Violence, Displacement, and Support for Internally Displaced Persons: Evidence from Syria

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Abstract

What is the legacy of war, violence, and displacement on altruism towards diverse populations suffering similar hardships today? Prior research suggests that these hardships have the potential to increase empathy that can in turn motivate altruism across identity boundaries. We test this hypothesis using survey data from over 2000 Syrians living in rebel-held areas in 2017. We find that Syrians previously exposed to violence were more likely to host IDPs. Using a conjoint experiment to measure preferences over different types of IDPs, we show that these individuals were also more likely to prefer to host sick and vulnerable IDPs, as well as IDPs from the Kurdish ethnic minority. However, they were less likely to host IDPs from the Christian minority, possibly due to their association with the government. These results suggest that politics plays an important role in shaping the co-evolution of violence, altruism, and intergroup behavior during conflict.

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1   INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are currently more refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) than at any time since the end of World War II. As the number of those displaced by violence grows, humanitarian agencies and host-country governments have increasingly called on ordinary citizens to welcome displaced people into their homes and communities through resettlement and local integration programs (UNHCR 2013). However, little is known about what motivates members of the host population to incur the costs and risks of hosting refugees and IDPs.

This is especially true of host populations in poor and conflict-affected countries. Because it is often difficult or impossible to collect data in these settings, most research on why citizens of host-countries support migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees comes from wealthy countries in stable regions (e.g. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Adida, Lo and Platas 2018). While a small number of studies have addressed this topic using data from developing countries (Hartman and Morse 2018; Whitaker 2003), rigorous empirical evidence on the drivers of support for refugees and IDPs in countries actively experiencing civil conflict remains scarce. Yet this is precisely where the need for research on the drivers of support for IDPs and refugees is greatest, as the overwhelming majority of those forcibly displaced by violence flee within their own country or region, where levels of civil conflict, strife, and poverty are high (UNHCR 2016).

To address this gap, we collaborated with an international humanitarian aid organization conducting surveys in non-government controlled areas of Syria to inform their programming and aid policies.[1] Our collaboration centered around one such survey administered in 2017 to over 2000 Syrians from 70 communities in northern and southern Syria. In addition to information on economic activity, medical needs, and food security, the survey collected information on past experiences with violence, whether respondents were currently hosting IDPs from other parts of

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[1]Due to the political sensitivity of operating humanitarian aid programming in Syria, the humanitarian partners who made this research possible do not wish to be identified at this time.

Syria, and whether they would be willing to host additional IDPs should the need arise. The latter topic -– willingness to offer assistance to IDPs — was elicited through a conjoint experiment in which respondents were presented vignettes of hypothetical IDP families whose attributes varied along several dimensions (e.g. ethnic and religious identity, gender of household head, level of need, and occupation) and asked to choose which family they would rather host, given their limited resources.

We use these data to assess how past exposure to violence associates with hosting behavior, focusing in particular on its influence on the importance of indicators of need relative to ethnic and religious identity. Our pre-registered hypotheses draw on theories of altruism born of suffering, which posit that victimization and suffering can lead to greater empathy, and that such empathy can in turn motivate altruistic behavior towards those in need regardless of their ethnic or religious identity. Recent research has found that this theory explains patterns of hosting behavior in regions beset by recurrent periods of cross-border violence and displacement (Hartman and Morse 2018), but the scope of this finding remains untested. Following this line of research, we hypothesized that individuals previously exposed to violence would be more responsive to indicators of need and less responsive to ethnic or religious identity when deciding which families to host, as compared to those with less prior exposure to violence. We also hypothesized that these individuals would be more likely to host IDPs in real life.[2]

In Syria, which is predominantly populated by Sunni Muslim Arabs, ethnic and religious minorities — including the Alawites, Druze, Christians, and Kurds — made up about 35% of the pre-war population (Balanche 2018). This diversity characterizes the setting in which we test how exposure to violence during civil war associates with altruistic behavior within and across ethnic and religious boundaries.

Our results are broadly consistent with our hypotheses. Whereas residents with below average exposure to violence and displacement discriminate against Kurdish families and families with sick children, residents with above average prior exposure exhibit no such discrimination and

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[2]Our pre-analysis plan is available at [REDACTED FOR PEER REVIEW].

indeed appear to prefer hosting families with sick children, consistent with the idea that violence precipitates an empathetic preference shift, making individuals more responsive to indicators of need and less responsive to identity when deciding who to host.

We also find a strong association between prior exposure to violence and actual hosting behavior. Substantively, a one standard deviation increase in violence associates with a five percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting IDPs and an additional 12 person-months of hosting overall. We interpret this result as evidence that past experience with violence not only leads to more empathetic preferences, but also motivates greater helping behavior overall.

Lastly, we find that while violence appears to mitigate discrimination against ethnic Kurds, the same is not true for discrimination against minority Christians. Whereas individuals with low violence experience display a distinct preference for hosting Christians, this preference is much weaker among individuals with high violence exposure. Splitting our sample into subgroups for Sunni Arab Muslims and Syriac-Assyrians, we find that past experience with violence associates with weaker support for Christian families among Sunni Arab respondents but has no such association among the 15% of our sample who identify as Christian Assyrians.

We explore two potential explanations for this result, both of which are consistent with the idea that empathy born of violence is sensitive to sectarian politics during conflict: (1) *self-interest*: given the presence of Sunni extremist groups, hosting Christian IDPs may entail a heightened level of risk; individuals previously affected by violence may be especially concerned about these risks, reducing their motivation to host Christian IDPs; and (2) *blame*: because Christians have long been associated with support for the Assad regime, both before and during the crisis, victims of violence may be especially resentful of Christians for their role in the conflict, reducing their willingness to host.

Our study makes two contributions to two closely related literatures. First, we contribute to the growing literature on the determinants of support for immigrants and refugees by explicitly testing an existing theory and associated set of findings in a new context. In so doing, we validate and strengthen existing evidence that altruism born of suffering can motivate hosting behavior in

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diverse settings, providing much needed replication in a field where this is all too often under-incentivized. At the same time, our results also caution that altruism born of suffering is unlikely to extend to groups associated with rival parties in the conflict.

Second, our findings also make an important contribution to the literature on the legacies of violence on individual and group-level behavior. Whereas previously this literature has tended to treat all outgroups the same, our findings suggests that the legacies of violence are not uniform across ethnic and religious outgroups and that they instead depend on sectarian politics — whereas altruism towards apolitical outgroups may increase in the aftermath of violence, altruism towards outgroups associated with rival parties in the conflict may decrease due to blame attribution or to the heightened importance of self-interested security concerns.

The project also has important implications for the practice of providing humanitarian assistance to those forcibly displaced by violence. In particular, our results suggests that under certain conditions, highlighting shared experiences as opposed to group differences may help increase generosity towards those in need. This implies a need for future research on the potential for this type of public messaging to promote intergroup altruism during and after conflict.

2   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section we outline the conceptual framework that motivates this research. Political scientists and psychologists have long been interested in how experiences of conflict and violence shape both institutions and individual behavior (Blattman and Miguel 2010). A large body of research has examined the relationship between conflict and the salience of social group identity (Petersen 2011; Posen 1993; Sambanis and Shayo 2013). The emerging empirical regularities from this research led to competing theoretical arguments about how violence affects inter-group cooperation.

Some evidence suggest that conflict can increase the salience of within group allegiance while building hostility towards outgroups, leading to parochial altruism (Bauer et al. 2014; Beber, Roessler and Scacco 2014). In line with this, the post-traumatic stress literature argues that the ex-

perience of violence hardens individuals' attitudes towards peace and compromise (Hirsch-Hoefler et al. 2016).

In contrast to these findings, researchers have developed the theory of post-traumatic growth (PTG) to explain the potential positive impacts of violence at the micro-level. Experience of violence may positively affect political participation (Bateson 2012; Blattman 2009), altruism (Voors et al. 2012), and community engagement (Bellows and Miguel 2009). A recent meta-analysis confirms that war violence indeed tends to increase pro-sociality across various studies (Bauer et al. 2016).

Yet most evidence documents these positive changes *within* social groups and/or during the post-conflict period, after most of the violence has ended (e.g. Mironova and Whitt 2016). In this paper we analyze how experiences of violence shape behavior *between* social groups and while violence is ongoing and social identities may be politicized or polarized. More precisely, we draw on the existing theoretical concept that experiences of violence can create inter-group empathy and altruistic behaviour (Hartman and Morse 2018) and we test this theoretical concept in the context of the pressing problem to provide refuge to people fleeing civil conflict.

2.1 DETERMINANTS OF SUPPORT FOR IDPs

Globally the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that in 2018 244 million people left their place of origin as migrants. The UNHCR estimates that as of June 2018, almost 70 million people were displaced as a result of conflict and violence (UNHCR 2018), including over 25 million refugees displaced outside their country of origin and over 40 million internally displaced people. Nations rich and poor struggle to provide support to these conflict-affected populations.

When violence forces people to flee, there are rarely refugee or IDP camps staffed with humanitarians at the ready to provide support. Instead, what policymakers refer to as "host communities" must provide front-line aid. There are many factors that might shape host community members' general attitudes towards migrants and displaced people (Braithwaite et al. 2019;

Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner 2016; Ghosn, Braithwaite and Chu 2019) and the decision to be accepting and even generous rather than hostile. Host communities face obvious economic costs if they support displaced people, but they may also be confronted with political ones. Research on refugees shows that their arrival may increase perceptions of group-based threats in refugee-receiving states (Whitaker 2003). Such perceptions may not be unfounded given that conflicts tend to cluster in space and time and that refugees could increase the probability of violence spreading by bringing in weapons, altering the ethnic or religious composition of their settlement region, or by increasing demands on limited resources (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). Less research has focused on the consequences on local communities of hosting internally displaced people in contrast to transnational refugees.

Local host communities may be particularly skeptical of supporting displaced people who are associated with social groups that are different than their own, or perhaps even associated with a host community's enemy. This may be especially true if displaced people participate actively in the ongoing conflict or are perceived to do so. Generosity towards IDPs in general, and towards people from social outgroups in particular, therefore presents a puzzle, especially during ongoing conflict.

Yet, over 52% of IDPs do not find shelter in formal camps, but are hosted by local communities (Davies 2012). Many individuals make the decision to help displaced people in need and even to help those who are not from their own social group. Given general resource constraints in times of conflict, we explore how social and political identity shapes generosity under these conditions.

2.2 EMPATHETIC ALTRUISM

To understand generosity towards other identity groups, we build on the theoretical concept of empathetic altruism elaborated in Hartman and Morse (2018). Empathetic altruism puts forward that shared experiences of displacement and violence create cross-cutting identities that explain why some individuals are more likely to support displaced people, including those from different ethnic and religious groups.

Empathy, or the ability to share and understand the feelings of another is a primary driver of altruistic, or "other-regarding" behavior (Batson and Powell 2003; De Waal 2008). Experiencing violence could increase empathetic actions across identity boundaries in the following steps: (1) violence and displacement causes hardship and suffering; (2) surviving these hardships increases empathy for others, including for those who suffered in a similar way; (3) because empathy motivates helping behavior on the basis of need, identity boundaries become relatively less important when deciding who to assist. In this way, empathy cuts across identity boundaries, particularly when there is a shared experience, leading to altruistic behavior both within and between social groups (Hartman and Morse 2018).

The idea that empathy born of violence links violence to greater generosity across group boundaries is grounded in the work of Frans De Waal (2008), who identifies three processes that drive empathetic altruism. These include emotional contagion, when observing another being in need leads to personal distress. Personal distress can motivate an individual to help another for egotistical reasons - to relieve their own emotional distress. Second, sympathetic concern, or "an affective response that consists of feelings of sorrow or concern for a distressed need other" (Eisenberg 2000). A sympathetic response stands in contrast to other-regarding behavior motivated by self-interest (Batson and Powell 2003). Finally, perspective-taking is a process through which an individual accurately understands another person's internal state. Perspective taking increases the power of both emotional contagion and sympathetic concern by increasing perceptions of another person's distress.

When conflict leads to individual hardship, pain and distress, a person's perspective-taking will be shaped by their own experience with a similar situation (Batson and Oleson 1991). As perspective-taking increases emotional contagion and sympathetic concern, empathetic altruism can motivate helping behavior towards others in times of distress. Empathetic altruism can be enhanced by perceptions of similarity between people (Staub and Vollhardt 2008), but hardship can increase sympathy independent of shared characteristics (Staub and Vollhardt 2008; Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). As a result, experiences of hardship can create a cross-cutting identity that

mitigates or supersedes other identities (Paluck and Green 2009).

2.3   HYPOTHESES

We present two sets of prespecified hypotheses.[3] First, leaving past experience of violence aside, we expect that respondents will be concerned about the well-being of internally displaced people, and will thus be more willing to accept people who are sick or in a female-headed household, two categories of household that tend to be more vulnerable than others, all else equal. Conversely, we also expect respondents to hold ingroup preferences, and thus to prefer co-ethnic and co-religious internally displaced people, all else equal.

We do not have a clear hypothesis regarding the impact of prewar professional occupation: on the one hand, a professional working background may be interpreted as a signal of greater wealth and therefore greater ability to remunerate altruistic behavior, or it may be seen as a sign of greater education or other desirable attributes, leading to a positive impact on the likelihood of being hosted; on the other hand, respondents may infer that those who come from a professional working background are better positioned to access assistance elsewhere, and may thus prefer farmers on account of their greater need.

