Blood and Gold: Insurgency and Economic Aid in Iraq

by

Benton Sample

Abstract

The prevailing theory in US counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine establishes civil affairs, including economic aid and development, to be one of the foundational pillars of an effective COIN strategy. This doctrine currently states that it is essential to provide a population with opportunities for economic prosperity and growth in order to eliminate the allure of being recruited to a terrorist or insurgent group. Without disregarding the importance of civil affairs in COIN, the provision of economic aid may be counterintuitive. If economic status is not a major driving factor in insurgent recruitment and is disbursed without ensuring the security of the populace, then economic aid may simply enhance the ability of an insurgent group to finance its operations by boosting the carrying capacity of a population. This paper seeks to establish the positive relationship between economic aid and insurgent effectiveness conditional on state control by using data from the Empirical Studies of Conflict Project on the US occupation of Iraq.

Index words: Conflict, Iraq, Counterinsurgency, Insurgency

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Introduction

After invading Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the US became engaged in a lengthy insurgency campaign that lasted eight years, spanning from 2003 to 2011[1]. For the initial invasion of March 20, 2003, the US and its coalition partners brought a military force of 195,000 men, 148,000 of which were US military personnel, to bear on the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. The coalition forces swiftly crushed the conventional military forces of Iraq and swept into Baghdad toppling the Ba'athist regime in just over five weeks. President Bush proclaimed the end of major combat operations on May 1st and the war had ostensibly concluded in a decisive US victory. Following this conventional success, the former state was effectively dismantled via the dismissal of former security forces without pay and the banning of the Ba'athist party. The new goal of the coalition was to establish a stable democratic government in Iraq, with the help of the United Nations. Yet, as the year progressed an insurgency movement developed that coalition forces were unable to quickly eliminate.

The mission of destroying what was considered a renegade Ba'athist regime under Saddam Hussein gave way to a nation-building program seeking to put in place a successor government capable of controlling its own territory and maintaining at least the semblance of a

[1] Background information on the US war in Iraq comes from:
Joel, Rayburn, Frank Sobchak, Jeanne Godfroy, Matthew Morton, James Powell, and Matthew Zais. "The U.S. Army in the Iraq War: Volume 1 and 2." Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, January 2019.

democracy. Suddenly, US and coalition partner military forces were no longer facing down a conventional military target but were given the task of suppressing the violent insurgent movements threatening the security of the nascent democratic Iraqi regime, a practice which is known as counterinsurgency, or COIN for short. COIN requires the simultaneous weakening and destruction of hostile military forces, and the strengthening of the host regime which the COIN practitioners are seeking to protect. As such, COIN encompasses everything from civil affairs to military operations, from dropping bombs and killing insurgents to building effective host nation police forces and repairing infrastructure. In Iraq, the US government found itself bearing almost the entirety of the weight of the military occupation and COIN operations as coalition partners started to withdraw their own forces in the face of the war of attrition against competing insurgents that arose from the ashes of the Saddam regime. US military operations against the blooming Sunni and Shia insurgent groups lead to the First and Second Battles of Fallujah, in which the coalition forces lost 750 casualties, the vast majority of which were US personnel. Despite vigorous military action, attempts to foster an effective civil government in Iraq failed. The insurgent and counterinsurgent campaigns drew on for eight years, until on December 15th, 2011 the last US military troops withdrew from Iraq. However, the violence persisted, creating an atmosphere of chaos and a power vacuum that in 2014 allowed the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to gain a significant foothold in the country and threaten the geopolitical stability of the entire Middle East. The US COIN campaign was at best only a nominal success, and at worst a failed effort that gave birth to one of the most influential terrorist groups of the past decade. The implications of the US government's failures in Iraq cannot be ignored, as the US confronts a similar problem in Afghanistan that is likely to occur in other countries in the future.

Despite the clamoring of over-enthusiastic theorists, the advent of the thermonuclear age has not eliminated the need for a well-trained and effective boots-on-the-ground military force. In fact, the conflicts which challenge the United States and other developed nations require a more refined understanding of what Roger Trinquier dubbed "modern warfare," a brawl between COIN and insurgent forces over control of a population. From Vietnam, to Afghanistan, to Iraq, to Somalia, the US has consistently been outmatched by forces far inferior in organization, technology, and resources but superior in the art of modern guerilla warfare. It is a necessity that US armed forces find ways to adapt to this alien challenge, as the future provides a near infinite range of possibilities where the US might intervene on behalf of weak states or against rogue regimes stretching from the African Sahel to the Central Asian Steppe. In order to maintain its geopolitical hegemony and pursue its international objectives, the US must become not just an experienced participant, but an effective practitioner of modern warfare.

To this end, many military officers and scholars have already written on the need to shape a portion of the armed forces to this unique mission. One such product of this intellectual movement is the US Army/ Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which was born out of the US Army's experience during the Iraqi occupation. This manual rightly treats civil affairs as one of the keystones in COIN strategy, and as a part of civil affairs encourages the construction of a viable and prosperous economy. However, the academic literature on the effects of war-time aid are mixed (Findley 2018; Young and Findley 2011; Findley, Powell, Strandow, and Tanner 2011; Wood and Sullivan 2015; Jadoon 2018). Many of these authors evaluate the question of the effect of aid from the perspective of protecting civilians. The reduction of civilian casualties is clearly a desirable goal, however for COIN, and the use of economic aid within that context, the end-goal is to eliminate the fighting ability of insurgents,

and attacks against civilians alone are not an accurate measure of an insurgency's ability to engage in violence. The primary concern of the counterinsurgent is the isolation and destruction of the enemy's organization (Trinquier 1964). The US military's counterinsurgency doctrine views the release of economic aid as a means to achieving the aforementioned isolation likely due to the correlation between economic development and civil war, yet it may have the opposite effect (US Army/Marine Corps 2007; US Army 2009). If insurgent/counterinsurgent recruitment after the initial dissolution of the Ba'ath security forces within the context of Iraq was not driven by economic factors, the release of large amounts of development funds would increase the material situation of the population without necessarily increasing support for the US-backed Iraqi regime. This appeared to be the case for much of the Sunni Triangle in the Anbar region, where violence was driven by tribal feelings of disenfranchisement (Rayburn et al 2019). In this situation, insurgents could exploit the financially improved position of the locals in order to further their own aims. This paper theorizes that recruitment to government COIN forces and insurgent militias in post-invasion Iraq occurred in an environment not subject to competition with the general labor market (Bahney et al 2013; Jung et al 2014). This rendered US aid largely ineffective at weakening insurgent groups and instead led to an increase in the carrying capacity of local populations, allowing insurgent groups in contested areas to enhance their own organizational capabilities leading to an increase in violence against US and Coalition forces.

The relationship is tested using a negative binomial model, and data from the Empirical Studies of Conflict Project with some additions from myself. The data set was created by Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2011), and covers the occupation of Iraq from 2004 to 2009. The data includes detailed information on the location of violent incidents against US-Coalition forces (coded as SIGACT for significant action) at the district level, total amounts of spending

by district along with the programs that sponsored the projects and at what civil society sector they were aimed, and economic factors such as household income, unemployment rates, and the presence of oil and natural gas reserves over time. Data on the location of military forward operating bases and camps was appended by the author, but proved unhelpful for the analysis due to their time invariant nature across the studied period.

Chapter 2

Historical and Social Context

Iraq's geographic and demographic situations played an important role in creating the problems which would become the responsibility of the US/Coalition forces that this paper focuses on. To the southwest, Iraq has a neighbor in Saudi Arabia, a long-time Sunni-dominated state, and to the east shares a border with Iran, a Shia-controlled theocracy. The religious orientation of these nearby states is particularly important in the case of Iraq as a Sunni-Shia conflict had been simmering for at least five decades prior to 2003 (Tripp 2010, Rayburn et al 2019)[2]. The Shia population in Iraq constituted a strict majority, but was largely excluded from power under the Ba'athist regime. The struggles between the Sunni Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein would define Iraqi domestic politics and set the stage for the sectarian civil conflict which erupted after the US invasion.

[2] Pre-1990 information on Iraqi history comes from Charles Tripp's "A History of Iraq," while post-1990 information comes from Tripp and the "US Army in Iraq" by Rayburn et al.

