How Does Islamist Local Governance Affect the Lives of Women?

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How do women fare under rule by Islamists? Whereas some scholarly work suggests that Islamists are effective at providing the type of social services that benefit women most, other studies contend that Islamic groups support "pro-male" policies and cultural interventions that disadvantage the well-being of women. In order to adjudicate between these views, I compare two neighborhoods in Greater Cairo that are similar on a number of dimensions but in one, a militant Islamist group came to dominate local politics, whereas in the other, strongmen ruled the streets in the absence of a strong state presence. Using an original data set of retrospective health histories for women in each neighborhood, I find that women subject to governance by the Islamic group enjoyed better outcomes related to reproductive health than a statistically matched set of women in the comparable neighborhood while being no more likely to marry early or drop out of school.

How do women fare under rule by Islamists? Though governance by Islamic societal groups has differed on gender-related policies, much has been written about the way that Islamist governments offer—at best—a mixed bag for women. At worst, Islamist-oriented regimes have repressed women economically, politically, and culturally, even privileging male citizens in the disbursement of state-provided goods and services. One difficulty in assessing the impact of Islamist governance on the lives and well-being of women involves the challenge of answering the key counterfactual question: How would women have fared in these cases in the absence of Islamist rule? A researcher's ability to answer this counterfactual is hampered by the limited number of cases of Islamist governance at the national level with which to make comparisons.

The question of how women are impacted by Islamist rule is one that might increasingly be addressed at the subnational level. In many cases, Islamists are not governing entire states but rather areas within states. In tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, "Islamic emirates" exist outside of the control of regimes with limited state capacity. Hamas, the Islamic group that won a majority of seats in the 2006 Palestinian elections, has maintained political control in Gaza but not the West Bank. In northern

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Mali, Islamic activists have exercised forms of political authority in pockets of the country.

This article takes advantage of a unique divergence in local political institutions that occurred in Egypt's recent history to explore the impact of Islamist governance on the lives of women. The 1980s saw tremendous growth in informal, slum areas ringing Egypt's capital city, Cairo. Unable to maintain control of governance in these areas at the local level, some neighborhoods came under the control of strongmen, family heads, and, occasionally, thugs. Others fell under the influence of both moderate and radical Islamist groups. I have chosen two neighborhoods that were comparable on a number of dimensions—size, socioeconomic status, proximity to the city center, and previous levels of Islamist activity—but in one, a militant Islamist group came to dominate local politics whereas in the other, clan leaders and strongmen ruled the streets in the absence of the state. I argue that the former came under control of Islamists as a result of factors orthogonal to women's health and well-being outcomes.

This comparison provides a unique opportunity to consider the impact of Islamist rule across highly comparable units at precisely the same time. The empirical strategy that I employ matches women in the neighborhood that was governed by Islamists at the local level with women who lived in the neighborhood dominated by non-Islamist local leaders. I find that women in the Islamist-dominated area enjoyed better reproductive health outcomes but were no more likely than women in the control area to be subject to types of negative cultural intervention that might manifest in higher school dropout or female circumcision rates. These conclusions suggest that Islamist local governance—even by a group described as radical—can be positive for women's health outcomes and neutral with respect to measurable cultural impacts, like education.

There are a number of important limitations to the generalizability of these findings worth highlighting from the start. First, the article only explicitly considers one counterfactual condition—the outcomes we would have expected for women in the absence of Islamist local governance. The weakness of non-Islamist political organizations in the region and limited capacity of many Middle Eastern states suggest, however, that the comparison addressed in this article is the key counterfactual question of concern. Second, it is not clear how these findings might "scale up" to a larger geographic area or alternative set of political constraints. Islamist organizations operating as part of a political opposition movement or with a limited geographical scope may behave differently than groups in government with responsibility for larger numbers of citizens. There is little question, however, that the role of religiously minded activists in the Islamic world is an issue of increasing, critical importance. In the 2011 Egyptian parliamentary elections, 25% of votes went to the Salafi bloc with an additional 40% to the political alliance associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and a Muslim Brotherhood candidate won Egypt's first free

and fair presidential election in 2012. Despite the limitations that I have highlighted, this article represents one of only a handful of design-based approaches exploring the impact of Islamist governance, a subject of growing importance.

This research provides suggestive evidence that Islamic groups operate as we might expect many grassroots insurgent groups to behave— cultivating support through the provision of public goods in areas where the reach of the state was limited. Berman and Laitin (2008) describe voluntary religious organizations of this type as using a club model where provision of local public goods allow such groups to meet their other objectives more effectively. The emergence of powerful religious organizations in Egypt speaks directly to the circumstances under which weak states fail to complete the tasks expected of them and cede political control to nonstate actors including warlords, local elites, militias, and Islamist political organizations.