Our main hypothesis is that those who previously experienced violence will be more responsive to indicators of IDP need or vulnerability (as proxied by having a sick child or being a single, female-headed family) and correspondingly less responsive to IDPs' religion or ethnicity, as compared to those who have not experienced violence and displacement. We define the experience of violence as experiencing events that can lead to hardship and trauma through their intention to hurt, damage or kill, including forced displacement, attacks on property, and physical violence. We also expect those who previously experience violence to be more altruistic towards IDPs in general, and thus to host them in greater numbers.

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[3]Our pre-analysis plan can be accessed via [REDACTED FOR PEER REVIEW].

2.4 SCOPE CONDITIONS

Recent research shows that empathy can be a powerful driver of support for IDPs and refugees (Hartman and Morse 2018; Adida, Lo and Platas 2018; Simonovits, Kezdi and Kardos 2018). However, these studies are relatively few in number, and come from very specific contexts. Hartman and Morse (2018), for instance, provide evidence suggesting that empathy motivates hosting behavior across group boundaries in the context of the Ivorian refugee crisis in Liberia; Adida, Lo and Platas (2018), on the other hand, show that a perspective-taking exercise administered to U.S. citizens and designed to elicit empathy for refugees increased inclusionary behavior in the form of an anonymous letter to the President of the United States; and Simonovits, Kezdi and Kardos (2018) show that an online game designed to facilitate perspective-taking and engender empathy reduced antipathy towards refugees among citizens of Hungary.

Here, we test the empathy born of violence hypothesis in the context of ongoing civil war, circumstances which are altogether distinct from previous studies yet highly relevant to the well-being of the majority of those forcibly displaced by violence. In considering whether this hypothesis will travel to our setting, several factors are important to keep in mind. First, high levels of civilian victimization as in the Syrian case mean that the salience of shared experience between host communities who have previously experienced violence and IDPs could increase the cross-cutting identity born of violence, increasing empathy. People in distress may be easily able to take a suffering person's perspective and may find comfort in helping these individuals.

On the other hand, the willingness to help displaced families might be low in the politicized and resource-constrained context of an ongoing civil war. In the Syrian case, UN OCHA reported that 69% of the remaining population in 2017 lived in extreme poverty and that the coping capacities of many people in the most affected communities in Syria were exhausted, forcing them to cut back on food consumption, to spend savings and to accumulate debt (UN OCHA 2016). The acute priority of addressing one's own needs may impede willingness to help others. The danger of being attacked by the various armed actors in Syria may also evoke self-preserving behavior and

may restrain individuals' support to those social groups that are targets of political violence in fear of increased attacks to one's own home.

Additionally, IDPs — and in particular ones from ethnic or religious outgroups — may be associated with an actor that committed violence against potential hosts. Balcells (2012) for example shows that suffering that can be attributed to an armed actor leads to the rejection of the perpetrator's identity. This rejection may also lead to general hostile feelings towards religious or ethnic groups associated with the perpetrator (Bar-Tal and Labin 2001; Canetti-Nisim et al. 2009). Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013) even show that group identities in conflicts can mediate how civilians perceive harm perpetrated by outgroups and ingroups. If a Syrian has experienced violence committed by a specific armed group, this might reduce this person's readiness to host IDPs whose social group is affiliated with that actor. The highly politicized context of hosting IDPs while violence is ongoing might increase in- and outgroup dynamics. If individuals recently experienced violence by armed actors and associate this hardship with certain groups in an ongoing conflict, they may reject hosting "collaborators" of their tormentors. This blaming might mitigate the effects of empathy born of violence.

To summarize, we expect hosting IDPs in Syria to be a difficult test for the theory of empathy born of violence due to the politicization of identity groups, the imminent threat of violence, and the severity of resource constraints, all of which could be expected to further increase preferential treatment for social ingroups.[4]

3   SYRIAN CONFLICT

The civil war in Syria began with peaceful anti-government protests against President Bashar al-Assad in 2011 that were violently repressed by the Syrian regime. In response, multiple rebel

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[4]In the Syrian context relevant social identity groups are shaped by historical ethnic, religious and sectarian divisions. In the context section below we briefly discuss the situation of these different groups and for ease of reference refer to them as social groups throughout.

groups emerged and violence spread throughout the country. The ongoing civil war has led more than 5.6 million people to seek refuge abroad and displaced another 6.1 million within the country itself, as of the end of 2017 (NRC/ IDMC 2018). The following sections summarise the key dynamics of the crisis, with a particular focus on the sectarian dimension of the war. This perspective is central to an understanding of our experimental findings on ethno-religious hosting preferences. In the Appendix, we provide background information on sectarian divides in Syria prior to the crisis.

3.1 SECTARIANISM IN THE POPULAR UPRISINGS

In March 2011, Sunni-led demonstrations against President Bashar al-Assad sparked in southern Syria. Supported by a large part of the population, including both Arab and minority ethnic groups such as the Kurds, the demonstrations quickly gained in size (Zisser 2017; Jenkins 2014). The Syrian regime responded to the growing opposition movement with violent repression and the strategic fuelling of social, including religious and ethnic, divisions within the protesters (Baczko, Dorronsoro and Quesnay 2018, 258). While the Assad regime formed political and economic alliances with minorities like Christians, Druze, and Alawite to marginalize Sunni protestors, the government simultaneously portrayed itself as the guarantor of national unity in light of Kurdish claims for self-determination (Balanche 2018, 13). The regime crackdown on protestors quickly transformed the initial revolt into a full-scale civil war that continues today (Droz-Vincent 2014).

Over the course of the war, the armed opposition to the Government of Syria splintered into various factions, often along religious and ethnic cleavages. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore all the permutations and factions that emerged during the conflict, but several stand out. In the early stages of the conflict, Syria's Sunni Arab majority loosely organized themselves as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in opposition to the president's Alawi sect. In addition, predominantly Sunni Arab Jihadist groups, such as the Islamic State (IS) and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) that was previously known as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), fought to control territory. Kurdish groups in the North East of Syria, that initially fought alongside Sunni rebels to topple the government,

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also shifted to fight for their own territorial autonomy. Critically, since 2013, Kurdish groups have also fought against both IS and HTS with support from Western allies. At the same time, the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) injected an increasingly stronger tone of Kurdish nationalism into their rallies and began to call for self-determination (ICG 2013). These claims alienated the Kurdish rebels from the broader Sunni movement against al-Assad whose constituents generally favour a unified Syria (Gunter 2015).

Other ethnic minorities, such as Christians and Druze, took different positions in the conflict. Government propaganda targeted these communities, stoking the fear that a majority (Sunni Arab) government would lead to a backlash against minority groups (Balanche 2018; Berti and Paris 2014). The extremist ideology of IS and the specific targeting of non-Sunni Muslim minority groups may have also increased Christians' fears about their future should the al-Assad government fall (Berti and Paris 2014). Hence, several Christian and Druze communities set up local defence militias (Baczko, Dorronsoro and Quesnay 2018, 87).

The increasing ethnic and religious divisions in Syria were reflected in the emerging zones of control during the conflict. While the regime held multi-sectarian zones in the most populous areas, the largely Kurdish North East was controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The rebel-held areas in Aleppo and Idleb were predominantly Sunni Arab zones until the fall of Aleppo in December 2016. Control in these areas was the most fragmented because of competing armed groups, including the presence of Islamist radicals, who until their defeat by Kurdish militias controlled territory in Raqqa and Deir-al-Zor. More recently, government forces were able to retake a slim majority of Syrian territory from rebel and jihadist groups. In the end of 2017, the IS was driven out of Raqqa, its de-facto capital in Syria, by a concerted effort of international forces and the Kurdish SDF. The year 2018 was characterized by Turkish attacks in northern Syria against Kurdish territorial control around Afrin and government's retaking of Dar'a governorate in South Syria, with assistance from Russian forces. Over 13.1 million people in Syria required humanitarian assistance in 2017 to mitigate the vulnerabilities from displacement, exposure to hostilities, and limited access to basic goods (UN OCHA 2017).

3.2 VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS DURING THE CONFLICT

The Syrian civil war has been characterized by high levels of indiscriminate violence – such as forced mass displacement, collective punishment, torture of innocent civilians, bombings and sieges of entire villages, towns, and cities – perpetrated by all conflict parties. Unlawful weapons such as cluster munitions and chemical weapons have been used throughout the civil war by different parties involved in the conflict. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, monitoring the conflict from abroad, estimated the death toll since the beginning of the war to be 511,000 as of March 2018.

The Syrian government has used widespread shelling and barrel bombs to instill fear in Sunni districts and to make rebel-held areas unlivable. Aleppo, held by various fractions of Sunni rebel groups, was hit hardest by barrel bombs from the regime forces (Fabbe, Hazlett and Sinmazdemir 2017). Sunnis, often marginalized in government-held areas, have fled violence committed by security forces.

While the regime attacked Sunni majority areas, the insurgent-controlled territories became increasingly dangerous for minorities that were harassed and extorted by the various rebel fractions. Anti- government groups have looted Christian, Druze, Alawite, and Shia households, suspecting these groups to be regime collaborators (Baczko, Dorronsoro and Quesnay 2018, 256-265). Assyrians in particular faced discrimination and violence at the hands of extremist Islamist groups. After the proclaimed creation of a "caliphate" in June 2014 and the group's rapid territorial advances, the IS inflicted severe harm on the civilian population in general (ICG 2012). This included mass killings as well as concerted campaigns against non-Muslim minorities. In their territories, the IS introduced strict sectarian hierarchies. Due to the ideological ambition to unite Sunnis across nationalities, other religious minorities were intensively persecuted, killed, and displaced. The IS and HTS looted churches, issued ultimatums to convert to Islam and suppressed the practice of Christian rites in their territories (Haider 2017). In Deir ez-Zor, as a stronghold of IS during the civil war, the Armenian Church was destroyed and the few Christians who chose to

stay paid head taxes to ensure protection (Baczko, Dorronsoro and Quesnay 2018, 259).[5]

3.3 ACCOMMODATION OF SYRIAN IDPS

Since the outbreak of armed conflict in 2011, more than half of the Syrian population has been displaced (UN OCHA 2016). The long crisis also resulted in the mass destruction of housing infrastructure. With most neighbourhoods being severely damaged, adequate shelter is insufficient and most IDPs struggle to meet basic needs. In 2016, only 5% of Syrian IDPs lived in collective shelters in schools, mosques and churches (Shelter Sector Syria 2016). Host communities remain the primary provider of shelter for IDPs. The vast majority sought protection in rented houses, apartments, or with family members. Rented accommodation is over-crowded and multiple families share small facilities. IDPs are often unable to make formal rental agreements with landlords and many IDPs cannot afford rising rent prices (UN OCHA 2016, 19).

4 EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

We use two strategies to test how exposure to violence during war affects willingness to host IDPs, both of which rely on data collected during a face-to-face survey conducted in four Syrian governorates in December 2017. First, we use data from a conjoint experiment designed to measure respondents' preferences over IDPs' characteristics when deciding who to host to assess whether prior exposure to violence and displacement associates with stronger preferences for vulnerable IDPs and weaker preferences for religious or ethnic ingroup IDPs, consistent with the empathy born of violence hypothesis. Second, we test whether prior exposure to violence associates with greater *actual* hosting of IDPs, as would also be consistent with the empathy born of violence hypothesis.

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[5]There is evidence that IS persecuted Muslim minorities and other religious groups even more fiercely, including Alwais and Yazidis.

4.1 ACCESS

We conducted our study in collaboration with a large international humanitarian organization in-volved in the provision of humanitarian aid to hard-hit regions of Syria. This organization conducts regular background surveys using local humanitarian actors inside of Syria and based in the com-munities where the assessment takes place.[6]. The results of these surveys are then used to inform this organizations programs and policies in the region. During our collaboration, the survey in-cluded questions on protection, access to information, possession of documentation (e.g. land titles, birth certificates, etc.), past experiences with violence, and current hosting of refugees or IDPs. We added our conjoint experiment designed to provide insights in to which types of IDPs were most likely to be supported versus those less likely to be supported and therefore would most benefit from assistance. The data were collected in December 2017 while fighting continued, and provide a unique opportunity to assess how generosity and altruism operate in the context of ongoing violence.

Given the sensitive nature of the data collected this study, we highlight some of the ethical concerns it raises and how we addressed these concerns. First, research projects, such as this one, can place an undue burden on research participants. People inside of Syria face huge burdens to-wards meeting their basic needs and participating in research that does not contribute towards this goal would be unethical. We managed this risk by adding only a very limited number of questions to the existing survey and maintained an open dialogue with our partners throughout this process on this point so that the research would also be useful to their practical goals of providing better assistance. Second, when asking questions of a sensitive nature about decision-making in times of crisis, we were wary of asking a questions that might unintentionally aggravate existing tensions between groups. To avoid this, we did not ask about the most sensitive inter-group cleavages (fol-

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[6]These surveys were not attached to the provision of humanitarian aid; participants were informed that answering survey questions would not affect whether they would receive support and identifying information was not collected. In addition, given the partners role in the community there was not clear link between how survey respondents answered questions about hosting (either in the survey experiment or in self-reported behavior and their experiences of violence).

lowing the guidance of our local partners we did not ask about members of the Alwai sect) and framed our research in terms of a positive action (generosity to accommodate IDPs) as opposed to any negative behavior (such as the burden that IDPs placed on local communities). Finally, although our partners collected the data as part of their ongoing work, we aimed to be reflexive about our own role during the design and set-up of the project, taking into consideration our role as foreign researchers and the role of our own countries in the conflict. Instead of conducting the survey ourselves, local researchers defined the boundaries of this research.[7] Hence, our partnerships were critical and this research would not have been possible without them.