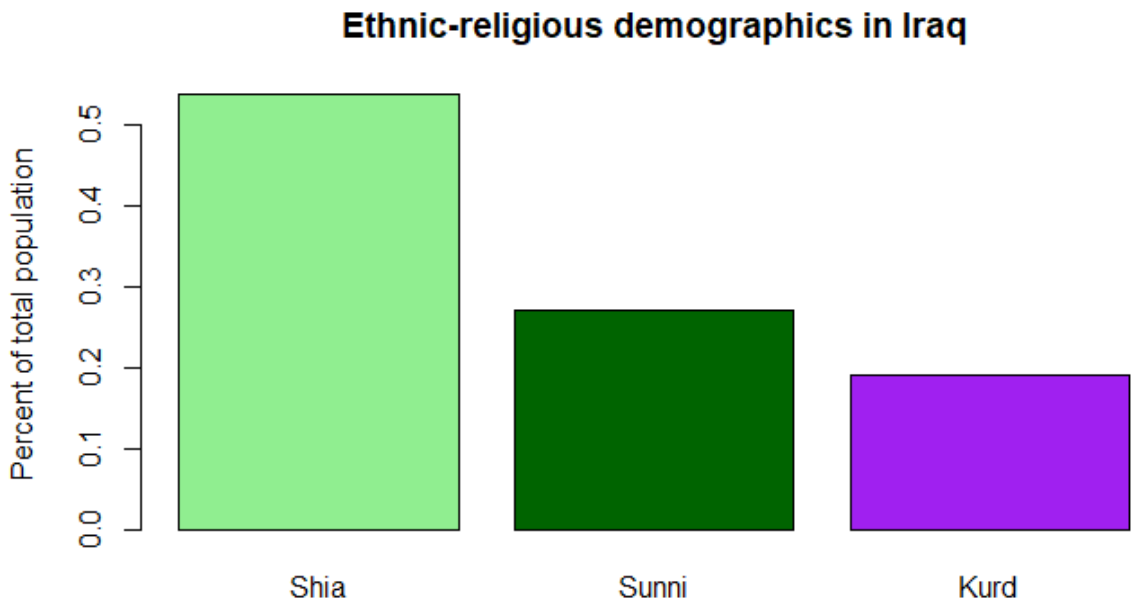

Figure 1

The Ba'ath Party first came to power through a coup in 1968 under the military leadership of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, who would become the Prime Minister and President of the new regime. Saddam Hussein, as a leader within the Ba'athist Party, set about expanding the intelligence and security apparatus in order to reinforce the government's still tenuous hold on the country. Hussein's influence within the Party grew, until in 1977, in the wake of another round of Shia protests suppressed by the government, he was understood to have become the de facto leader of Iraq after having his brother-in-law appointed as the minister of defense. Shia civil unrest would be a recurring theme for the Saddam Hussein regime, as he officially became President in 1979 and filled powerful government positions with mostly Sunnis.

The Iranian Revolution and consequent ascendancy of a Shia Islamic state to the east led to further Shia protests within Iraq, and before the end of 1980 the Iraqi government had

declared war upon the fledgling government of Iran in the hopes of easily securing new eastern territories. Though Hussein expected a swift victory, the Iranian military proved to be more resilient than anticipated and the Iraqis were driven back to within their own borders in 1982. Following this military failure, the Kurdish population in northern Iraq engaged in open revolt and distracted the Hussein regime. The Kurdish uprising was violently quelled, and eventually the Iran-Iraq War concluded with a stalemate in 1988. However, during the conflict and the resulting civil strife, the Ba'ath government had acquired large amounts of debt and a stagnating economy.

Due to the Iraqi state's reliance on oil revenues to finance its budget, Saddam Hussein became displeased when Kuwait drove down international oil prices through over-production. A failure to negotiate resulted in Iraq invading Kuwait in 1990 under the auspices of uniting Iraq and incorporating the former state of Kuwait as a province. International distaste for this action caused the Gulf War in 1991, which saw a US-led coalition crush the Iraqi military in Kuwait in less than a week. However, the coalition refused to push into Iraq and topple the Hussein regime, instead inciting the population to rebel and overthrow the government themselves. The attempted revolution which followed did so with the expectation of US support, but when this failed to materialize the rebellion was effectively stomped out by loyalist forces. Again, the Kurdish population revolted but this time due to the UN setting in place a no-fly zone over northern Iraq their actions were successful, and the Kurdish Autonomous Republic was founded. Large-scale efforts to resettle Shia Arabs and drive out Kurds were undertaken by the Iraqi government, guaranteeing a confused and volatile demographic mixture.

After the crushing defeat of the Gulf War and the subsequent internal revolts, Saddam turned his eye towards shoring up domestic security. The formerly secular Ba'ath Party was

Islamicized, and began incorporating radical clerics into party circles and military training. Additionally, the decimation of Iraq's conventional army by the US-led coalition forced a shift in orientation and organization for the country's armed forces. The weakened divisions were consolidated, and paramilitary groups associated with the Ba'ath Party became the new focus for the security service. These new forces were trained as light infantry, and were explicitly expected to turn to guerilla warfare instead of facing down a technologically superior enemy (the US) in a conventional war of movement. In another move to secure his own position, Saddam halted the suppression of tribal identity the Ba'ath Party had previously pursued and began empowering tribal leaders. The upshot of these various attempts to reestablish domestic stability was the decentralization of authority and the creation, or endorsement, of a variety of groups who would eventually challenge the Ba'athist regime, or any other that was considered to be inimical to their own interests.

Yet another knock-on effect of the Gulf War and the ensuing sanctions was a failing Iraqi economy, with a corresponding decrease in the provision of governance. The crumbling infrastructure from the 1970s could not be updated, and the bureaucracy could no longer finance government services. Education failed, literacy dropped, and what few services were provided were controlled entirely by Saddam. The defunct legal economy gave way before an illicit trade in oil that was fostered by Saddam as the only means of raising revenues for the regime. Iraqi society had effectively collapsed.

This bleak picture had changed little by the time that the US had decided to invade Iraq in 2003, who after the events of 9/11 was considered part of the "Axis of Evil," and was falsely considered to be in possession of weapons of mass destruction. While Saddam himself was confident of his military's ability to eventually bring the US to the bargaining table, the stark

reality on the ground was understood by both Iraqi military commanders and members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Ba'athist paramilitary groups soon formed plans to engage in guerrilla warfare, and Iran positioned itself to sponsor Shia militias with the goal of undermining a US occupation and furthering their goal of establishing a Shia theocracy in Iraq. As mentioned in the introduction, the "Coalition of the Willing" led by the US invaded Iraq in late March, and in just over a month had seized Baghdad and the majority of the country. Many of the remaining Iraqi troop formations began dissolving into the populace with their arms and equipment. Also during the invasion, Kurdish troops fought against Saddam's forces in support of the US/coalition forces and began taking control in northern Iraq, while Iranian-sponsored militias moved to organize a coalition of Shia insurgent groups. These outside factors complicated the already complex situation that the US found in the newly occupied Iraqi state.

The early days of US occupation, and the actions taken therein, would have long-term consequences for the creation of a functioning state. The Civilian Provisional Authority, which was meant to take control of governance over from the military, was incapable of managing the situation on the ground. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) lead by US Ambassador Paul Bremer was formed to help establish a democratic Iraqi republic and was largely staffed by military personnel, a task for which US military forces were neither designed nor trained for. They had invaded a decrepit state, a powder-keg of conflicting ethnic, religious, and tribal groups, and were now expected to establish formal and effective governance. In implementing a policy of de-Ba'athification predicated on the belief that the Ba'ath Party was essentially equivalent to the Nazis, Bremer then ordered the official banning of the Ba'ath Party and its members from Iraqi politics, and the dissolution of the Iraqi military. This not only burned what was left of a functional state and bureaucracy, but left a substantial body of armed and trained

soldiers without pay or purpose. Further, the CPA passed an order that only police may carry firearms. This was not only a drastic action in an armed society where almost every household had a firearm, but the enforcement of such an order was patently ludicrous as the country was flooded with weapons from unsecured military stockpiles. By May of 2003, there was no longer an Iraqi state of any description, and the US/Coalition forces were faced with a disintegrating society and the seemingly insurmountable goal of establishing effective governance.

An Iraq Interim Government consisting mostly of Iraqi former exiles was set up, but it operated as a political council while the CPA was still practically responsible for governance. The Sunni tribal groups quickly found out that their position within the new state would be greatly diminished, and expressed their displeasure at the state of affairs by joining together with resistance militias and terrorist groups. Additionally, the dissolved Ba'athist party members began forming their own resistance groups, along with the growing Salafi religious movement which had been previously sponsored by the Saddam regime. Some Shia groups refrained from violence at first, but other Shia militias ostensibly under the influence of Iran initiated attacks against Coalition forces. To top off this mess of sectarian interests, the Kurds continued to engage in reprisals against former Ba'athist officials, adding fuel to the fire of internecine ethno-religious conflict in Iraq.

Despite US/Coalition efforts to rebuild infrastructure and restore security, by the end of 2003 the sectarian conflicts had boiled over into a full-blown insurgency campaign waged by a variety of groups against both each other and Coalition forces. It is within this context that data on violence began to be collected, and this study seeks to explore the role of aid on counterinsurgency outcomes in that environment.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The single most influential theorist of insurgent warfare, Mao Zedong, claimed "Revolutionary warfare is 80 percent political action and 20 percent military." This observation applies to both sides of an asymmetric conflict, as the goal of both participants is not the conventional military destruction of their opponent but the establishment of control over a population and its corresponding territory (Galula 1964). The populace is the center of gravity in modern war, and in order to influence the population it is necessary for COIN forces to engage in civil affairs. Fall (1961) and Herrington (2004) note that the French and US failure to defeat the Viet Minh/Viet Cong insurgents was a direct result of their blindness to the importance of civil issues. Economic development falls under the auspices of these civil affairs for which COIN practitioners have been made responsible, and according to US doctrine is important for two reasons. First, it establishes the credibility of the host regime which is being supported. Second, it is assumed that a working man is less likely to join rebel forces as he has more to lose. The early academic literature supported this point of view, as economic development has been demonstrated to be strongly related to civil war (Muller and Seligson 1987; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Fearon 2008). Additionally, sharp horizontal inequalities between groups within societies can lead to increased ethnoreligious related violence (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleiditsch 2011). This is a particularly salient argument in post-invasion Iraq, as the Sunni population and portions of Shias felt excluded from, and ignored by, the government established by the US

which consisted mostly of Shia former exiles (Malkasian 2008). The inequality in political power and access to state-provided services amongst groups within Iraq may have therefore fueled conflict, and could have been alleviated by effectively allocated aid or a more inclusive political settlement.

