often used as soldiers. They have lost their childhood. The imprint will change forever. It's the worst where ISIL is."
- "The same for children as women. Regime 2, ISIL 4, PYD 5, Free Syrian Army 6. The education ISIL gives is to make children worse rather than better. The Free Syrian Army doesn't interfere with children. They leave it to the families. They do get killed by bombs. *There are less children in Syria every day*."
- "On one hand children are left to themselves, on the other they are sexually exploited in the refugee camps. It was not there before the war. There is a huge problem of prostitution. It will affect civil society in the future."
- "There have never been any laws in Syria giving children any right. There hasn't been any birth control. The average family has seven children. Raising seven children is very difficult. Parents have to work most of the time to afford them. The children grow up on the streets. The main danger now is not going to school. We are approaching a disaster for lack of education. They are exposed to abuse from radical groups. Terrorism is not only military. Syria is like a rich land. What is sown is reaped, especially with children. Lately children have been used to commit terrorist bombings. The international community bears a lot of responsibility for its neglect. The children are lost. *The world thinks about humanitarian aid, but not the children.* Children, even in Gaziantep, are left to

dirty jobs on the streets. They are being raised to be ideologically like the sectarian parents. If you want to develop any country you have to invest in the people, in the children. *To fight terrorism invest in the children. Development aid should be withheld until what is being taught children is approved*."

Religion

Level 2: In this country, the political leader or leaders control the public's faith practices. (The leader might even be the deity.) Religion provides for medium range needs, up to a generation. For example, "If the people are faithful we will be victorious in battle and be a safe and powerful nation state.

Round 1

- *Responses to round 1*:
  - "This is maybe true for a certain ethnic group. They cannot be Muslim. This is a big problem."
  - "I don't know who was perceived as the dominant religious community."

Round 2

- "Religion is a political investment, no more, no less. It's a sectarian war. The regime is targeting villages, churches, the Sunni, even though they are the majority."
- "*Everybody's launching holy wars*."
- "The regime controls religion. Religion is between man and God, not man and man. His relation to God defines his ethics, his relationship with others. In Syria it is defined by the regime, not religion. Religion should be separated from government."

Round 3

- "Syria was not tolerant before the revolution, for instance the constitution required the President must be Muslim. Now religion is an instrument to trade on for gains. The Imams present themselves as if God on earth. In all religions we expect to be punished for our sins after death. We get it from each other now. Crimes should be punished by the code, by the government, not religion."
- "The religious practices of the terrorists in government areas are used as tools to control people."

Level 3: In this country, religious intermediaries—priests, imams, saints, gurus, rabbis, and others—translate and explain God's will to citizens. The believer hopes to meet needs beyond the immediate life.

Round 1

- "Hafiz Asad was perceived as god. Read the book, Ambiguity and Power. The Leader of the Alawi is Bashar al-Asad. Others are watchdogs for him. He had agreements with the Sunnis too."

- *Round 2 Responses to Round 1:*
    - "This represents God as present on earth with very specific rules to go to heaven"

Round 2

- "The others do not really fit. Before the war there were multiple religions tolerant of each other, but political power rested with the Alawi and Sunni. This caused some tensions. Religion became a problem because of the grasp on power of one minority."
- "Especially over the past 4 years the number of clerics has grown exponentially, becoming a de facto judiciary, emphasizing the level of violence of the other side."
- "Syria is a founder of local laws."
- "This is exactly what's going on. Groups from Lebanon and Syria are working together on this. The strength of any country comes from the people who live in the country. Everyone working together is the right way to proceed."
- "Hafiz al-Asad failed at making people worship him. Children were forced to pray to him, but nobody believed. They grew up to fight him."
- "Imams play a very important role. Even the opposition uses religion to mobilize people."
- "Most of the clerics like to introduce themselves as brokers between the people and God. It gives them power."

Round 3

- "There is a wide range, but 3 is medium."
- "This is *out of survival mode*. The parents have to believe that there is a better life after this that their work and pain is for a purpose. It provides hope."

Level 4: In this country, citizens have individual relationships with the divine. There is one dominant religious community, which is intolerant of other religions and atheists.

Round 1

- *Responses to round 1:*
    - "Anyone choosing level 4 is most likely an atheist. Atheists are anyone of a minority religion and *eligible to be executed*."
    - "In government controlled areas this is true."

Level 5: In this country, citizens have individual relationships with the divine. There is one dominant religious community, which is tolerant of other religions and atheists.

Round 1

- "Efforts are being made to change demographics by displacing some sects and replacing them with chosen ones."

Round 2

- "Syria *used to be a secular country where everyone was tolerant of each other*."

Round 3

- "Syria is very diverse. The Sunni are definitely the dominant group, but before the conflict inter-religious disputes were rare, and inter-religious marriage was common. Even the ruling elite were not from the dominant group, and it was acceptable."
- "It was majority Sunni, but Syria does have a Christian community. Syrians have individual relationships with different religions. It is not like this for all of Syria, for example, ISIS wants and Islamic state."

Level 6: In this country, the religious and scientific communities cooperate well, and the major religious communities have integrated findings from group altruism, group selection, and evolutionary psychology research.

Round 3

- "The psychology aspect of 6 is non-existent in Syria. 5 is also true. In Syria there was always tolerance between religions. There is no tolerance now between the Sunni and the Alawi."

Level 8: In this country, the religious and scientific communities are partners in a large-scale initiative to address two or more global threats (e.g. global warming, environmental degradation, or plagues).

Round 1

- "We are a faithful people, deeply affected by our religion. It is a sacred thing to us. The Asad regime is afraid of faithful groups because they organize well and are led by people other than Asad. They might not be interested in lectures, but they always go to religious obligations. They look to clerics as honest, sober, loving. The faithful have values. *The regime doesn't like values. The regime has a strategy to deny them education, wealth*. Clerics can be in jail, outside country, or in a coffin. Only Asad can appear religious. He wanted to use religion against his enemies, Americans in Iraq, Maliki regime in Iraq, in Lebanon. It was an ace in his hand. He positioned Christian against Muslim, against Maronites, Druze. Forbid real religious activities. Masjid [mosque] open for prayer, but no gatherings. Can't discuss anything at all there. He gives talks for clerics to give. Some clerics are still there working for him. People are afraid to say they are faithful. Prayer is in secret. Asad gave George W. Bush information regarding terrorist groups all over the world. Asad funded al-Qaida in Iraq, the camps in Deir ez-Zor, for instance. *The United States has secret jails in Syria. Asad is so strong because he provides black ops services to many countries. He is protector of Israel*."

Four participants declined to choose a level, and instead provided these comments:

- "Religion exists in the opposition and the government. Asad tried to provoke people using religion. Some hide behind religion. This should be included in the options. Most Syrians don't believe in any of these levels because it's like magic. They are not very religious. They may meet religious obligations, but not more."
- "Hafiz al-Asad was never perceived as God. Bashar forced people to say there is no god but Bashar, but he denies it. *Religion is abused by all people*. Before the conflict the security service controlled all religious services…religion is a personal experience between the believer and God. Rewards and punishment should be in the afterlife. It is being used politically. It's used by the opposition and the government. [The participant will welcome the separation of church and state.] Turkey is an example. Erdoğan's claim that Fethullah Gülen was behind the coup attempt didn't work."
- "In the freed region they try to separate religion from government. They encourage all religions and tolerance of each other. They have good relations with each other. The government targets Sunnis, not terrorists. They cooperate with science too."
- "ISIL – 4, Regime – 3, Free Syrian Army – 6, PYD – 5"