4.2 SAMPLE

Selection of respondents followed a three-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, 70 communities were randomly selected from the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Daraa, and Qunietra using selection probabilities proportional to population size. Figure 1 displays areas where the communities were sampled. In the second stage, enumerators randomly selected households using a random-walk procedure, with the total number of respondents selected per community proportional to their population. In the third stage, a single adult respondent was randomly selected within each household. If the respondent was not home at the time of the enumerator's visit, an appointment was made for later that day or the following day. If the respondent was not available within 48 hours, the household was replaced. In total, the survey was administered to 2,349 respondents. 80.33 % of the respondents identify as Arab (Sunni Muslims) while 15.50 % identify as Syriac-Assyrian (Christians).[8]

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[7]This included not adding any additional questions about conflict-dynamics to the survey due to the sensitive nature of the data collection.

[8]A small proportion (4.17%) of respondents identify as Turkmen, Palestinian, or do not report an ethnic identity. The absolute numbers by group are: 1887 Arabs, 364 Syriac-Assyrians, and 98 Others.
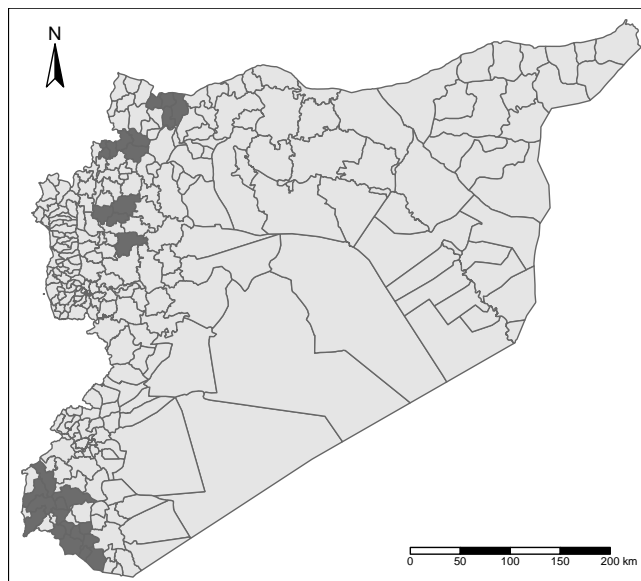
Figure 1: Map of the sample areas in the North and South of Syria

4.3 CONJOINT EXPERIMENT

Our conjoint experiment asks respondents to evaluate IDP families whose attributes randomly varied along five dimensions: ethnicity, religion, child health, profession, and the status of the household head, as depicted in Table 1. Respondents evaluated three pairs of families in succession, each time choosing which of two families they would prefer to host. The motivation for this "forced-choice" design was to mirror choices that host communities face when the number of refugees or IDPs is overwhelming, as is often the case. Another advantage the Conjoint Design is that it has been shown to mitigate social desirability bias, by providing respondents multiple justifications for their selection based on varying attributes, and by the fact that there is often no clear "socially desirable" response (Horiuchi, Markovich and Yamamoto 2018).

Each attribute intended to correspond to a particular motivation for hosting refugees. Recognizing that hosts may prefer to host ethnic or religious ingroups, we varied whether the IDP family was Muslim or Christian, and whether they were Arabic or Kurdish speaking. We report results for Arab and Syriac-Assyrian respondents; and Kurds represent the ethnic outgroup for both ethnic groups. For Sunni Muslims (the majority of our Arab survey population), Assyrians are the

Table 1: IDP Attributes

Attribute	Level 1	Level 2
Status of HH	Single mother	Mother & father
Ethnicity	Arabic speaker	Kurdish speaker
Religion	Christian	Muslim
Occupation	Farmer	Professional
Health of child	Sick	Healthy

Attributes were presented as pictographs, as shown in the Appendix.

relevant religious outgroup because of their adherence to Christianity. For the Syriac-Assyrian in our sample, Muslims are the relevant outgroup.[9] Hypothesizing that empathy for those in distress may motivate communities to host, and that exposure to violence may strengthen such motivation, we varied whether the IDP family had a sick child or a healthy child, and whether the household was headed by a single mother or by a mother and a father. And finally, in recognition of the role that class may play in motivating hosting behavior — and in particular, the IDP family's ability to remunerate their hosts — we manipulated whether the household head was a farmer or a white collar worker.

4.4 EMPIRICAL STRATEGY FOR ESTIMATING HOSTING PREFERENCES

Following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2013), we estimate the probability that a hypothetical IDP family is hosted via:

$$\texttt{Hosted}_{ijk} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \texttt{Singlefemale}_{ikj} + \gamma_2 \texttt{Farmer}_{ikj} + \gamma_3 \texttt{SickChild}_{ikj}$$
$$+ \gamma_4 \texttt{Kurdish}_{ikj} + \gamma_5 \texttt{Christian}_{ikj} + \epsilon_i \tag{1}$$

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[9]The existence of Christian and Kurdish IDP families appears plausible in our sample areas. Southern Syria, including Qunietra and Daraa, is generally ethnically diverse. In Aleppo, Kurdish majority areas - such as around Azaz and Afrin - exist. We also find Christian villages in Aleppo and Idlib governorate. For more information on ethno-religious settlement patterns see Balanche (2018)

where i indicates the respondent, k indicates the round or "choice task", and j indicates the depicted refugee family. In our experiment, $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots, 2310\}$, $k \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, and $j \in \{1, 2\}$. Each respondent i yields 6 observations: 3 rounds, and 2 choices per round. The unit of analysis is the hypothetical IDP family, the outcome is a binary indicator for whether the family is selected, and the explanatory variables are the family attributes. Because each attribute is randomly assigned, equation 1 returns unbiased estimates of the average effect of each attribute on the probability that a refugee family is hosted. We cluster standard errors at the level of the respondent, following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2013).

We also seek to test whether respondents with relatively high levels of exposure violence, displacement, and hardship have different preferences than those with more limited exposure to these experiences. To measure past exposure to violence, we average over four indicators:[10]

1. *Experience of displacement:* we use a survey question on the number of times a household has been displaced during the Syrian civil war to construct a dichotomous variable equal to one if the household was displaced one or more times during the crisis, and zero otherwise. 57.8% of all respondents in this survey have been displaced at least once throughout the crisis.

2. *Experience of death in household:* the survey asked whether a household has experienced the death of a family member during the conflict. We construct a dichotomous variable equal to one if a person in the household aged six to sixty has died in the last six years [11], and zero

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[10]In the pre-analysis plan, we set out to measure past experience with displacement as a separate predictor, while the main violence index should have consisted of indicator 2-4. While we provide an additional analysis separating the experience of violence from the experience of displacement in the Appendix, we have combined all four indicators for the main results in the paper. Theoretically, we do not expect different effects of experiencing violence or displacement on hosting behaviour.

[11]We limit household deaths due to the war to people of this age span to increase the likelihood that the death is associated with the ongoing fighting.

otherwise. 17.4% of survey respondents have experienced the death of family members.

3. *Experience of residence destruction:* we include a dichotomous variable whether the house-hold's primary residence was destroyed during the conflict. 30.3% of all survey respondents' residences were destroyed in the civil war.

4. *Experience of business destruction:* the final dichotomous variable measures whether the respondent's business was destroyed in the civil war. 27.1% of respondents' businesses were destroyed.

We standardize the index of exposure to violence for ease of interpretation. We also create a second binary variable that takes the value of one for respondents with above mean levels of violence exposure and zero otherwise. We use the created four-item index for the observational regression analysis (see details below) and we use the binary variable to identify preferences whom to host depending on past exposure to violence in the conjoint experiment. The heterogeneous effects are estimated by adding an interaction term for each attribute, as follows:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\texttt{Hosted}_{ijk} =\ & \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \texttt{Singlefemale}_{ikj} + \gamma_2 \texttt{Farmer}_{ikj} + \gamma_3 \texttt{Sick}_{ikj} \\
+\ & \gamma_4 \texttt{Kurdish}_{ikj} + \gamma_5 \texttt{Christian}_{ikj} \\
+\ & \gamma_6 \{\texttt{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \texttt{violence}\} + \gamma_7 \{\texttt{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \texttt{violence}_i\} \\
+\ & \gamma_8 \{\texttt{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \texttt{violence}_i\} + \gamma_9 \{\texttt{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \texttt{violence}_i\} \\
+\ & \gamma_{10} \{\texttt{Christian}_{ikj} \times \texttt{violence}_i\} + \epsilon_i
\end{aligned}
\tag{2}
$$

where `violence` is the binary variable described above.[12]

According to our violence measure, about 60.9 % of the respondents have experienced less violence, destruction and displacement than the overall survey sample. Descriptive statistics also

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[12]We can exclude the base term, `violence`, without consequence because it cannot predict `Hosted`, by virtue of the forced choice design.

show that Syriac/Assyrian respondents - as a minority group in Syria - were more strongly exposed to violence than Arab Sunni Muslim respondents. We report further summary statistics, selection into violence and the model specifications in the Appendix.[13]

4.5   Observational analysis

We also assess the relationship between past experience with violence and *actual* self-reported hosting behavior. Our hypothesis is that those with relatively high levels of past experience with violence will host greater numbers of refugees.

We will test this hypothesis using two variables constructed from responses to the survey:

1. *Dichotomous outcome*: whether the respondent is currently hosting IDPs (1) or not (0)

2. *Continuous outcome*: total number of IDPs hosted by the respondent during the whole crisis X duration in months that IDPs were hosted (e.g. hosting of 5 IDPs over 5 months = 25)

Because we test this hypothesis with two variables, we will use the procedure outlined in Benjamini and Hochberg (1995) to adjust our p-values and control the risk of false discovery to 5%.

On average, 44% of our respondents currently host an IDP. The average value for the continuous outcome variable is 23.25. We regress these outcomes on our continuous measures of past violence described above, controlling for gender, age, ethnicity, prewar education,[14] urban versus rural residence prior to the war, quality of prewar residence,[15] prewar occupation,[16] and prewar

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[13]For observational results using the binary indicator or experimental results using the four-item index also see Appendix.

[14]Prewar education is measured through indicator variables for: no education, primary school, secondary school, university, and post-graduate degree.

[15]Quality of prewar residence is measured through indicator variables for: apartment, standalone house, or tent.

[16]Prewar occupation is measured through indicator variables for: unemployed, agricultural occupation, salaried occupation, small business owner, informal labor, and domestic work.

family ownership or residence.[17] We report OLS regressions with robust standard errors clustered at the community level. We also use mean imputation to address missingness in our predictor variables.[18] Summary statistics for our main outcome variables, independent variables, and descriptive (i.e. control) variables are reported in the Appendix.

We pursue two strategies to assess whether the observed relationship between these outcomes and past violence might be driven by unobserved confounding. First, we test empirically whether the covariates listed above vary by past experience with violence. The results, reported in Appendix A.5, suggest that victims of violence — specifically those with above median levels of prior violence exposure — are significantly more likely to have been agricultural workers prior to the war, more likely to have been a salaried or private sector (i.e. white collar) employee, more likely to live in a temporary structure (i.e. a tent), and more likely to by Assyrian, relative to those will with below median exposure to violence. Apart from these observed sources of selection, victims were broadly comparable to non-victims by gender, education, urban vs rural prewar residence, and prewar property ownership. As a whole, these results suggest that violence was not entirely indiscriminate, and that there are likely observed and unobserved sources of selection into violence.

The central question for purposes of this study, however, is not whether violence was or was not selective, but whether these sources of selection also predict hosting behavior. To the extent that they are weak predictors of hosting behavior, then they are unlikely to confound. We assess this through two strategies — first, we look for coefficient stability across our "naive" (i.e. bivariate) and controlled specifications, interpreting stability as evidence that observed covariates that are imbalanced across victimization status are non-confounding. Second, to estimate the degree of *unobserved* confounding, we pursue a sensitivity analysis following Oster (2019), assuming conservatively that the bias due to unobserved confounding is up to twice as influential as the bi-

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[17]Prewar ownership of residence is measured via an indicator variable for: government owned, in family hands, other private owner, or own property.

[18]In total, 5.9% of the data is missing.

ased eliminated by observed sources of confounding, following Oster's recommended standard for robustness. As we show in the Appendix, the results of this sensitivity analysis suggest that unobserved confounders would have more than twice as strongly predictive of hosting behavior than our observed covariates to reduce the estimated association between violence and hosting behavior to zero, a possibility we believe is unlikely.

Notwithstanding these considerations and mitigating strategies, we recognize that because violence is unlikely to have been "as-if" randomly assigned, it is impossible to definitely rule out unobserved sources of confounding. For this reason, we interpret our results as associational and suggestive, using descriptive rather than causal language throughout the paper.

5   RESULTS

5.1   PREFERENCES FOR HOSTING IDPS

Figure 2 displays the average effect of each attribute in the conjoint experiment on whether an IDP family was selected.[19] In line with the long history of division between Arabs and Kurds in Syria, we find strong evidence of discrimination against Kurdish IDPs, with these families roughly 5 percentage points less likely to be hosted. We also observe discrimination against families with sick children, who are 2 percentage points less likely to be hosted than families with healthy children. This small but significant bias may reflect the reluctance of would-be hosts to take on the burden of sick children given the lack of resources available in the Syrian setting, or it may reflect the fear that their illness may spread.

Against our expectations for a predominantly Muslim society, Figure 2 reveals favoritism towards Christian IDPs. One explanation is that this result may be driven by the substantial proportion of our sample (around 15%) that identify as Assyrian. Favoritism towards Christians is indeed much stronger among these respondents, as we report below, though the effect persists

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[19]For the full regression tables, see the Appendix.