However, this logic is not necessarily borne out by the current literature on recruitment practices during a civil war. Weinstein and Humphreys (2008) find that insurgents are often poor, and that poverty is a predictor not only of participation in a rebel movement but also in joining the counterinsurgent forces. Additionally, they identify the importance of pay in recruiting members. These findings offer some support to the prevailing US COIN doctrine. However, their study uses data from the conflict in Sierra Leone and there is therefore some question about the generalizability of their findings. Insurgent organizations can have diverse characteristics, and their recruitment strategies vary based on their own organizational peculiarities (King, Hering, Newman 2014). On the other hand, Weinstein and Humphreys make important contributions in noting the fact that different logics of recruitment can exist simultaneously within a conflict or insurgent organization. They also raise the issue of considering the problem of recruitment only from the supply side, as often recruits have little agency in the decision to join a rebel group. When considering recruitment from the demand side, ie the insurgent group's perspective, it becomes clear that the economic situation of the potential recruit may be irrelevant, a situation supported by captured Al-Qaeda documents in Iraq (Bahney et al 2013; Jung et al 2014). Jung et al (2014) find that Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq paid recruits sub-standard wages, even assuming fighters were unskilled illiterates. This supports the argument that insurgent recruitment was not dependent on the state of the local economy, and that fighters were motivated by non-monetary or ideological reasons.

Hegghammer (2012) and Krueger and Maleckova (2004) also find that poverty has little connection to the likelihood of being recruited to a terrorist organization. Though insurgent and terror organizations are not identical either in form or practices, the demand side logic of recruitment developed by Hegghammer still applies to insurgent groups. This connection might be particularly salient in the context of Iraq, as terror groups had a great deal of influence over several insurgent militia groups (Rayburn et al. 2019). With groups focusing on kin-based and ideological recruitment strategies to procure high quality members (Weinstein 2005), the provision of economic resources by COIN forces is unlikely to diminish their organization's ability to engage in guerilla war. Eck (2010) finds that neither oil nor contraband, which can be understood as increasing economic opportunity, are in fact statistically significant predictors of individual participation in a rebellion. Additionally, Bueno de Mesquita (2005) argues that changes in economic status can have conflicting effects on the recruitment of terrorists. Of particular interest is his acknowledgement of the potential for a boost in a state's economy to have the knock-on effect of granting a larger resource base to a terrorist group and improving its ability to recruit quality members.

Economic aid has sometimes been found to have negative externalities in the form of increased civilian attacks. A key argument in this literature is the problem of predation (Findley 2018). More aid increases the incentives for rebel groups to target civilians in order to secure the aid and economic resources for themselves. This becomes particularly important during ongoing conflicts, when aid not only increases the value of violence by increasing the size of the "prize" of victory and looting (Wood and Sullivan 2015), but might also be essential for a rebel group seeking to fund itself (Findley, Powell, Strandow, Tanner 2011). Jadoon (2018) analyzes the provision of aid on the recipient state's tendency to engage in violence against civilians, and

finds that economic aid, by far the most common form of aid disbursed, has at best mixed outcomes for the citizenry. These studies bring into question the efficacy of providing economic aid which on its face may seem helpful, but which in practice has a variety of negative consequences.

Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2011 and 2018) study the problem of aid from the perspective of the COIN practitioner, namely the US/Coalition forces in Iraq. They examine the effect of the Commander Emergency Response Program on the incidents of violence targeting Coalition forces in a given district. They develop a three-player information game between the insurgent, the counterinsurgent, and a civilian who can choose to provide information to the counterinsurgent. The CERP is examined because it provided funds to commanders for the use of local projects in their area of operations, and is described by the US Army (2009b) as a "weapons system" in the fight against insurgency. This created a situation where not only could the commanders on the ground directly address the needs of the local population, but led to the development of projects being contingent upon the presence of US/Coalition troops. In their theory, the conditional nature of the aid is key to securing the assistance of the population. They argue that the use of CERP increases the likelihood of a civilian choosing to provide information to the counterinsurgent, allowing that counterinsurgent to avoid ambushes and effectively target and destroy insurgents. Their model provides a compelling argument for the usefulness of local service provision in building local support during a COIN campaign, but focuses on the CERP funds which made up only one-tenth of aid spending during the Iraqi conflict. The question of the utility of other ninety percent of the funds in buying the hearts and minds of the populace remains unaddressed.

Looking at the efficacy of the Commander Emergency Response Program in the context of Afghanistan, Sexton (2016) develops a theory which argues that aid is effective in reducing violence only in areas already under the military control of US forces. Using Forward Operating Bases and battalion-level military installations to measure whether or not a district is secured, he finds that unsecured districts experience an uptick in violence when aid increases, while secured districts show less violent incidents. Unlike Berman et al (2011), the measure of violence used in the study captures all reported insurgent violence, not just incidents targeting US or International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) personnel. Sexton theorizes that the relationship between aid and violence is conditional on security because spending creates additional political incentives for insurgents. Instead of focusing on predation or resource mobilization, he argues that insurgents view counterinsurgency aid spending as a threat to their control over a district, and respond to this increased threat level with violence to ensure their continued dominance over the local population. From this point of view, insurgents see spending as a signal of counterinsurgent goals and act in order to hamper or halt the achieving of those objectives. In districts already under military control, Sexton states that this incentive for violence is greatly reduced since the population is already de facto "in the hands" of the counterinsurgent forces. The implication of his theory is that aid by itself is useless if not counterproductive in fighting an insurgency and should only be disbursed in government-controlled areas. Additionally, Sexton seeks to identify the effect of different types of aid, but he finds little difference in the average impact from the base model. He looks further into two categories, namely "Protective Measures", those projects focused on security, and "Humanitarian" projects, which cover direct transfers of commodities such as food, fuel, and cash. He finds that Protective Measures increase violence, while Humanitarian projects have little to no effect. Following on from his general theory, he argues

that this is because security projects threaten insurgents, and humanitarian projects do not generate a clear response from the insurgent group. This is debatable, as it ignores the predation argument which is put forth throughout the literature and finds empirical support (Perlez 1992, De Waal 1997, Cooley and Ron 2002). Also, Protective Measures capture the building of structures such as guard towers, meaning it effectively proxies for the presence of security forces who as targets for the insurgency might lead to a rise in violence unconnected to the perceived threat of COIN effort. However, his analysis of the purpose of aid disbursements is theoretically useful, and has been examined previously in the terrorism literature.

Young and Findley (2011) perform a sectoral-level analysis of foreign aid to in order to determine the effectiveness of aid in reducing terrorism. They empirically test the hypothesis that education spending is most effective in combatting terrorism at the state level across 147 countries for 32 years, while also examining the result of aid spending in various other sectors. Their model addresses the effect of overall aid, education, health, conflict, governance, and civil society aid. First, they establish that overall aid is not perfectly fungible and therefore that sectoral level analysis is a useful endeavor. They then find that all of the previously mentioned areas of aid disbursement have a negative effect on the number of transnational terrorist attacks, while agricultural and budget aid seems to have no such result.

Of course, insurgent groups require support from the population. Mao, from personal experience, stated: “The [population] may be likened to water and the [insurgents] to the fish who inhabit it”. The insurgent relies on the population for food, recruits, intelligence, and financing. They can gain this support either through political propaganda, security promises, or violent coercion (Trinquier 1961). From an ecological perspective, the local populace can be said to comprise the operational environment of the insurgent. Johnson and Madin (2008) first

identified that since the center of conflict in insurgent warfare lies in the population, ecological models might produce exciting insights into the functioning of insurgent groups. Importantly for this paper, Johnson and Madin raise the limiting effect of a population's "insurgent carrying capacity" resulting from resource constraints. The carrying capacity of an environment is the amount of life it can support given its available resources. A decrease in resources would lower the carrying capacity of an environment, and an increase in those resources would boost the carrying capacity. In the context of insurgency, the local population can be understood as the environment within which the insurgents, the relevant life form, exist. The physical and financial resources of a population, either partially or entirely under the control of an insurgent group, are of course finite and therefore create an upper limit for the size of the insurgent group operating in the local area. However, an outside shock could alter that limit.

Chapter 4

Theory

The argument for a population acting as a resource in the environment, which must be the basis for utilizing carrying capacity as part of a theory of counterinsurgency, has a precedent in academic and practitioner literature. Trinquier (1961), an intelligence officer who served in the French army during the Algerian Crisis, provides an illustrating example of the FLN's recruitment strategy and method of interacting with the Muslim population. A Muslim Algerian worker was confronted by FLN enforcers and instructed to pay a tax to the rebel organization. When he refused, the enforcers beat and robbed the worker. The next week, they came to tax him again and he paid. After a period of time, he was instructed to collect taxes for the FLN instead of paying them himself. More time passed, and he was informed that he had been promoted to a full military member of the organization. When he protested that he was uninterested in such a promotion, he was told that his family would be killed if he did not cooperate. The worker went on to become a ranking assassin in the ZAA, the politico-terrorist organization of the FLN tasked with wresting control of the city of Algiers from French authorities. Questions of economic development and employment opportunities had little to do with his recruitment or the insurgency's ability to levy resources from the population. Another less anecdotal and more academic perspective comes from the resource mobilization literature (Boyns and Ballard 2004; Zald and Berger 1978), which argues that resource constraints drive the capability of both terrorist and insurgent organizations. An increased availability of resources will result in an

increase in attacks (Boys and Ballard 2004), and a corresponding decrease in the ability of the counterinsurgent/terrorist to control the rebel group (Zald and Berger 1978). Of note is the fact that these insights are predicated on the assumption that there is a grievance mobilizing the dissident group, which in the context of a counterinsurgency campaign might be resolved by a more inclusive political settlement. However, the provision of security by the state can also prevent insurgents from siphoning resources off the citizenry.

Populations are easily coerced via violence to provide resources in the form of recruits or supplies by either the insurgent or the counterinsurgent. Additionally, the acquisition and denial of information can be enforced with similar methods. Though Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2011) find support for the CERP having a positive effect in their information-based model, it could be argued that they were effectively proxying for the presence of Coalition troops, which could clearly translate into coercive power. Herrington (2004) relates his experience with a Vietnamese villager who alternately worked as an intelligence officer for the Viet Cong, then an informer for the US military, then again as an officer in the Viet Cong as the balance of power around his village shifted. Sanctioning uncooperative populations and therefore effectively removing their agency, at least in the context of handing over their resources, is a relatively easy task for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent (Hazelton 2017). It therefore might be useful to consider the population as the environment within which the insurgent and counterinsurgent compete in order to understand how it might influence insurgency war-fighting ability. When the population is viewed this way theoretically, carrying capacity becomes an applicable and potentially important concept.

When considering carrying capacity for an insurgency, a few implications arise. First, an insurgent group will find its existence untenable if cut off from the local population. Though

insurgents may procure arms and funds from international actors, they are forced to acquire the majority of their resources from the local populace (Zedong 1937; Trinquier 1961; Galula 1964). These resources range from firearms and materials for IEDs to recruits and money. A decreasing ability to draw upon a population will have a corresponding negative effect on the insurgency, and this exclusion of insurgents from their support base is the primary means by which COIN forces, according to Trinquier's theory of modern warfare, achieve their goal of extirpating an insurgent group. However, a decrease in the resources of a population will have similar effects, at least on the insurgency's ability to support itself. On the other hand, an increase in the local population's resources would provide the insurgency with greater resources as well. Economic aid, which focuses on benefiting locals and building up the host nation's economy, necessarily increases the resources of the population and as a result those of the insurgent if there is no corresponding counterinsurgent presence.

This concept can be illustrated with a simple equation. Consider *R* as representing the total resources of the insurgency, *P* as the population's total resources prior to an exogenous shock, and *v* as a value bounded between zero and one representing the ability of the insurgency to extort resources from the populace. *F* represents the assistance of friendly foreign actors, but as there is no current feasible way of measuring this value, this paper is forced to make the assumption that *F* is a constant.

$$\text{Equation 1: } R = vP + F$$

The restriction of insurgent growth is essential in COIN, as insurgent successes can lead to a snowball effect culminating in the toppling of the host nation government. An increase in insurgent effectiveness increases the *v* value, allowing the insurgency to extort more resources from the populace, boosting their resources and as a result their ability to engage in extortionate

violence, resulting in a spiral effect. This cycle produces an inverse effect in the host government's security forces, since the host nation and insurgents are engaged in a zero-sum game over the citizenry. However, the effect of economic aid is likely conditioned on the a priori insurgent control over a population. In terms of the basic model, if the value of v is close to zero due to either successful COIN efforts to control the local populace or the insurgency's failure to secure control for themselves, then an increase in the population's resource base will have little to no effect on R.

If economic aid is provided to a population, then a new value of P, P^*, is created. Since $P^* > P$, then given a constant value for v, there will be a new value for R as well. If $R^* > R$, then the insurgency has access to a greater level of resources, which can translate into a larger food supply, a boost in funding, an expanded ability to recruit, more intelligence, or an increase in access to arms. A community receiving aid for the construction of a water sanitation plant would likely see immediate economic benefits from the influx of jobs and spending by contracted workers, and after completion of the project would see benefits from a clean water supply that would boost productivity. An insurgency gathering informal taxes from the community would see a corresponding increase in the amount of money or food they could reasonably extract from the locals. Using their organizational ties, they can then translate this boost in funding into weapons, recruits, or intelligence. This increases the insurgency group's ability to engage in violence and threaten the host nation government and its security forces. This gives the hypotheses:

H1: When insurgents exert a large amount of control over an area's population, then economic aid will cause an increase in insurgency effectiveness measured by the incidents of violence targeting Coalition forces.

H2: When insurgents exert little to no control over an area's population, economic aid will have a minimal impact on insurgency effectiveness.

It is worth noting that the alternative explanations of predation, criminal violence, and threat signaling might also play a role in the relationship between aid and violence (Jadoon 2018; Findley 2018; Sexton 2016). While predation is a plausible argument and is substantively tied to the carrying capacity argument of this paper, I would claim that the related theory of aid incentivizing criminal violence does not hold water in the case of Iraq. Though aid might increase the level of lootable resources and therefore the potential financial gain of criminal activity, this is unlikely to be connected to an increase in violence against COIN forces. The logic of profit-maximizing criminality, which is the basis for the theory, would necessitate avoiding engaging in violence against trained soldiers. The need for attacking Coalition forces in order to steal or smuggle goods is unclear, and the risk of death when fighting a technologically superior military force would seem to preclude the possibility of criminality being a significant driver of violence against COIN forces. Additionally, the threat signaling mechanism makes sense in Afghanistan where large portions of the country were uncontested by ISAF troops and an expanding zone of control following from a "clear-and-hold" strategy made any expansion a clear threat to insurgents, but this does not seem applicable to Iraq. The entirety of the country was contested by Coalition forces (Berman, Felter and Shapiro 2011; Rayburn et al 2019), and though the threat to insurgent control represented by economic aid was likely still present, it can be expected to have been much lower than in Afghanistan.

In addressing the potential impact of sectoral aid, this paper draws heavily on Young and Findley's (2011) work on the effects of sectoral aid on transnational terrorism. As such, education aid will be expected to have a palliative effect on the number of attacks, along with

health, governance, and civil society aid when conditioned on counterinsurgent control. The role of education in discouraging the joining of an insurgency is unclear, as an increase in education should be associated with a higher opportunity cost when becoming a fighter, but education might also make more salient the inequalities or injustices mobilizing the insurgent organization. The literature on the link between education and terrorism/insurgency recruitment is mixed (Krueger and Maleckova 2003; Bueno de Mesquita 2008). Regardless, education along with health, governance, and civil society aid all act as strong signals to the populace of the counterinsurgent's ability and willingness to provide useful services, which should be associated with a decrease in violence as the population becomes more likely to support the current government. However, the potential negative effects of each sector should vary when insurgents control the disbursement area. Drawing on carrying capacity and resource mobilization, education is unlikely to have any effect on insurgent violence in this study as the economic benefits of an increase in education will occur several years in the future, and therefore will not have an effect during the five-year time period being addressed in this study. Governance aid should also mirror education aid in its effects, as in COIN controlled areas it will assist the development of the local government, while insurgents will have a difficult time converting investment in democratic institutions into usable resources. Health and civil society aid on the other hand should increase violence when there is a high level of insurgent control, since the economic benefits of health services will be seen on a much shorter timeline and might be used by the insurgents themselves to assist their wounded members. Civil society aid also should be relatively easy for the insurgency to take advantage of. When the insurgents control the local population, an increase in civil society is likely to foster the growth of their own networks and

boost their ability to extract resources from the population (an increase in *v*). This produces the following hypotheses:

H3: Education aid should decrease incidents of insurgency violence in areas under COIN control, and have no effect on violence in areas under insurgency control.

H4: Governance aid should decrease incidents of insurgency violence in areas under COIN control, and have no effect on violence in areas under insurgency control.

H5: Health aid should decrease incidents of insurgency violence in areas under COIN control, and increase violence in areas under insurgency control.

H6: Civil society aid should decrease incidents of insurgency violence in areas under COIN control, and increase violence in areas under insurgency control.

In the context of the Iraqi occupation, the implications of the hypotheses being proved correct would mean that economic aid aimed at problem areas in order to strengthen the hand of COIN forces might have had the opposite effect, and that sectoral level targeting of aid disbursements has an important effect on violence in contested regions. The US from the beginning of the invasion to the end of 2008 spent a total of $29 billion in general economic aid and infrastructure development (Tarnoff 2008). Such a serious flaw in American COIN strategy is not just a question of the poor use of funds reaped from US taxpayers but also the inability of the state to achieve its geopolitical goals and provide security to the Iraqi people. The failure of the US intervention in Iraq is evidenced by the rise of ISIL in the wake of the US military withdrawal and the unstable nature of the current Iraqi regime. With the country engaged in similar conflicts in Afghanistan and Somalia, it is necessary to have an effective and

comprehensive COIN strategy that leaves in place a stable state, and not a power vacuum that might be more dangerous than the previous regime.

Chapter 5

Empirical Analysis and Findings

The data set used in this analysis is the Empirical Studies of Conflict data on Iraq, created by Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2011), and covers the occupation of Iraq from 2004 to 2009. The data includes detailed information on the location of violent incidents against US-Coalition forces (coded as SIGACT for significant action) at the district level, total amounts of spending by district along with the programs that sponsored the projects and at what civil society sector they were aimed, and economic factors such as household income, unemployment rates, and the presence of oil and natural gas reserves over time. However, information on many demographic factors is rough at best and not consistently followed over time and sometimes missing for certain districts. This is no fault of the researchers who put together the data set, who did an excellent job providing clarity and functionality, but instead is the result of a lack of detailed surveys occurring in Iraq between the initial 2003 invasion and the eventual US withdrawal.