(albeit more weakly) even when restricting the sample to Muslim respondents. We return to this seemingly counterintuitive result below.

While respondents prefer to host Arab families who are Christian and have healthy children, they are otherwise more or less indifferent with regards to the gender and occupation of the household head.

Figure 2: Average effects of each conjoint attribute on the decision to host an IDP.
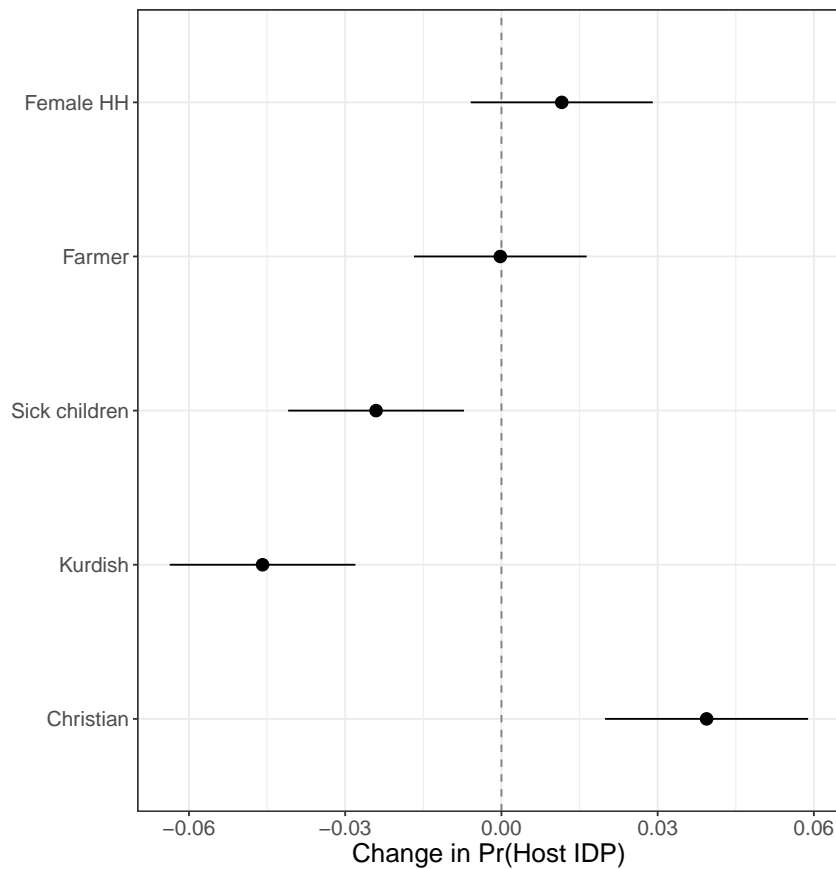
OLS estimates with standard errors clustered at the individual level;
horizontal bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

PRIOR EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND PREFERENCES FOR HOSTING IDPS

Figure 3 displays the effect of each attribute among those with above versus below mean prior exposure to violence. Disaggregating the results in this manner reveals stark differences in the

preferences of those who experienced low versus high levels of violence, particularly in regards to their preferences over hosting ethnic and religious ingroups and families with sick children. Whereas respondents with low levels of prior exposure to violence discriminate against Kurdish families and families with sick children, those with relatively high levels of prior violence exposure exhibit no such discrimination. Compared to individuals with low exposure, survey respondents with high exposure to violence seem to no longer avoid the responsibility of hosting a family with sick children. The survey respondents with high prior exposure to violence are also indifferent to Kurdish IDPs while the group of respondents with lower prior exposure to violence prefers hosting Arab IDPs. These results are consistent with our hypothesis that prior exposure to violence activates empathy, motivating individuals to decide which families to host on the basis of their need and vulnerability, rather than their ethnic identity.[20]

We also observe an important difference between those with low versus high prior exposure to violence in regards to their preferences for hosting Christian IDPs. In particular, we find that while those with low prior exposure have a weak preference for hosting Christian IDPs, those with high prior exposure do not show this preference. We interpret these findings in light of Syrian Christians' association with support for Assad and the Syrian government (e.g. Dagher 2012; al Tamimi 2017). As discussed in Section 3, Assad rose to power in part by marshalling the support from a coalition of minority groups, including Alawites, Druze, and Syriac Assyrians who predominantly identify as Christian (Phillips 2015). During Assad's reign and the subsequent civil war, many of Syria's Christians continued to support his regime materially and through conscription in the Syrian armed forces (al Tamimi 2017). We surmise that exposure to violence during the conflict — most likely at the hands of Syrian government forces — has led to resentment among Sunni Muslims against Christian Assyrians for their support of Assad's regime, reducing whatever preference they otherwise would have for hosting Christian IDPs.

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[20]Another complementary explanation for these results lies in Kurdish resistance to the Syrian regime. Victims of violence at the hands of the regime may be thankful for this, and this may motivate them to put aside whatever animosity they otherwise would hold towards Kurds.

Figure 3: Hosting preferences by past experience with violence
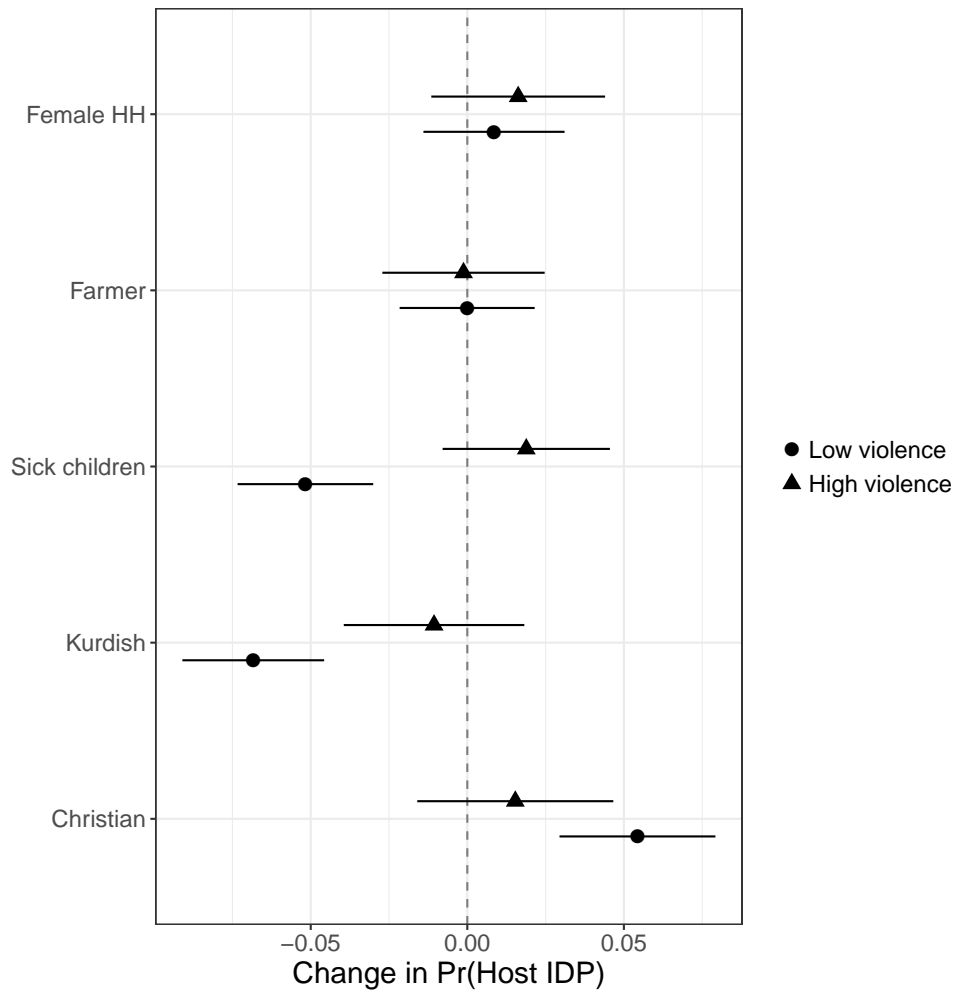
OLS estimates with standard errors clustered at the individual level;
horizontal bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

To explore this possibility further, we examine differences between those with high versus low exposure to violence among two subsets of our sample: Sunni Muslims and Christian Assyrians, who constitute 85 percent and 15 percent of our sample, respectively. If resentment of Christian Assyrians for their support for Assad explains the negative association between violence and willingness to host Christians, then we would expect this effect to be stronger among Sunni Muslims than for Christian Assyrians, whether because the latter is more likely to attribute blame elsewhere in defense of their religious identity, or because their experiences of victimization came

from extremist Islamist groups or predominantly Sunni rebels groups rather than from the regime. The results, reported in Figure 4, are indeed consistent with this logic. Sunni Muslim respondents with high exposure to violence no longer prefer hosting Christian IDPs. In comparison to the overall sample and the Muslim subgroup that has experienced lower levels of violence, they have lost their preference to host Christians while this is not the case for Christian Assyrians that consistently favor their religious group. This provides associational evidence that they might attribute blame to Christian Assyrians for government violence.

To summarize our results, we find that among Sunni Muslims, violence associates with greater willingness to host Kurdish IDPs and IDPs with sick children and lower willingness to host Christian IDPs, relative to those with less exposure. While we cannot decisively identify the mechanisms behind these results, we believe the most likely explanation lies in a combination of i) greater empathy for vulnerable IDPs, which in turn motivates support for sick children regardless of their ethnic identity, and ii) resentment of Christian Assyrians for their support for Assad, which diminishes the preference Sunni's otherwise would have for Christians. The end result is that Sunni Muslims who have experienced violence are essentially indifferent about the religious and ethnic identity of IDPs, as well as their occupation and gender of the household head, but exhibit a distinct preference for vulnerable families with sick children. By contrast, those with more limited exposure to violence are indifferent about the occupation and gender of the household head, favor hosting Christians over Muslims, and prefer not to host Kurdish families or families with sick children.

Among Christian Assyrians, a history of violence associates with slightly weaker preferences against hosting Kurdish IDPs or IDPs with sick children — consistent with our altruism born of empathy hypothesis — but no change in willingness to host Christian IDPs from their religious ingroup.

Figure 4: Hosting preferences by past experience with violence, split by ethnic group

OLS estimates with standard errors clustered at the individual level;
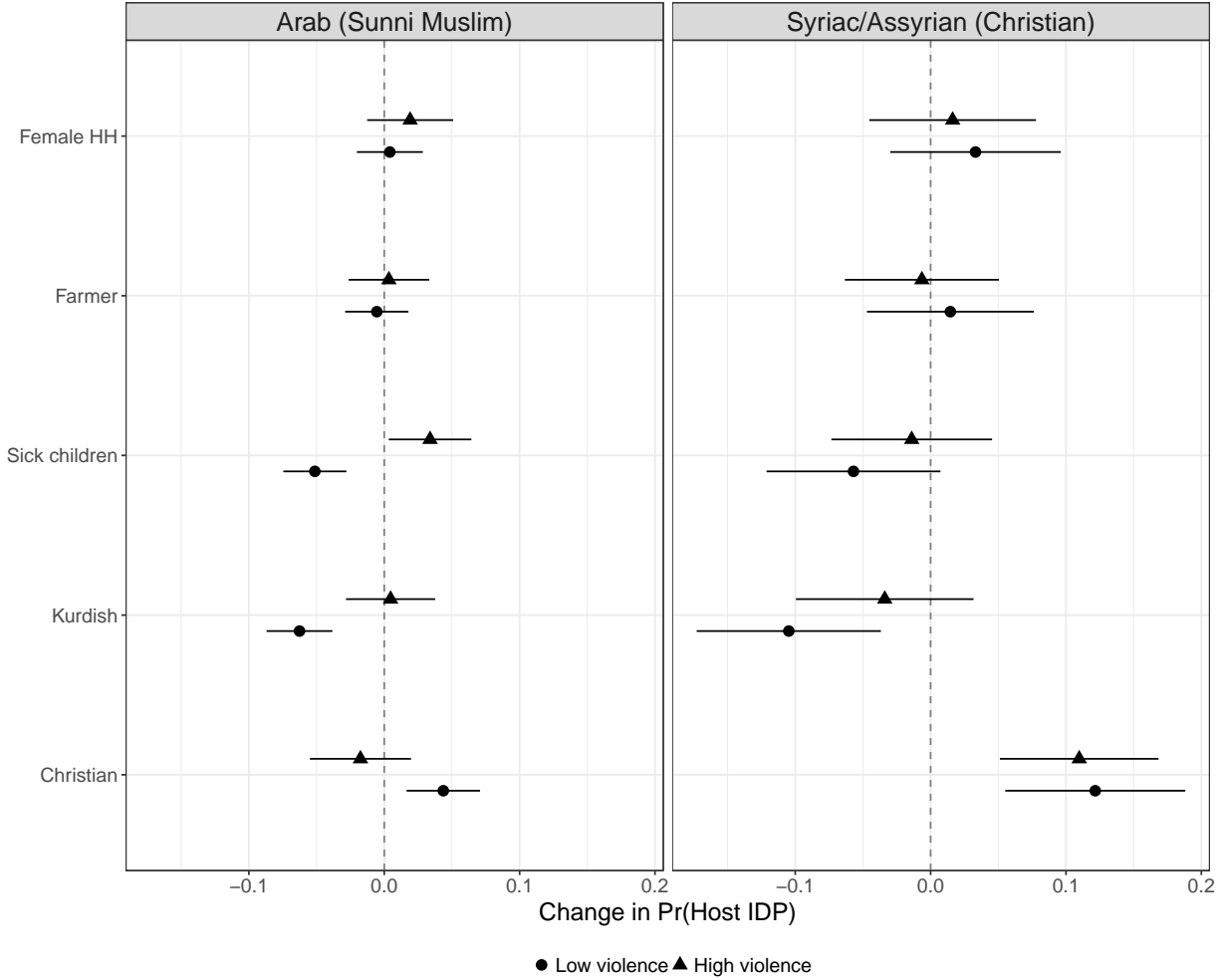*horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals.*

5.2 OBSERVATIONAL ANALYSIS

Our main hypothesis is that empathy born of violence will transcend identity boundaries, motivating altruistic behavior toward those in need regardless of their religious or ethnic identity. Using data on hypothetical hosting from the conjoint experiment, we have shown that this hypothesis holds for ethnic identity but not religious identity in our setting. We return to these mixed results in the Discussion. Here, we use self-reported data on actual hosting to test a corollary of our main hypothesis: that empathy born of violence will lead to greater hosting overall.