The dependent variable of insurgent violence is measured using the counts of significant actions reported by Coalition security forces in a district-month. Since the goal of an insurgent organization is to weaken the enemy military forces through guerrilla tactics until they can win a conventional military battle and seize control of the country (Mao 1937), I argue that insurgent violence is an accurate measure of the capability of rebel groups. An increase in resources available to insurgents often translates into better armaments, more weapons and explosives, and an increase in recruits. The yearly number of violent incidents in Iraq is displayed in Figure 2,

and Figure 3 shows the geographic distribution of violence per capita by district. Some problems with the measurement of the insurgent violence (SIGACT, or significant action) variable are pointed out by the authors (Berman, Felter, Shapiro 2011), who mention that violence was often underreported in months with a high number of incidents. Commanders stated that security forces engaged in forty or fifty actions a month often would report only thirty, whereas if only five actions occurred every incident would be reported. Additionally, there is only information on whether or not an incident occurred, with no insight into the intensity of the attack, total casualties, or property damage resulting from the action. However, there is currently no better measure of insurgent violence for Iraq.

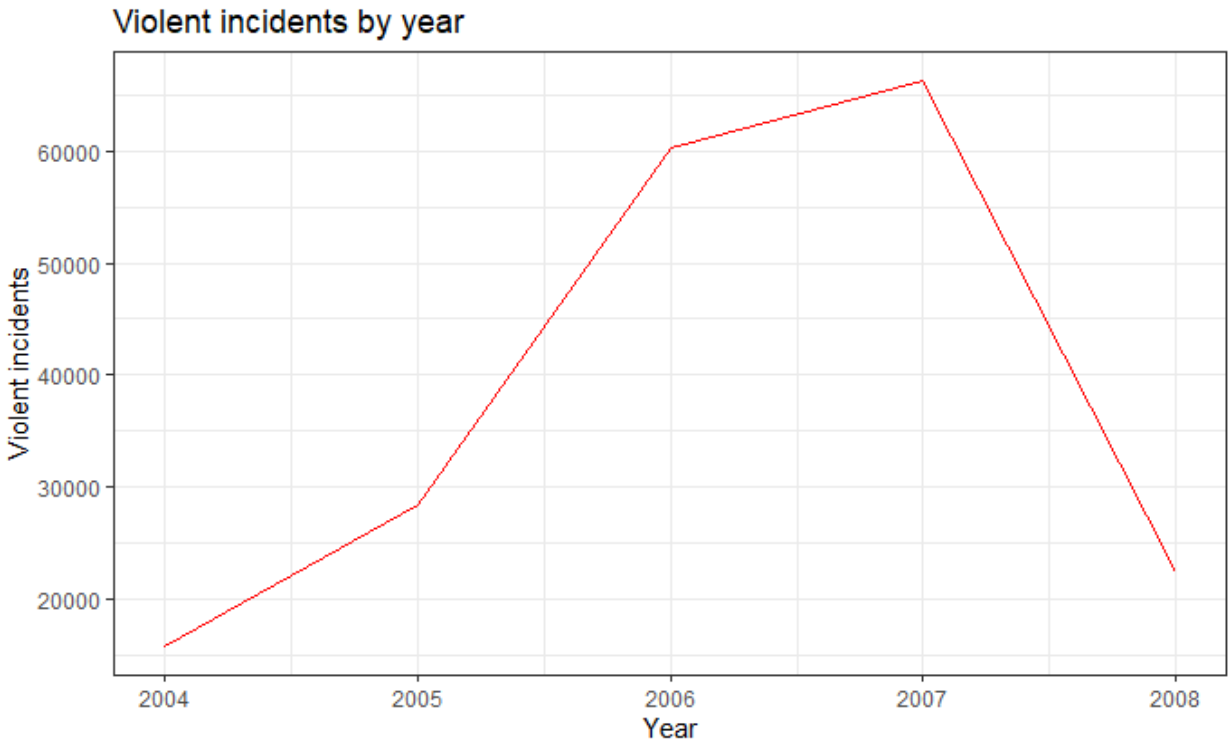

Figure 2

The key independent variable of total aid spending is also measured at the district-month level. As projects were most often funded upfront with large sums of money, the total cost of a

project is spread across the range of time during which it was active. This encapsulates all project spending, even those conditional projects, mostly CERP, demonstrated by Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2011) to have a positive impact on security outcomes. The type of aid is broken down into several sectors, namely democracy, education, electricity, healthcare, public buildings, transportation, and water and sanitation project. Democracy spending was used to promote democracy and governance, and thus corresponds to governance in Hypothesis 4. Education and healthcare also map neatly onto Hypothesis 3 and 5 respectively, whereas electricity projects, the construction of public buildings and transportation networks, and development of water and sanitation facilities fall under the civil society aid in Hypothesis 6. The allocation of aid spending by district is shown in Figure 4.

The effect of aid should be conditioned by the level of a priori insurgent control over a district, which is operationalized by rescaling the lagged value of insurgent violence between zero and one using the maximum value of violence per capita, which occurred in the district of Tarmia. This is obviously an imperfect approximation of the power an insurgent group held in a district as it assumes that Tarmia was at one point completely rebel dominated, while every district in Iraq was contested by security forces, unlike in Afghanistan. Additionally, it fails to capture the competition between sectarian militias. The conflict in Iraq was a three-sided war fought between Shia and Sunni militias and the Coalition security forces spurred on by the deposing of the Sadaam regime which had previously allowed for Sunni domination over the Shia majority populace. The presence of a high level of violence in a district may then be a reflection of two active competing insurgent groups as opposed to a consolidated militia effectively monopolizing control of the population. However, without expert coding this operationalization of insurgent control can be considered a rough approximation of the actual

level of power rebel militias held in a province during a district-month, and it is a crucially important variable to address when considering the effects of development aid.

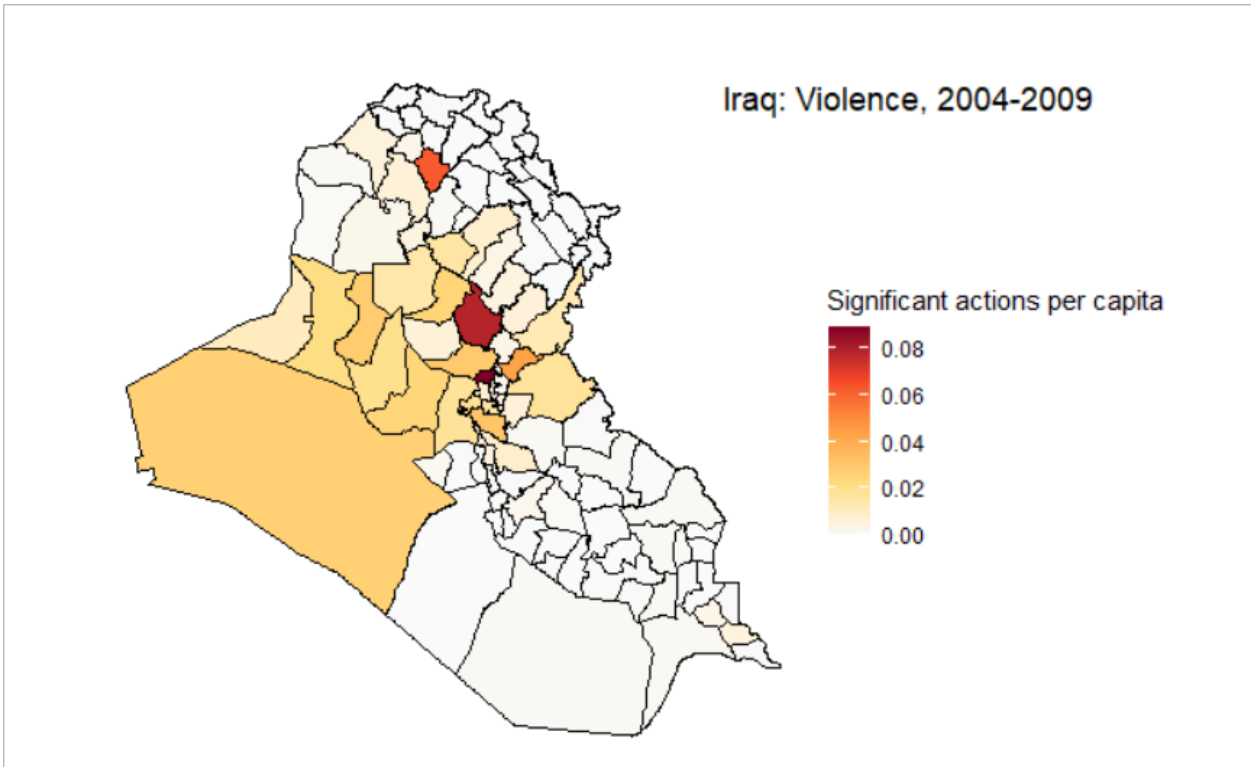

Figure 3

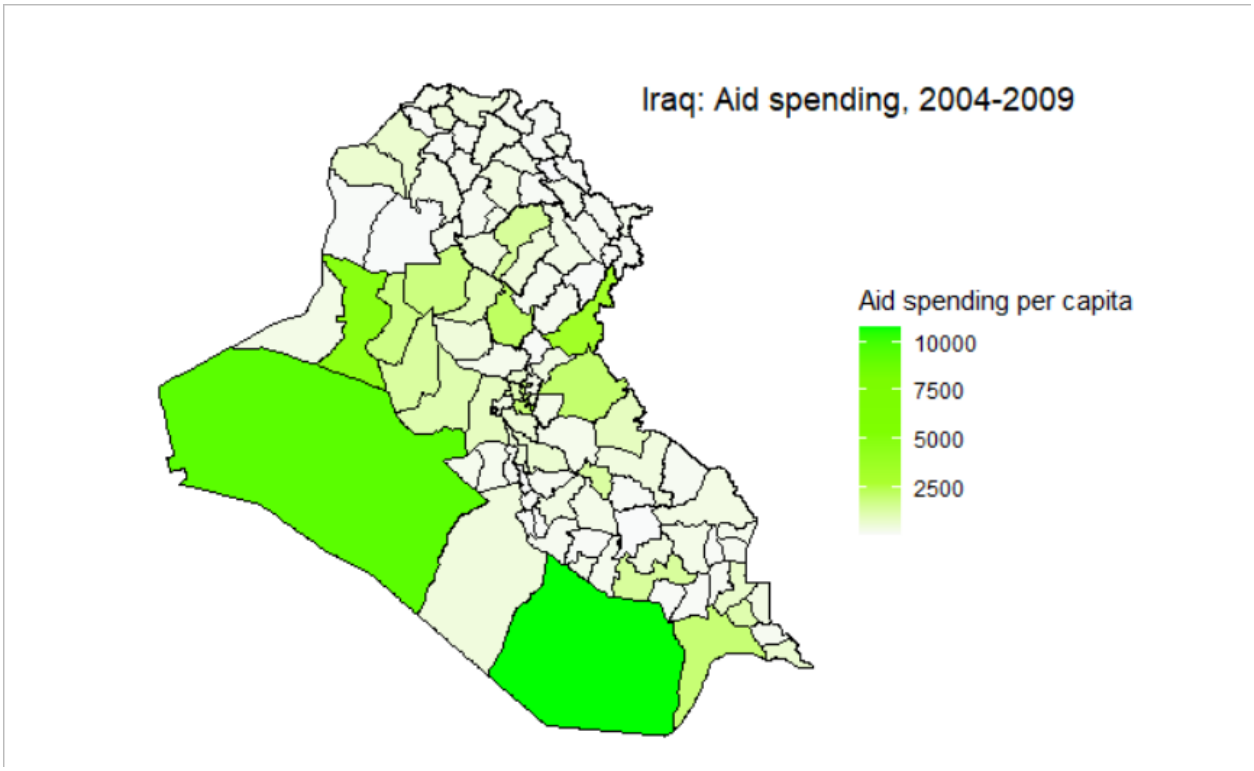

Figure 4

Due to the overdispersed nature of violence count data, a negative binomial model was used for the analysis, with random intercepts for both districts and month to control for variation. The controls used are drawn from previous literature on violence in civil wars. The presence of oil as a "lootable" resource is accounted for by including the total price-weighted value of the oil and natural gas reserves in a district-month, while the unemployment rate and the percentage of the population in the bottom 40% income bracket in Iraq are added as potential economic factors influencing the likelihood of an individual participating in political violence or being vulnerable to recruitment as an insurgent. Variables measuring the proportion of Sunni and Shia populations in each district are invariant across time, and therefore should be unnecessary to add as they are accounted for by the mixed effects. The inclusion of such variables did not improve model fit nor show substantive or statistical significance. The incident rate ratios are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Incident Rate Ratios for Model 1

Spending	Insurgent Control	Unemployment	Oil and Natural Gas	% of households in bottom 40% of income	Spending*Insurgent Control
0.344***	22.89***	.488*	5.437***	0.463***	35740279***

The direction of each of the variables supports the theory. Spending, in general, helps reduce violence. However, the mechanism by which spending suppresses violence does not appear to be economic, as both an increase in the unemployment rate and the proportion of impoverished households in a district-month drive down insurgent violence. Spending as a variable by itself is likely acting as a rough proxy of counterinsurgent effort, particularly since we see that the effect is starkly reversed when accounting for the impact of insurgent control. Additionally, the presence of a high value of oil and natural gas appears to increase violence, in line with the arguments put forth by many scholars in the resource and civil war literature. Figure 4 displays the interaction between spending and insurgent control given the typical Iraqi district-month, and the resulting effect on the expected level of violence. Even at a comparatively low level of insurgent control (.2, only 20% of the highest level observed in Iraq), the effect of spending is noticeable and sharp.

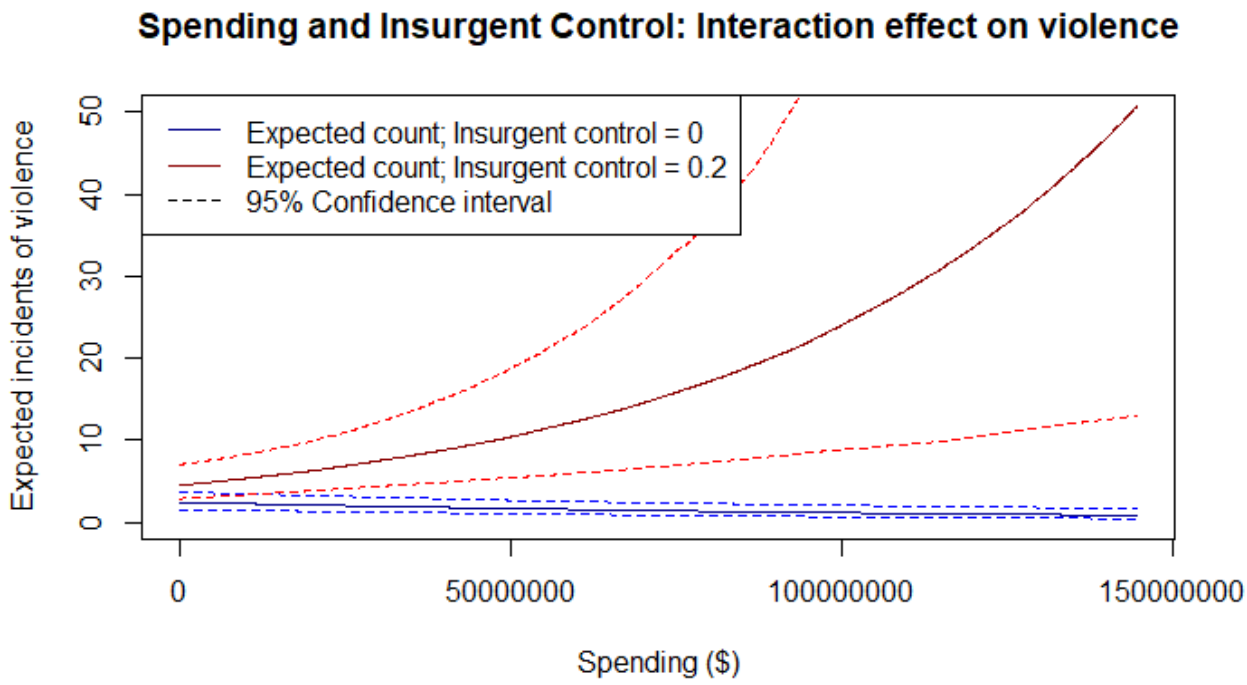

Figure 5: Effect of interaction between insurgent control and aid spending on the level of violence

Models 2 and 3, which disaggregate aid by sector, are also estimated using mixed effects negative binomial models. The results from the two models are given in Table 2, and the incident rate ratios in Table 3. The resulting incident rate ratios are interesting as both education and healthcare aid fail to rise to the level of statistical significance required to disprove the null hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 and 5 therefore remain unsupported, despite the evidence in the terrorism literature that aid directed towards these sectors decreases violence. Within Iraq, education may have been ineffective due to the relatively short timeframe evaluated, and the complete state of dysfunction present in the educational system prior to the US invasion. The non-effect of healthcare could be due to the conflict between a boost in counterinsurgent relations with the populace and an increase in positive health outcomes for insurgent fighters. Democracy aid is highly significant both substantively and statistically, which may be a result of more efficient governance generating more loyalty amongst the population. However, it could

also represent a strong proxy for counterinsurgency efforts. Barring deeper analysis, Hypothesis 4 therefore finds support from the models. Civil society aid appears to depress violence, with the effect being derived largely from transport and water and sanitation projects. This is surprising given the non-excludable nature of both sectors, but provides support for Hypothesis 6.