We focus on two measures of real-world support for IDPs: an indicator denoting whether the respondent is currently hosting IDPs, and a continuous variable constructed as the number of IDP-months the respondent has hosted over the course of the crisis (i.e. the size of the IDP family(ies) they have hosted × the number of months they hosted them). To (partially) mitigate concerns about confounding, we control for gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and prewar education and occupation.

Table 2 presents our results.[21] Consistent with our empathy born of violence hypothesis, we find that exposure to violence associates positively with both measures of hosting. Substantively, a one standard deviation increase in violence exposure is associated with a five percentage point increase in the likelihood an individual is currently hosting and a roughly 15 month increase in number of IDP-months hosted over the course of the crisis. Notably, these associations become stronger when controlling for observed sources of confounding, suggesting that confounding due to unobserved factors may lead us to *underestimate* the true effect of violence on hosting behavior. In the Appendix, we test this intuition more formally, using the approach developed by Oster (2019) to assess the potential for unobserved confounding. Substantively, we find that for both of the outcomes reported in Table 2, omitted variables would have to be more than twice as confounding than the observed variables to reduce our effect estimates to zero. Because we have endeavored to measure and include the most influential determinants of hosting in our survey, including information on age, gender, ethnicity, and prewar education, occupation, and home ownership, we believe this scenario is unlikely.[22]

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Our study is not without limitations. First of all, though we have done our best to mitigate omitted variables bias by controlling for a large number of prewar covariates in the observational analysis,

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[21] For full regression results see the Appendix.

[22] Inclusion of these variables helps to mitigate the possibility that violent experience during the conflict might shape self-reporting hosting through economic need.

Table 2: Association of past experience with violence and hosting

	Currently hosting IDPs		Total # of months hosted (Family size × duration)	
Violence index	0.05*	0.05*	12.36*	15.14*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(5.64)	(6.81)
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Num. obs.	2209	2209	2177	2177
Mean of outcome	0.44	0.44	23.25	23.25
Unadjusted p.value	0.0326	0.0243	0.0319	0.0294
BH adjusted p.value	0.0326	0.0294	0.0326	0.0294

OLS regression with robust standard errors clustered at the village level. $*p < 0.05$. Adjusted p-values are calculated using the procedure outlined in Benjamini and Hochberg (1995), with risk of false discovery set to 5%.

we cannot rule out unobserved confounding. While our sensitivity analysis following Oster (2019) suggests that unobserved confounding is unlikely to account for our results, we cannot rule this out definitively. This is a problem that affects nearly all studies in the micro-effects of violence literature, and ours is no exception (Bauer et al. 2016).

A second and related limitation is there is no way of knowing how selective migration influences the association between violence and hosting behavior. It is possible, for instance, that the association of violence with hosting is negative among Syrians who fled Syrian altogether and do not enter into our sample. In short, we have no way of knowing whether the results we document in this paper generalize to Syrians displaced outside of Syria.

While this is a limitation, it is also important to bear in mind that our goal in this paper is not to assess the association of violence with hosting among all Syrians living in our study region at the outset of the war. Rather, we view residing within Syria as either an IDP or non-displaced resident as an important population in its own right and a key scope condition of our study; we focus on this population because it is particularly policy relevant given the important role it plays in hosting IDPs in war zones. How violence associates with hosting behavior among refugees living outside of Syrian is a separate question altogether, albeit one that is potentially less relevant from a humanitarian policy perspective given the availability of established camps and government

services in these settings.

Lastly, as with all survey experiments, there are potentially important limitations to the external validity of our results. In our setting, one particular concern is that the preferences elicited in the conjoint experiment may not predict the actual decisions made in the real world in Syria or the resulting composition of IDPs hosted, as these outcomes clearly depend on factors well beyond the host population's preferences, such as the composition of IDP flows, and of course, the host population's constraints. In an extreme scenario in which potential hosts are themselves barely subsisting, they might not host anyone, even if they have a desire to do so and strong preferences over which types of IDPs they would host. Our goal in this study is much more narrow — to estimate preferences, and to assess how these preferences vary with prior exposure to violence.

6 DISCUSSION

Taken as a whole, the results from our conjoint experiment and observational data on real-world hosting suggest that exposure to violence can increase feelings of empathy for IDPs, and that this can motivate greater levels of hosting. Not only were Syrians who experienced violence more likely to help displaced people by hosting them, they were also more responsive to those in need (i.e. sick children) and less biased against Kurdish IDPs. Together, these results suggest that empathy born of violence has the potential to overcome discrimination and create a bridge across longstanding identity cleavages, including divisions between Arabs and Kurds. These groups have been struggling over questions of rights, autonomy and territorial control for more than 100 years, both in Syria, and across the region. That experiencing violence can form cross-cutting solidarity between Arabs and Kurds is a surprising and important insight.

Our finding that empathy born of violence operates even in the context of ongoing armed conflict complements and extends the literature on post-traumatic growth in the wake of violence, which hitherto has largely focused on *post*-conflict settings. Our findings are in line with prior research showing that violence leads to greater levels of pro-sociality in violence-affected Nepali

communities (Gilligan, Pasquale and Samii 2014), lower outgroup discrimination in post-conflict Bosnia (Whitt and Wilson 2007), and higher trust between groups in Burundi (Voors et al. 2012). As such, our study are in line with Bauer et al. (2016)'s recent meta-analysis showing that epxosure to war violence tends to increase cooperative behaviour. However, we are among the first to provide empircal evidence that these pro-social effects may manifest even in the context of ongoing conflict.

Our research also introduces a critical factor into pro-social impact of violence: the politics of intergroup relations. We show that empathy born of hardship may overcome some group cleavages, but not others. In our sample, Assyrians show durable biases against Muslims regardless of whether they were exposed to violence or not. Previous work on social identity theory demonstrates that minority group members tend to identify more strongly with their ingroup than majority group members (Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy 2007; Simon and Brown 1987). This tendency may explain why members of this minority group persistently prefer sheltering their own religious ingroup in the polarised context of active fighting. More research could explore how the group size of religious and ethnic groups shapes the response to violence.

Second, our findings indicate that prior experience of violence decreased empathy for Assyrians in our sample of Sunni Muslims. Two mechanisms are consistent with this evidence for mitigated empathetic altruism: self-preservation and blame.

On the one hand, Muslims that were exposed to violence in non-government held areas of Syria may be more aware of the risk of hosting religious minorities in the Syrian context. Extremist jihadist groups play a major role in the Syrian civil war and groups such as IS and HTS have specifically attacked Christians and minorities in their attempt to establish Sunni Muslim dominance (Haider 2017; Balanche 2018). Strategic self-preservation and the fear of getting attacked may explain why Sunni Muslims reduce their willingness to host Christians when exposed to violence. This mechanism would be consistent with Braithwaite et al. (2019)'s study on Syria showing that recent exposure to violence increased individuals' perception of the risks associated with hosting refugees from conflict zones.

On the other hand, Muslims' increased discrimination against Assyrians could be explained by hostile feelings towards a religious outgroup that is associated with the Syrian regime as a perpetrator of violence against civilians. This blaming of Assyrians for alliances with Assad may be in line with previous studies on the blaming of broader social groups for the violence committed by political actors (Balcells 2012; Bar-Tal and Labin 2001; Canetti-Nisim et al. 2009).

Both mechanisms could plausibly explain why Muslims have experienced higher levels of violence no longer prefer hosting displaced Christians. Our survey experiment cannot identify which mechanism predominantly drives the results and we encourage further research to identify the conditions under which empathy born of violence transcends identity boundaries or is mitigated by countervailing effects.

Overall, this study shows that violence does not always lead to parochial altruism. We show that in diverse settings violence creates the conditions for cross-cutting ties that transcend certain identity boundaries. This has several implication for policy going forward. First, it suggests that when members of groups that are highly divergent on political, religious and cultural characteristics share certain experiences it can create the conditions for generosity. In humanitarian or migration crises where resources are severely constrained, interventions that activate this bridging identity may be critical to garnering support for people in need. Second, while it is an open question what sorts of projects activate this identity, ongoing work around the contact hypothesis (Mousa 2018) may show a way forward for creating bonds between groups. Although evidence on the efficacy of programs that build inter-group relations through contact is mixed (Scacco and Warren 2018), this research shows that when contact focuses on building a shared identity it could be more successful.

This study also shows that some cleavages may be too difficult to bridge, in particular when individuals have incentives to protect themselves against further violence. While we find no evidence that in-and outgroup identities become harder to bridge in Syria as individuals experience violence, future work should nevertheless explore which social cleavages become salient and why. This knowledge may be crucial when fighting stops to increase the chances of bringing people together for peace.

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Violence, Displacement, and Support for Internally Displaced Persons: Evidence from Syria

Online Appendix

A.1   Sectarian Divides Prior to the Crisis

Syria is a religiously diverse multi-ethnic state with a complex history of inter-group relations. Prior to the war, Syria's population consisted of roughly 65% Sunni Arabs, 15% Kurds, 10% Alawi, 5% Christian, 3% Druze, and various smaller minorities. (Balanche 2018). Contemporary power dynamics between minority groups, such as Assyrian Christians, Kurds, and Arab Muslims, can be traced back to at least the Ottoman empire, which controlled the territory from the 16th century until 1918. Following the creation of the French Mandate in 1920, the colonial administration divided the territory into different units of governance based loosely on both sect and geography.[23] The 1939 Personal Status Law recognized individuals as members of specific religious groups with their own legal institutions creating legal differences between members of different groups (White 2012).

Unfolding in the context of World War I, the Assyrian Genocide played a critical role in the politicization of sects and the demography of present day Syria. Assyrian has been used as an umbrella term for numerous non-Armenian Oriental Christian sects present in Ottoman empire. Although some argument is made for common historical ties to the Assyrian empire and to the ancient Semitic language Aramean, in practice these groups, which include (among others) members of the Syriac Catholic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Church of Bablyon, and the Latin Church were not united but instead separated by historical religious, geopolitical and clan divisions. All members, however, were targeted by a lesser known extension of the Armenian Genocide that led to the death of tens if not hundreds of thousands of Assyrians in the border areas of what would become Turkey and

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[23]The colonial administration set up an Alawi state and a Druze state (Jabal Druze) as well as regional states of Damascus and Aleppo and the area known as the Sanjak of Alexandretta, much of which would later be annexed by Turkey (Phillips 2015; White 2012).The incorporation of different religious laws into Syrian law drew upon the Ottoman structure of *millets* that provided communities with different religious legal traditions to administer some of the own affairs under the auspices of Ottoman administration (Arberry 1969).

Syria. The Ottoman army perpetrated many of the atrocities and local defense forces and even Kurdish militias may have played a role in certain places. (Gaunt 2015).

The immediate consequence of the Assyrian genocide was the displacement of Assyrian Christian communities from Turkey into Syria and increased French attention to protecting the rights of religious groups, and in particular Christians, during the mandate period (White 2012). For Assyrian Christians, some degree of protections persisted after the mandate ended, and some rose to positions to prominence with the Syrian Ba'ath party, founded in part by the Syrian Greek Orthodox Christian Michel Aflaq in 1947(Lund 2014). The effects of the Assyrian Genocide were felt long after, however, and their bloody aftermath is echoed in ongoing conflict dynamics almost 100 years later.

The Kurds, the largest non-Arab ethnic group in the territory that would become Syria, have their own history of tension and violence in the region. During the 1920s, the expansion of the Turkish Republic's state authority led to violence between Turkish forces and Kurds and to the displacement of Kurds into French controlled Syria (White 2012). During the mandate period, the French permitted some degree of mobilization around the Kurdish identity, but while religious minorities were acknowledged through differential legal status under the Personal Status Law, and Alawi and Druze communities operated with some autonomy under the mandate's divided governance system, the religiously diverse Kurdish-speaking groups did not benefit from these protections (White 2012).

Tensions between Arab nationalists and Kurds led to discriminatory policies that culminated in a 1962 snap one-day census and citizenship verification exercise in al-Hasaka governorate. This census effectively stripped Kurdish residents of their citizenship if they could not prove that they had settled in Syria prior to 1945. The absence of complete land tenure documentation and suspicion about participation in the census meant that over 100,000 Syrian Kurds lost their Syrian citizenship in this process (Yildiz 2005). Tensions between Arab and Kurdish communities continued to be exacerbated by 1970s land reforms led to large scale expropriation of Kurdish land and the Arabization of previously Kurdish areas in the Turkish and Iraqi border region (Yildiz 2005).