Table 2: Results from negative binomial mixed effects models of sectoral level aid

	Insurgent violence	
	Model 2	**Model 3**
Democracy aid	-1.882***	-2.119***
	(0.473)	(0.445)
Insurgent control	3.098***	3.114***
	(0.249)	(0.249)
Education aid	-0.565	-0.707
	(0.456)	(0.438)
Electricity aid	0.307	
	(0.384)	
Civil society aid		-0.263*
		(0.150)
Healthcare aid	-0.359	-0.309
	(0.453)	(0.459)
Public building aid	-0.252	
	(0.234)	
Transport aid	-1.385**	
	(0.581)	
Water and sanitation aid	-0.932*	
	(0.534)	
Unemployment rate	-0.602	-0.700*
	(0.380)	(0.379)
Oil	1.888***	1.924***
	(0.653)	(0.653)
Percent of households in bottom 40% of income	-0.756***	-0.772***
	(0.204)	(0.204)
Democracy aid*insurgent control	87.790***	105.811***

	(15.700)	(8.215)
Education aid*insurgent control	-5.593	-0.086
	(6.535)	(5.792)
Electricity aid*insurgent control	2.375	
	(3.920)	
Civil society aid*insurgent control		5.405***
		(1.612)
Healthcare aid*insurgent control	0.953	0.721
	(3.283)	(3.351)
Public building aid*insurgent control	5.829**	
	(2.302)	
Transport aid*insurgent control	-3.791	
	(6.487)	
Water and sanitation aid*insurgent control	87.128***	
	(7.443)	
Constant	1.161***	1.178***
	(0.282)	(0.282)
N	4747	4747
Log Likelihood	-12288.460	-12299.210
AIC	24620.930	24630.420
BIC	24763.160	24733.860

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 3: Incident Rate Ratios for Models 2 and 3

	Model 2	Model 3
Democracy aid	0.152***	0.120***
Insurgent control	22.161***	22.522***
Education aid	0.568	0.493
Electricity aid	1.359	
Civil society aid		0.769*
Healthcare aid	0.698	0.734
Public building aid	0.777	
Transport aid	0.250**	
Water and sanitation aid	0.394*	
Unemployment rate	0.548	0.497*
Oil	6.607***	6.845***
Percent of households in bottom 40% of income	0.470***	0.462***
Democracy aid*insurgent control	1.3e+38***	9.0e+45***
Education aid*insurgent control	0.004	0.918
Electricity aid*insurgent control	10.756	
Civil society aid*insurgent control		22.585
Healthcare aid*insurgent control	2.594	2.057
Public building aid*insurgent control	339.851**	
Transport aid*insurgent control	0.023	
Water and sanitation aid*insurgent control	6.9e+37***	

In order to more intuitively address the relationship between aid, insurgent control, and counterinsurgent effort, I turn to the case of Fallujah. The First and Second Battles of Fallujah were some of the bloodiest of the Iraqi War, and occurred during the beginning of the occupation, namely in April and November of 2004. The initial conflict was sparked off by the killing of four private military contractors under highly publicized circumstances which led to an aggressive response from the US military despite the deaths representing a news story more than a military concern. The Coalition forces emerged victorious in both of their roughly month-long bouts with the local insurgents, and afterwards the city was turned over to an Iraqi security force. The influence of aid spending, which increased greatly as a result of the two battles, on the aftermath for the district is interesting.

During 2004, aid spending was correlated with decreasing levels of violence until the resurgence of violence in October. Unfortunately, as the model focuses on economic factors it has difficulty predicting shifts generated by mechanisms internal to the insurgent organizations, which appears to have driven the decline in violence following the First Battle of Fallujah and the subsequent uptick in the Second Battle. However, predictions still show that aid was associated with declining violence. As previously mentioned, after the victory of US troops in the Second Battle of Fallujah the area was transferred over to the control of Iraqi soldiers. Iraqi troops, provided with less training and experience than US personnel (Rayburn et al 2019), were less capable as a counterinsurgent force. Aid continued to pour into Fallujah while security degraded, and by 2006 the district had become far more violent than in 2004. A clear trend exists during this time of increased aid flows and negatively spiraling security. Following on the insights of the theoretical model, it is likely that a subset of the aid being sent to the district was being acquired by the insurgents indirectly by taxing the populace who were the intended

recipients. The data shows that the majority of the funds being provided during this period focused on water and sanitation, a portion of development aid that is difficult to make conditional or exclude insurgents from. Such projects do little to gain popular support as citizens receive the benefit regardless of who they support, and as such can provide more materiel to insurgents who are drawing upon locals for resources.

Figures 5 and 6 plot the predicted level of violence across a range of potential levels of aid spending along with the actual observed value for each month in Fallujah. Figure 5 covers the period from the First and Second Battles of Fallujah in which US troops acted as counterinsurgent forces, whereas Figure 6 looks at a six-month period in 2006 when undertrained Iraqi soldiers were responsible for state security in the city and district. With the higher level of military control exercised by US troops aid flows were effective at helping to reduce violence (Figure 5). However, in the absence of strong military control like in 2006 aid appears to exacerbate the conflict and increase violence (Figure 6).

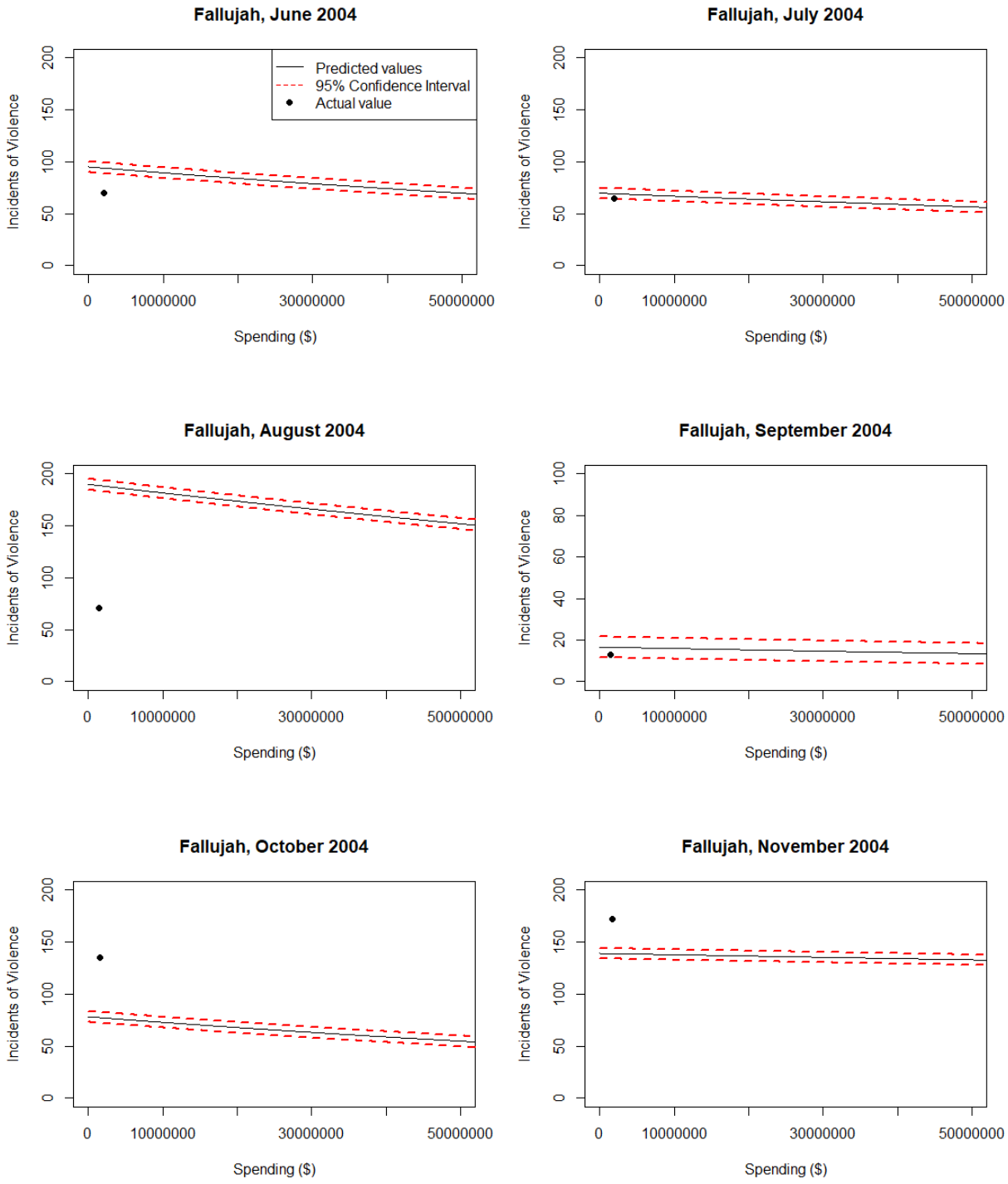

Figure 6: Predicted values of incidents of violence over spending for Fallujah, 2004