This political history frames the regime of President Hafez al-Assad who took power in 1970, and his son Bashar al-Assad, who became President after his father's death in 2000, and their consolidation of political power in the hands of an Alawi elite. Economic reforms created benefits for a wealthy, mostly urban, Arab Sunni upper class under the Assad regime (Wedeen 2013). However, the majority Sunni Arab population, as well as Kurdish communities of various religious backgrounds, increasingly complained about high unemployment, corruption and a lack of political freedom in the lead up to the 2011 uprising (Hof and Simon 2013).
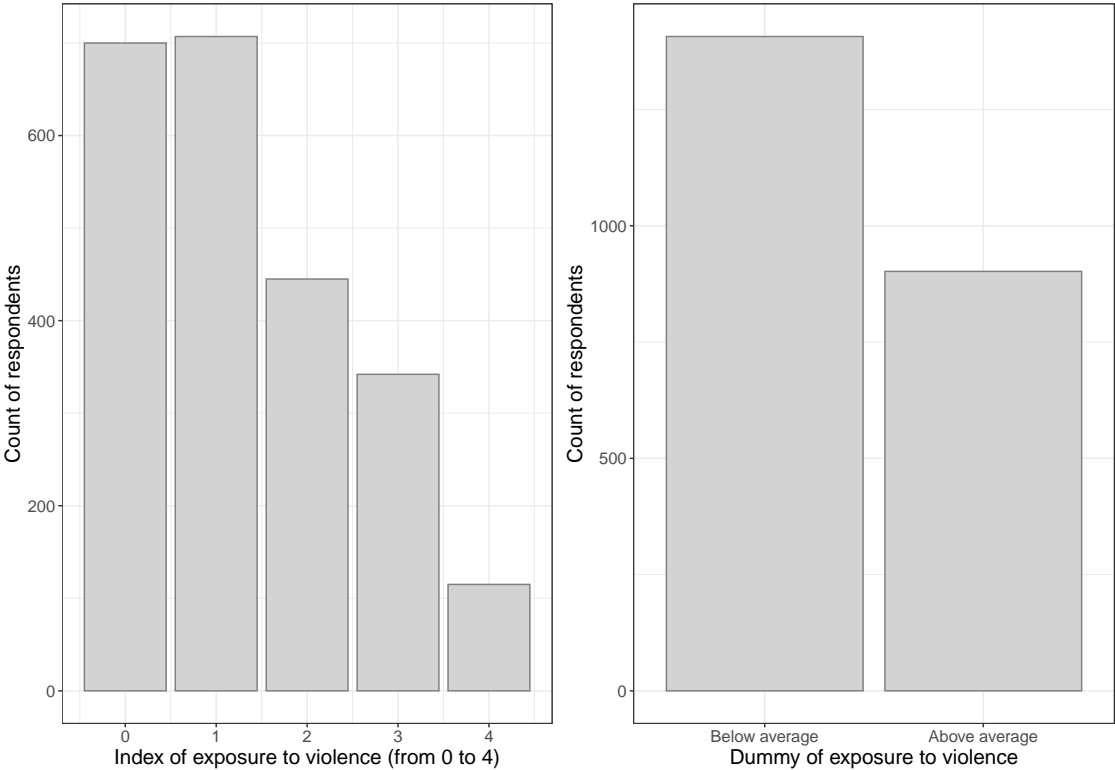
A.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Figure A.1: Distribution of exposure to violence (continuous and binary indicator) in data

Table A.1: Summary statistics for key outcomes and explanatory variables

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Missing
Independent variables					
Experienced displacement	0.58	0.49	0	1	40
Experienced death in household	0.17	0.38	0	1	40
Experienced residence destruction	0.30	0.46	0	1	0
Experienced business destruction	0.27	0.44	0	1	0
Violence index	0.33	0.30	0	1	0
Violence index (standardized)	0	0.89	−1	2.00	0
Experienced above mean level of violence	0.39	0.49	0	1	40
Outcomes - hosting IDPs					
Hosted any IDP	0.44	0.50	0	1	140
Months hosted x family size	23.25	146.32	0	3, 240	172
Descriptives					
Age	35.60	11.43	16	90	0
Urban	0.65	0.48	0	1	0
Male	0.59	0.49	0	1	0
Ethnicity					
Syriac-Assyrian	0.15	0.36	0	1	0
Arab (Sunni Muslim)	0.85	0.74	0	1	0
Prewar Education					
None	0.14	0.34	0	1	0
Primary school	0.36	0.48	0	1	0
Secondary school	0.32	0.47	0	1	0
University degree	0.12	0.32	0	1	0
Post-graduate degree	0.06	0.24	0	1	0
Prewar Occupation					
Agricultural	0.12	0.32	0	1	0
Domestic work	0.15	0.36	0	1	0
Informal work	0.07	0.25	0	1	0
Private sector employee	0.10	0.31	0	1	0
Salaried occupation	0.33	0.47	0	1	0
Small business owner	0.16	0.37	0	1	0
Prewar Residence ownership					
Residence in family hands	0.54	0.50	0	1	0
Residence owned by private owner	0.03	0.18	0	1	0
Residence owned in own hands	0.41	0.49	0	1	0
Quality of prewar residence					
Standalone house	0.81	0.40	0	1	0
Tent	0.02	0.13	0	1	0
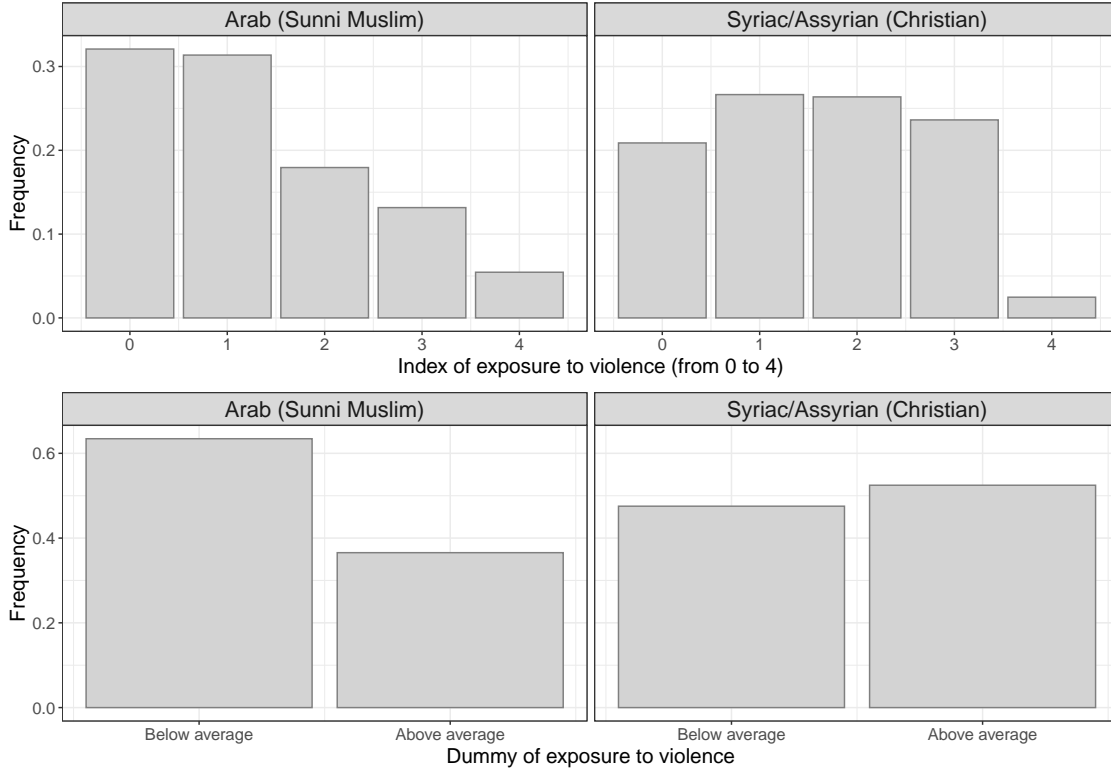
Figure A.2: Distribution of exposure to violence (continuous and binary indicator) per ethnic group

A.3   REGRESSION TABLES FOR THIS PAPER'S MAIN FIGURES

In this section, we present the complete numeric results for the conjoint analysis. Table A.2 displays the baseline model that is described by equation 1 in the main paper and visualised in figure 2. We then split the data into individuals with low violence and high violence exposure to investigate the interaction between violence and the IDP attributes. This can also be written as equation 2 in the main paper. Model 4 in Table A.2 reflects equation 2 on the full data. Eventually, it could be that other characteristics of the respondents drive their preferences over IDP characteristics. To partially account for this we estimate equation 3, interacting each conjoint attribute with potential confounding variables:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\text{Hosted}_{ijk} \;=\; & \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} + \gamma_2 \text{Farmer}_{ikj} + \gamma_3 \text{Sick}_{ikj} \\
+ \; & \gamma_4 \text{Kurdish}_{ikj} + \gamma_5 \text{Christian}_{ikj} \\
+ \; & \gamma_6 \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}\} + \gamma_7 \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_8 \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}_i\} + \gamma_9 \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{10} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{11} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{gender}\} + \gamma_{12} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{gender}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{13} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{gender}_i\} + \gamma_{14} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{violence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{15} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{gender}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{16} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{residence}\} + \gamma_{17} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{residence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{18} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{residence}_i\} + \gamma_{19} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{residence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{20} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{residence}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{21} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{ownership}\} + \gamma_{22} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{ownership}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{23} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{ownership}_i\} + \gamma_{24} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{ownership}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{25} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{ownership}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{26} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{education}\} + \gamma_{27} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{education}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{28} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{education}_i\} + \gamma_{29} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{education}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{30} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{education}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{31} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{work}\} + \gamma_{32} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{work}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{33} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{work}_i\} + \gamma_{34} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{work}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{35} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{work}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{36} \{\text{Singlefemale}_{ikj} \times \text{age}\} + \gamma_{37} \{\text{Farmer}_{ikj} \times \text{age}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{38} \{\text{SickChild}_{ikj} \times \text{age}_i\} + \gamma_{39} \{\text{Kurdish}_{ikj} \times \text{age}_i\} \\
+ \; & \gamma_{40} \{\text{Christian}_{ikj} \times \text{age}_i\} \\
+ \; & \epsilon_i
\end{aligned}
\tag{3}
$$

The results for this model specification can be found in Model 6 of Table A.2. Table A.3 then provides the regression tables for the observational analysis with all coefficients included.

	Baseline model	Low violence	High violence	Interaction	Interaction (+ Base term)	Interaction (+ Interaction with controls)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Female HH	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.07
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.05)
Farmer	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00	0.01	−0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.05)
Sick child	−0.02**	−0.05***	0.02	−0.05***	−0.05***	−0.17***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.05)
Kurdish	−0.05***	−0.07***	−0.01	−0.06***	−0.07***	−0.06
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.05)
Christian	0.04***	0.05***	0.02	0.06***	0.05***	0.15*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Female HH : High violence				−0.01	0.01	0.01
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Farmer : High violence				−0.02	−0.00	−0.02
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Sick child : High violence				0.05***	0.07***	0.03
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Kurdish : High violence				0.04*	0.06**	0.04*
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Christian : High violence				−0.06**	−0.04	−0.05*
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
High violence					−0.05*	
					(0.02)	
Interaction with controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
R^2	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02
Adj. R^2	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	13854	8442	5412	13854	13854	10578
RMSE	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
N Clusters	2309	1407	902	2309	2309	1763

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

Table A.2: Full regression results for conjoint analysis. Model 1 is the baseline model displayed in figure 2 of the paper. The models 2 + 3 split the data by high and low exposure to violence and estimate the preferences for hosting IDPs amongst those subgroups. The model coefficients are displayed in figure 3 of the main paper. Instead of splitting the data, model 4 estimates the interaction effect of exposure to violence on the IDP attributes for the whole dataset (see equation 2 in the paper). Model 5 adds the base term for exposure to violence to the model 4. Model 6 adds interaction effects between IDP attributes and possible control variables (same as in the observational analysis) to the interaction model 4. Equation 3 in the appendix specifies the model. This aims to assess if some characteristics (e.g. gender) other than violence drive the results. The interaction effects with covariates are omitted in the table output.

	Currently hosting		Total # of months hosted		Number of hosted IDPs	Duration of hosting
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Violence index (standardized)	0.05*	0.05*	12.36*	15.14*	0.77***	1.17*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(5.64)	(6.81)	(0.19)	(0.55)
Postgraduate degree		0.01		−40.50*	−0.33	−4.05*
		(0.06)		(16.15)	(0.55)	(1.71)
Primary school		−0.09*		−26.76	−0.92*	−2.83
		(0.04)		(17.23)	(0.37)	(1.82)
Secondary school		−0.03		−28.72	−0.50	−2.21
		(0.04)		(15.65)	(0.43)	(1.70)
University degree		−0.01		−36.13*	0.42	−3.42*
		(0.05)		(15.84)	(0.63)	(1.69)
Agricultural occupation		−0.05		−30.72	−0.62	−1.79
		(0.07)		(27.52)	(0.58)	(1.64)
Domestic work		0.04		−6.46	0.36	0.19
		(0.06)		(24.48)	(0.58)	(1.64)
Informal work		−0.03		−23.10	−0.06	−1.21
		(0.08)		(24.59)	(0.87)	(1.09)
Private sector employee		−0.03		−9.94	−0.25	0.53
		(0.06)		(26.51)	(0.78)	(1.56)
Salaried occupation		0.02		−12.10	−0.66	0.15
		(0.06)		(23.35)	(0.56)	(1.67)
Small business owner		0.08		−15.66	0.17	−0.65
		(0.07)		(26.22)	(0.73)	(1.45)
Urban residence		0.01		0.06	0.18	−0.01
		(0.04)		(7.06)	(0.32)	(0.67)
In family hands		−0.06		17.98	−0.12	2.45
		(0.07)		(15.47)	(0.99)	(1.36)
Other private owner		−0.23*		−9.55	−1.26	0.45
		(0.10)		(15.07)	(1.37)	(1.22)
Own property		−0.09		−1.51	−0.82	1.03
		(0.07)		(14.13)	(0.98)	(1.02)
Standalone house		0.06		−6.98	0.64*	−1.08
		(0.03)		(9.98)	(0.29)	(1.16)
Tent		−0.05		−21.32	0.84	−1.61
		(0.09)		(19.15)	(1.23)	(2.42)
Syriac-Assyrian		0.06		−15.32	0.22	−1.59
		(0.04)		(8.99)	(0.56)	(0.82)
Gender (Male)		0.05		8.69	0.68*	−0.06
		(0.03)		(8.56)	(0.30)	(0.79)
Age		0.00		0.23	0.00	0.03
		(0.00)		(0.24)	(0.01)	(0.03)
Mean of outcome variable	0.443	0.443	23.247	23.247	2.914	3.063
R^2	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.01
Adj. R^2	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00
Num. obs.	2209	2209	2177	2177	2349	2349
RMSE	0.49	0.49	145.94	145.60	5.41	16.79
N Clusters	70	70	69	69	70	70

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A.3: Full regression results for the effect of violence on binary hosting outcome (1+2) and on length x duration of IDP hosting (3+4). Models 4+5 estimate the effect of violence on the number of IDPs hosted and the duration of IDP hosting as separate dependent variables rather than combining them as in models 3+4.

A.4 SELECTION INTO VIOLENCE

Table A.4: Prewar determinants of violence

	Violence (binary)	Violence (continuous)
Postgraduate degree	−0.03	0.00
	(0.05)	(0.09)
Primary school	0.08*	0.14*
	(0.03)	(0.06)
Secondary school	−0.03	−0.07
	(0.03)	(0.06)
University degree	0.01	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.08)
Agricultural occupation	0.19***	0.42***
	(0.05)	(0.08)
Domestic work	0.01	0.09
	(0.04)	(0.07)
Informal work	0.11*	0.27**
	(0.05)	(0.09)
Private sector employee	0.18***	0.33***
	(0.05)	(0.08)
Salaried occupation	0.11**	0.28***
	(0.04)	(0.07)
Small business owner	0.19***	0.48***
	(0.04)	(0.08)
Urban residence	−0.04	−0.06
	(0.02)	(0.04)
In family hands	−0.10	−0.35**
	(0.07)	(0.11)
Other private owner	0.08	0.05
	(0.09)	(0.15)
Own property	−0.01	−0.17
	(0.07)	(0.12)
Standalone house	0.02	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.05)
Tent	0.23**	0.43**
	(0.08)	(0.14)
Syriac-Assyrian	0.18***	0.28***
	(0.03)	(0.05)
Gender (Male)	−0.05	−0.12**
	(0.02)	(0.05)
Age	0.00***	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)
R^2	0.07	0.08
Adj. R^2	0.07	0.07
Num. obs.	2309	2349
RMSE	0.47	0.85

$^{***}p < 0.001, ^{**}p < 0.01, ^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A.4 reports the results of a regression of the violence index on education, prewar employment status, prewar residence ownership, prewar residence type, ethnicity, and gender. Reference categories for these variables are as follows: no education (educational level), unemployed (prewar employment), government owned (ownership of residence), apartment (prewar residence type), Sunni (ethnicity), and female (gender). Robust standard errors clustered at the village level.

A.5 SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS FOR UNOBSERVED CONFOUNDERS

This section uses selection on observables to assess the potential bias from unobserved omitted variables, following (Oster 2019). The idea behind this approach is to use the bias eliminated by observed covariates to assess the potential bias of unobserved variables. Formally, consider the following linear regression models:

$$Y = \beta X + \gamma \mathbf{W_1} + \alpha \mathbf{W_2} + \epsilon \tag{1}$$

$$Y = \tilde{\beta} X + \tilde{\gamma} \mathbf{W_1} + \tilde{\epsilon} \tag{4}$$

$$Y = \dot{\beta} X + \dot{\epsilon} \tag{5}$$

where β, the effect of some treatment X, is the coefficient of interest, $\mathbf{W_1}$ is a set of observed control variables, and $\mathbf{W_2}$ is a set of unobserved control variables. Equation (1) refers to the true model and returns an unbiased estimate of β. Equation (2) includes the full set of observed control variables and is the equation used for the results reported in Table 2 of the paper. Estimates of $\tilde{\beta}$ will be biased unless $\mathbf{W_2}$ is uncorrelated with either X, Y, or both. Equation (3) is a naive model. Estimates of $\dot{\beta}$ will be more biased than those of $\tilde{\beta}$.

The Oster (2019) approach uses coefficient movements between the naive estimate ($\dot{\beta}$) and the controlled estimate ($\tilde{\beta}$) combined with movements in R-squared values to gauge the degree of potential omitted variables bias. Heuristically, estimates that move little with the inclusion of control variables that cause substantial increases in R-squared are indicative of limited omitted variables bias. The approach relies on two assumptions. The first assumption is the so-called "coefficient of proportionality", δ, which is degree to which the observed controls ($\mathbf{W_1}$) determine treatment relative to the unobserved ($\mathbf{W_2}$). $\delta = 1$ allows the unobserved controls to be as influential as the observed controls. This assumption is most likely to hold when the observed controls are among the strongest determinants of treatment.

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The second assumption is the maximum R-squared value (R^2_{max}) from the hypothetical estimation of Equation (1), the true model. R^2_{max} and $R^2_{controlled}$ (from Equation (2)) determine the explanatory power of unobserved omitted variables after accounting for the observed control variables. In the presence of measurement error or idiosyncratic variation in the outcome, $R^2_{max} < 1$.

Oster (2019) shows analytically that with these assumptions about R^2_{max} and δ it is possible to use coefficient movements in β between the naive and controlled regressions to calculate the potential bias from omitted variables. This procedure produces an identified set, bounded on one side by the controlled estimate and on the other by the bias-adjusted estimate, that contains the unbiased estimate. A result is deemed robust if the identified set excludes zero.

How to select conservative values for R^2_{max} and δ? To answer this question, Oster (2019) re-analyzes experimental studies to identify conservative values of R^2_{max} and δ under which a non-zero bias-adjusted effect would be consistent with exogenous treatment assignment. These parameter values are then recommended as a robust reporting standard. The intuition of this test follows from the discussion above: observational studies implicitly argue that the treatment is exogenous. Including controls should not change the coefficient because there is no confounding. In experimental studies, this assumption is known to hold. Control variables will still influence the coefficient estimate due to idiosyncratic imbalance across groups. Thus it is possible to use the stability of treatment estimates in randomized data as a guide to how much stability would be expected in observational data if the treatment were assigned exogenously. To do so, (Oster 2019) draws on a large sample of randomized studies published in *American Economic Review*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Econometrica* and the *American Economic Journal – Applied Economics* from 2008 through 2013.

Oster (2019) assumes the effects estimated in randomized data are causal and that they should therefore survive the bias-adjustment procedure. Robustness cutoff values are based on the value of R^2_{max} and δ under which the bias-adjusted effect is distinct from zero in 90 per cent of experimental studies. This leads to the values of $R^2_{max} = 1.3 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$, Substantively, this assumes unobservables explain as much of the variation in treatment as the observables and

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explain 30 per cent of the variation in the outcome explained by the included controls. For full details, see (Oster 2019).

In the present set-up, $ViolenceIndex$ is the effect of interest, $\mathbf{W_1}$ includes the full set of covariates reported in Table 2, including current village fixed effects, and $\mathbf{W_2}$ is the set of all unobserved confounders. Our test is conservative in two respects. First, we exceed (Oster 2019)'s recommended standards for robustness by setting $R^2_{max} = 2 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$ (rather than $R^2_{max} = 1.3 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$). Substantively, this sets unobservables to be as influential as the full set of control variables (including fixed effects) in explaining both the outcome and treatment. Second, we test the unconditional exogeneity of $ViolenceIndex$ by excluding any baseline controls ($\mathbf{M}$, from above).

The results of this sensitivity analysis are presented in Appendix Table A.5. The first column shows the "naive" effect of $ViolenceIndex$ on the outcome, estimated from a bivariate regression. The second column presents estimates of the fully controlled effect reported in Table 2 of the main paper. The third and fourth columns show the bias-adjusted effect and identified set under (Oster 2019)'s recommended standards for robustness ($R^2_{max} = 1.3 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$). Under this level of confounding, each of the identified sets exclude zero, suggesting our results are robust to confounding from unobserved variables up to 1.3 times as influential for the outcome as the observed variables. The fifth and sixth columns show the bias adjusted effect and identified set assuming $R^2_{max} = 2 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$, effectively setting unobservables to be twice as influential as observables. Even under this level of confounding, the identified sets exclude zero. Substantively, the results of this exercise indicate that omitted unobservables would have to be substantially more confounding than observables to reduce effect sizes to zero, a possibility we believe is unlikely.

Table A.5: Sensitivity Analysis

	Naive effect	Controlled effect	R2max = 1.3 x controlled R2		R2max = 2 x controlled R2	
			Bias-adjusted effect	Identified set	Bias-adjusted effect	Identified set
Currently hosting	.05 (.02) [.01]	.05 (.02) [.14]	.05	[.05, .05]	.04	[.04, .05]
# of months hosted	12.4 (5.6) [.01]	15.1 (6.8) [.02]	16.5	[12.4, 16.5]	19.8	[12.4, 19.8]

Notes: The first column shows the "naive" effect of the violence index on the outcome, estimated via a bivariate regression. The second column presents estimates of the fully controlled effect, reported in Table 2 of the main paper. The third and fourth columns show the bias-adjusted effect and identified set under the standards for robustness ($R^2_{max} = 1.3 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$) derived in Oster 2019's validation exercise. The fifth and sixth columns show the bias adjusted effect and identified set assuming conservatively $R^2_{max} = 2 \times R^2_{controlled}$ and $\delta = 1$.

A.6 REDUCED VIOLENCE INDEX WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT

This section presents results for an alternative violence index where displacement is kept separate from violence. The violence index hence only consists of the items *death of a family member*, *destruction of business*, and *destruction of residence*.

Figure A.3: Marginal effects of a reduced violence index and of displacement on the decision to host an IDP.
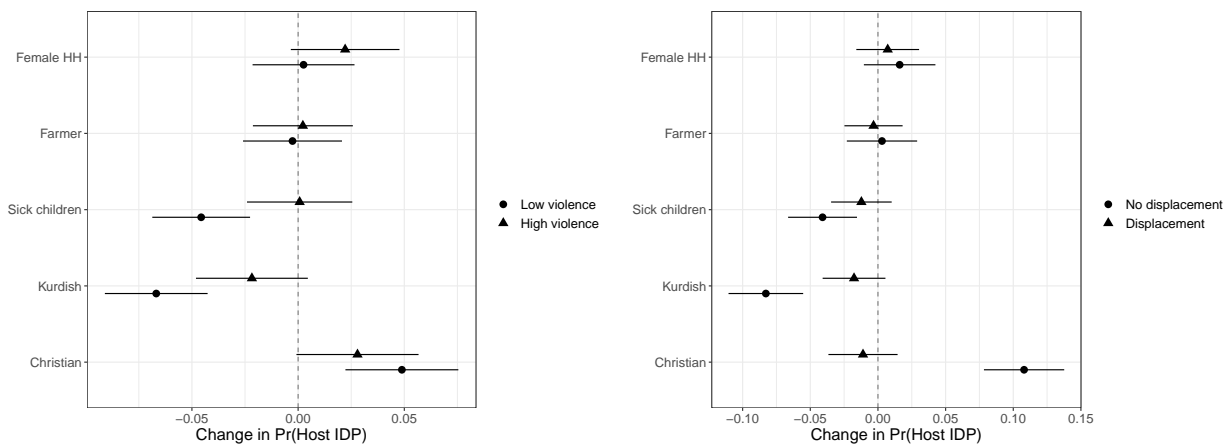

The left panel displays the reduced 3-component violence index. The panel on the right side displays the effect of displacement alone.