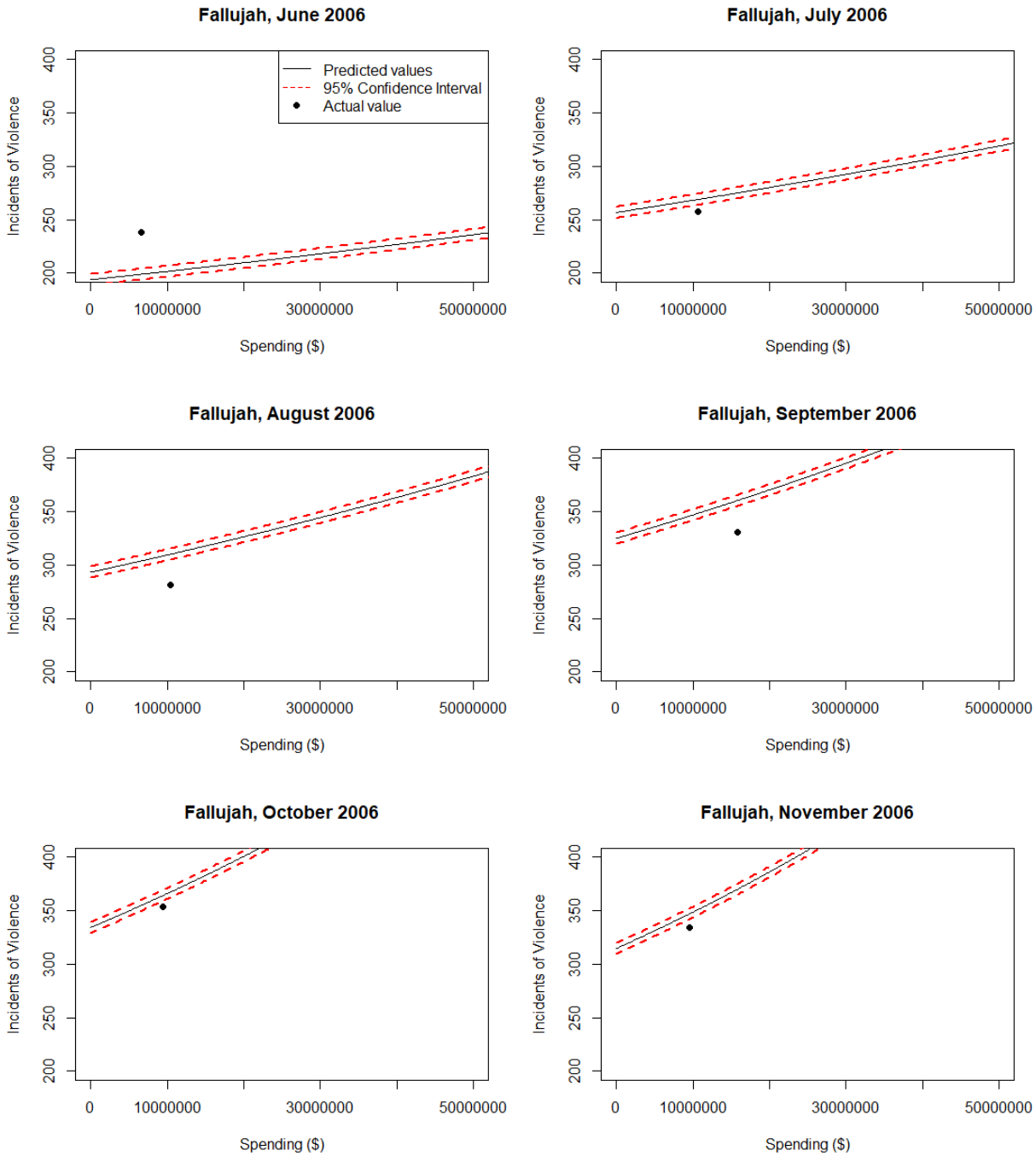

Figure 7: Predicted values of incidents of violence over spending for Fallujah, 2006

Another event from the occupation of Iraq that warrants further investigation is the Anbar Awakening. The Anbar region was a Sunni-dominated region to the north-west of Baghdad, and the tribal sheikhs in the area had aligned themselves with Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The result of this alliance was an intense insurgency, that by August 2006 caused the senior intelligence officer in the region to despair of being able to secure a complete military victory. Coalition security did not extend beyond the borders of the local military bases, and there were not enough troops to effectively fight the AQI organized insurgent movement. Yet, at the end of the month many tribal sheikhs had decided to form an anti-AQI front, and by September forty-one sheikhs formed the Anbar Emergency Council. This action by the sheikhs was less a result of effective US outreach, as division headquarters in the region was still skeptical of the tribes, and more due to the over-aggressive disciplinary policy pursued by the local AQI leadership which had recently beheaded a major sheikh for refusing to turn over his tribe's weapons.

Figure 8

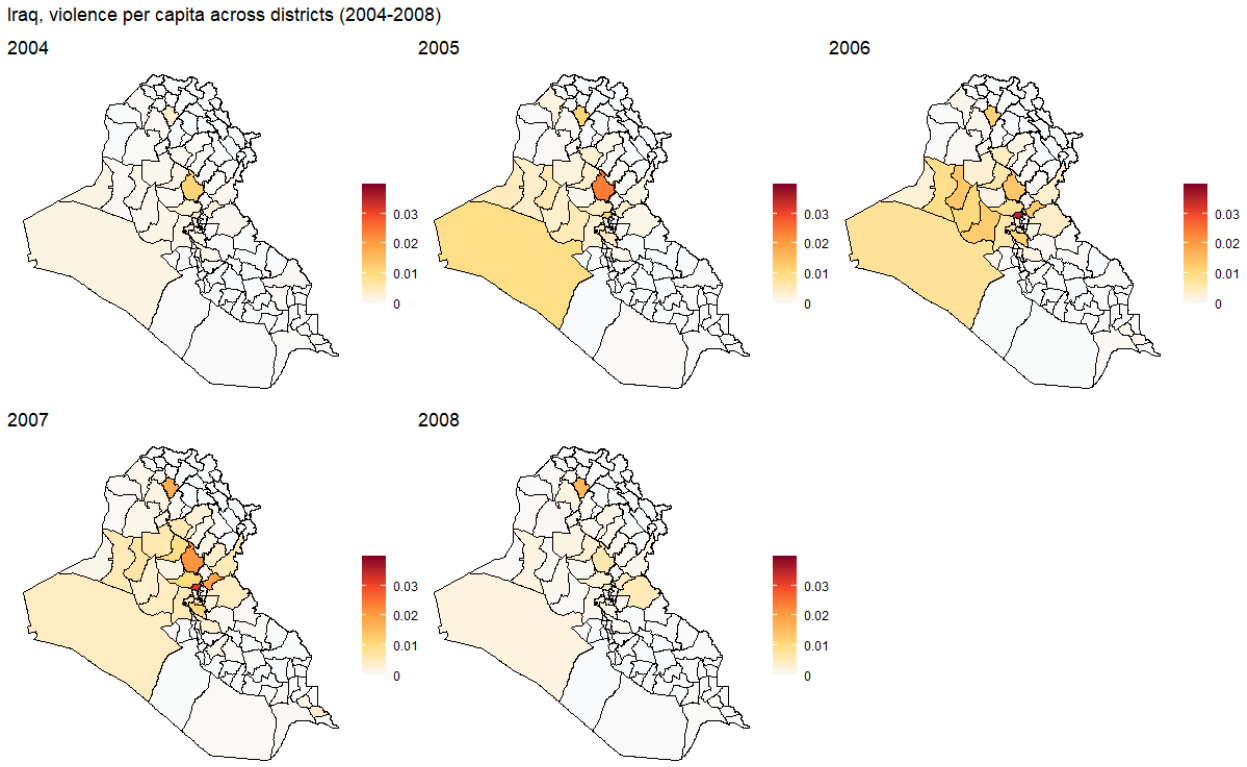

Figure 9

The effect on insurgency violence was sharp and immediate, and was substantively so large that it was reflected on the national level. The incorporation of the Anbari tribesmen into the Iraqi police is considered by experts (Rayburn et al 2019) to have been the driving force behind the increased success of counterinsurgency efforts, particularly in the previously troublesome "Sunni Triangle" region. The dramatic drop is displayed in Figure 8, which shows the number of violent incidents per capita for each district from 2004 to 2008. This drastic shift in policy on the part of the tribal sheikhs can be understood within the model as decrease in *v*, the ability of the insurgency to effectively extract resources from the population. Following this shift in circumstances, aid projects, particularly CERP, became more effective at reducing violence (Berman et al 2011). This result fits comfortably with the theory, as the model predicts that aid in areas under COIN control will tend to depress violence.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The disbursement of aid, particularly in large amounts with little on the ground oversight, can be a double-edged sword. Evidence from the Iraqi conflict points to a situation where development aid was effectively supporting insurgents instead of fostering a more secure state. Utilizing ecological models to understand the dynamics at play in asymmetric warfare can generate meaningful insights with actionable policy implications. However, there is a question of whether or not the theory fully depicts the insurgent/counterinsurgent conflict. As mentioned previously in the article, Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2011) model the Iraqi conflict as a three-actor game including the population, while the theory of this paper focuses on the conflict between rebel and state forces, considering the population to be a part of the operational environment. This follows on the theories of Trinquier (1961), who focuses on the necessity of managing the population as a means of strangling the insurgency so as to achieve a decisive military victory and a complete extirpation of insurgent militants. This theory is more compelling as it addresses the security concerns which according to Fearon and Laitin (2003) predominate amongst the causes of the incidence of insurgency. Future research might explore the effects of specific types of aid on insurgent activity, and utilize more refined measurements of local insurgent control. Identifying and practicing the most effective tactics and eliminating the counterproductive practices of US counterinsurgency strategy is increasingly important as the

rise of weak states across the world that act as potential havens for dangerous international actors has increased the range of military interventions the United States undertakes.

The Anbar Awakening, and its impact on the course of the conflict, highlight the importance of military control before using aid as a "weapon system" and the critical role that local elites can play in establishing that control. The top-down US approach to nation-building and security which dominated during the first four years of the conflict established several unpopular and ineffective regional governments, while cooperating with local sheikhs and reconstructing security forces from the ground-up resulted in a dramatic shift towards more positive security outcomes for not just Coalition forces but also the local citizenry. Though this seems like common-sense, US efforts to remedy the ills of weak states have frequently forgotten the importance of ground-level involvement with locals. Clausewitz's comments on war still ring true even in the complex conflicts which confront US policymakers today, "Everything is very simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult."

In order to achieve the new goals of US foreign policy, which places an emphasis on the replacement of uncooperative foreign regimes with more favorable governments, the US has thrown the military into a role for which it is currently ill-suited. Insurgencies defy the conventional war of movement doctrine which has dominated US military practice, and have forced the US military to adapt to a new mission for which it was never trained or prepared. With no more global superpower rivals, the US military has been occupied with the counterinsurgency mission, a mission which is remarkably difficult, complex, and immune to simplistic solutions. A more accurate understanding of the impact of economic aid on COIN efforts is essential to the success of US military interventions now and in the future, and by extension the welfare of the citizens in the unlucky state or region, and empirical scholarship can help achieve this.

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