Table A.6: Effect of violence (reduced index without displacement) and displacement as separate predictor on binary hosting outcome (Models 1-4) and on length x duration of IDP hosting (Models 5-8). Reference categories for categorical variables as in other models reported. OLS regressions with robust standard errors at the village level.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Reduced violence index	0.01		0.01		7.29		9.35	
	(0.02)		(0.02)		(4.10)		(5.08)	
Experience of displacement		0.18***		0.19***		19.15**		21.29**
		(0.03)		(0.03)		(6.13)		(6.38)
Postgraduate degree			0.01	−0.01			−39.81*	−41.33*
			(0.06)	(0.06)			(16.04)	(16.05)
Primary school			−0.08*	−0.11**			−25.01	−27.75
			(0.04)	(0.03)			(17.11)	(17.12)
Secondary school			−0.04	−0.04			−28.21	−30.23
			(0.04)	(0.04)			(15.55)	(16.01)
University degree			−0.01	−0.02			−35.29*	−37.22*
			(0.05)	(0.05)			(15.62)	(16.01)
Agricultural occupation			−0.03	−0.05			−29.77	−27.24
			(0.07)	(0.07)			(27.56)	(26.33)
Domestic work			0.05	0.04			−6.32	−6.01
			(0.06)	(0.06)			(24.31)	(24.76)
Informal work			−0.02	−0.05			−21.70	−22.05
			(0.07)	(0.08)			(24.37)	(24.04)
Private sector employee			−0.02	−0.02			−9.90	−5.80
			(0.06)	(0.06)			(26.77)	(25.42)
Salaried occupation			0.03	0.00			−10.55	−11.23
			(0.06)	(0.06)			(23.04)	(22.76)
Small business owner			0.10	0.08			−14.16	−12.10
			(0.07)	(0.07)			(26.28)	(24.99)
Urban residence			0.01	0.00			−0.10	−0.87
			(0.04)	(0.03)			(6.98)	(7.34)
In family hands			−0.08	−0.03			15.25	18.11
			(0.07)	(0.08)			(14.56)	(16.87)
Other private owner			−0.23*	−0.21			−11.22	−6.19
			(0.10)	(0.11)			(14.94)	(15.93)
Own property			−0.09	−0.03			−5.23	2.48
			(0.07)	(0.08)			(13.65)	(16.03)
Standalone house			0.06*	0.05			−6.28	−8.07
			(0.03)	(0.03)			(10.01)	(9.97)
Tent			−0.03	−0.05			−20.65	−17.07
			(0.09)	(0.08)			(19.14)	(18.88)
Syriac-Assyrian			0.07	0.07			−15.37	−11.94
			(0.05)	(0.04)			(9.54)	(7.57)
Gender (Male)			0.04	0.04			8.60	7.02
			(0.03)	(0.03)			(8.55)	(8.13)
Age			0.00	0.00			0.26	0.25
			(0.00)	(0.00)			(0.24)	(0.24)
R^2	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02
Adj. R^2	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	2209	2209	2209	2209	2177	2177	2177	2177
RMSE	0.50	0.49	0.49	0.49	146.07	146.05	145.76	145.82

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

Figure A.4: Marginal effects of a reduced violence index (separating displacement) on the decision to host an IDP per ethnic group.
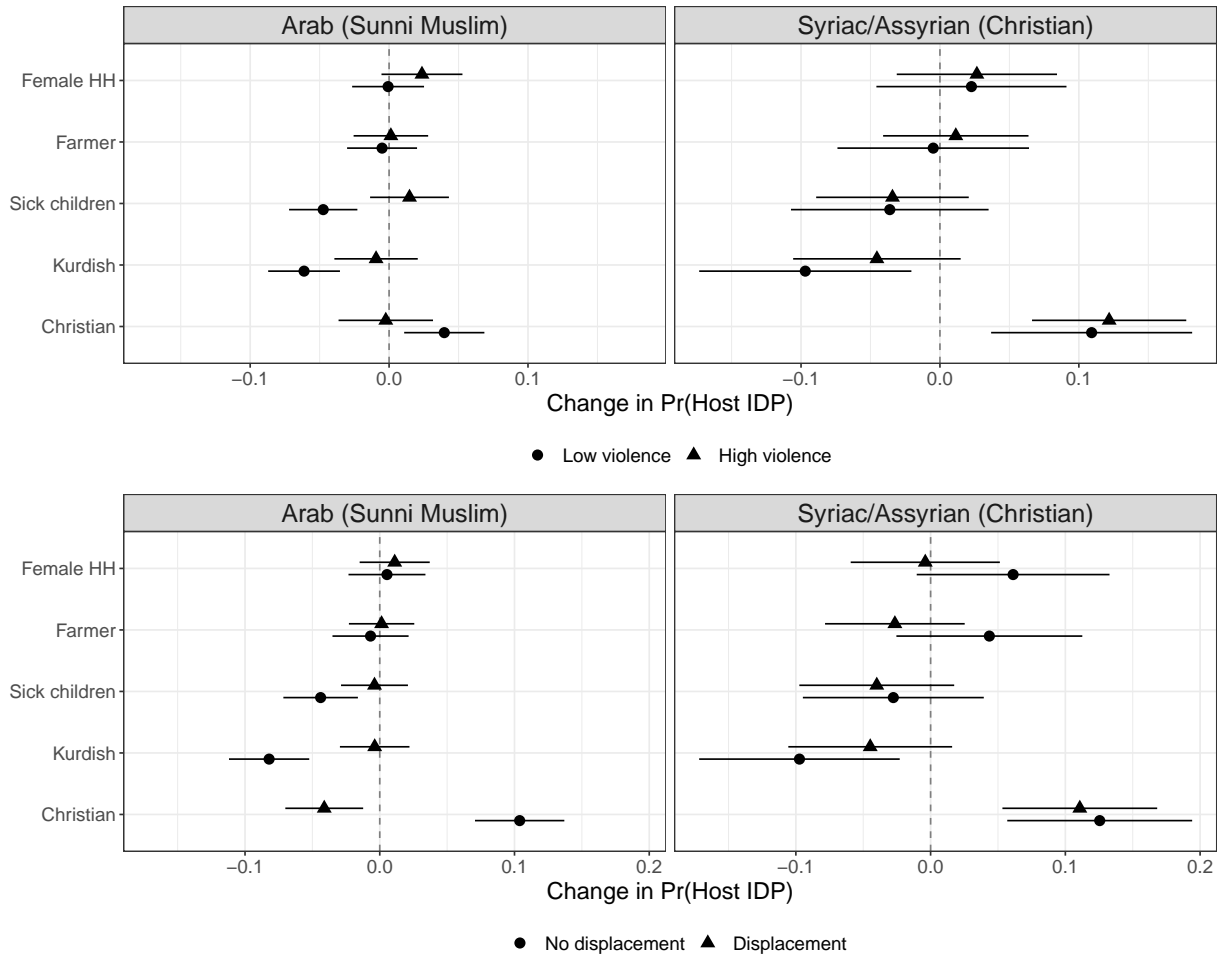
A.7 ALTERNATIVE CODING OF BINARY VIOLENCE INDICATOR

This section presents results for the conjoint experiment if the sample population is not split by the mean but if any respondent experiencing either displacement, a destroyed home or business, or the death of a family member is coded as 1. Only respondents experiencing none of these violent events are coded as 0.

Figure A.5: Marginal effects of the recoded violence index on the decision to host an IDP.
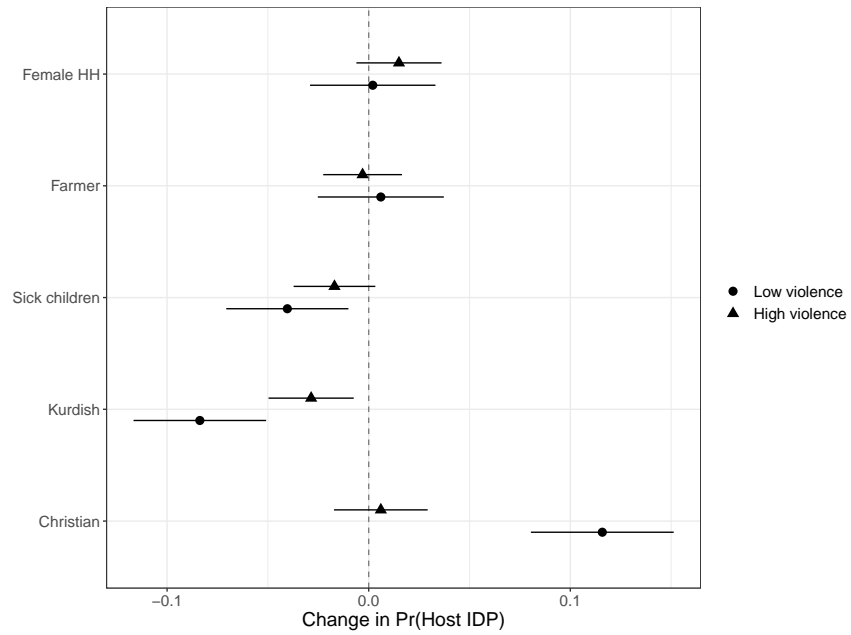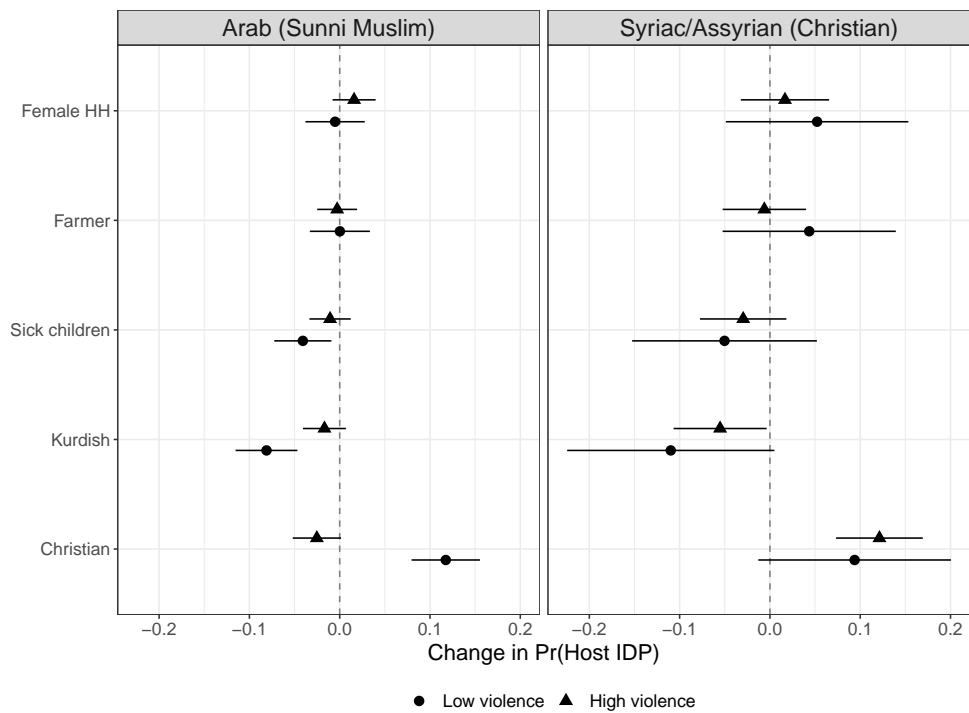

Figure A.6: Marginal effects of the recoded violence index on the decision to host an IDP (for each ethnic group in the sample).

A.8 DETAILS ON CONJOINT EXPERIMENT

(a) Single mother household head

(b) Mother and Father household head

(c) Prewar occupation: professional

(d) Prewar occupation: farmer

(e) Children healthy

(f) Children sick

(g) Family speaks your language

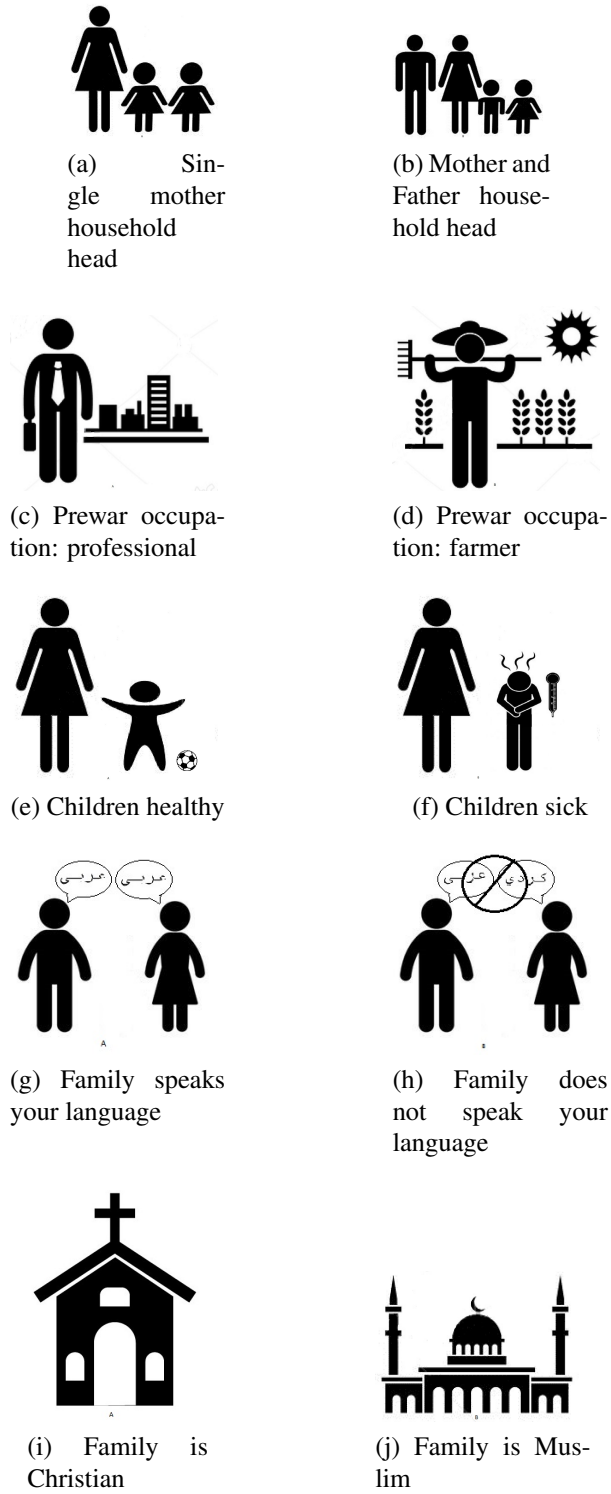(h) Family does not speak your language

(i) Family is Christian

(j) Family is Muslim

Figure A.7: Pictographs for conjoint analysis