The Impact of Islamist Rule on Women

Theoretical expectations regarding the influence of Islam and Islamism on women's lives and well-being are mixed. Scholarly work has suggested that Islam is bad for economic development (Kuran 2004) and an encumbrance to democratization (Fish 2002). The Islamic world exhibits what has been described as a "persistent gap in support for gender equality" compared to the rest of the world (Inglehart and Norris 2003, 68), and beliefs typical of fundamentalist ideologies tend to place restrictive demands on women while simultaneously favoring men over women in employment and education opportunities (Blaydes and Linzer 2008). Islamist political activity also focuses on issues related to public morality (Ismail 2003, 60–61) where women are a frequent target of social control.[1]

This characterization of the impact of Islam on women's well-being stands in contrast to a more ethnographic literature that considers the role of Islamic charitable and political associations in the provision of goods and services that frequently benefit Muslim women. Clark (2004, 14) argues that an essential aspect of Islamist identity relates to the creation of alternative institutions to those of the state. Islamic activists have developed a reputation for enjoying success in providing social services to local communities through such alternative institutions across the Muslim world (e.g., Cammett 2009; Clark 2004; White 2002; Wickham 2002). Women's participation in support of Islamic political parties and candidates may also lead to forms of female political empowerment (e.g., Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009; Clark and Schwedler 2003).

Meyersson (2009) examines how Islamic governance at the local level impacts women's educational attainment and employment outcomes across Turkish municipalities. He finds that religiously conservative mayors are "more effective in educating and providing better jobs for women" than secular parties (Meyersson 2009). Though Meyersson

suggests that democratically elected Islamists are able to positively influence outcomes for women in Turkey, the ideological preferences and political activities of Turkish Islamists may differ from those of Islamists in other Muslim contexts. In other words, Turkish Islamists represent a relatively favorable test for the impact of Islam on women's well-being. But what impact does Islamist local hegemony have when the Islamists in question are more radical in their orientation?[2] To answer this question, the experience of Egypt in the late 1980s and early 1990s is illustrative.

The Political Geography of Local Governance in Cairo

December 1992 witnessed what some have called the "seige of Imbaba," or the Egyptian government's effort to expel the Islamic militant group *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* (henceforth known as the Islamic Group [IG]) from a Giza slum where the group had supplanted other actors as the dominant political presence. It took a force of at least 10,000 police and army troops weeks to root out the IG in a confrontation that was characterized by mass arrests and widespread human rights violations. Not long before, a local IG leader had held a press conference for Western journalists declaring the establishment of the "Islamic Republic of Imbaba."[3] How did it come to be that mere miles from the city center of Cairo, an Islamic militant group was able to create a state-within-a-state that operated largely beyond the reach of the Egyptian government?

The IG in Egypt

Since the founding of the IG in the 1970s, IG activists advocated that Egypt be ruled according to the dictates of Islamic law and eventually came to call for armed confrontation with the Egyptian government for its failure to do so (Sullivan and Abed Kotob 1999). Between 1981 and 1984, planning for the group's future activities largely took place within Egypt's prisons as a result of the group's reported complicity in the assassination of President Sadat (Mubarak 1995). It was decided during this time that the IG would seek to expand its activities to Cairo, seeking a broader constituency than it had already established in its historic strongholds of upper Egypt (Ashour 2009). As IG members began to be released in the mid-1980s, the group initiated the process of both increasing its activities and expanding its geographic scope of influence (Mubarak 1995). Communities in Greater Cairo populated by new migrants from upper Egypt would seem to offer a good opportunity for expansion and cultivation of new members.

The desire to increase the geographic scope of the IG's activities to Greater Cairo came at an auspicious time. The city's growth over the previous 30 years had been fueled by the development of what have been called "haphazard" or "informal" communities—*'ashwa'iyaat*—populated primarily by migrants from rural areas (Oldham, El Hadidi, and Tamaa

1987). These areas were known as "informal" because they were developed on agricultural or government-owned desert land in violation of existing laws governing land use and "haphazard" because they did not emerge from an urban planning effort (Bayat and Denis 2000; Oldham, El Hadidi, and Tamaa 1987). Dwellers of these shantytowns, particularly in the 1980s, did not enjoy access to government infrastructure and typically occupied the lower rungs of Egypt's socioeconomic ladder. It seemed that the state had, to some extent, lost control of its capital city, raising issues about both the capacity and the competence of the Egyptian state (Dorman 2007, 24).[4]

IG Activities in Imbaba

Despite efforts to set up operations in a variety of areas (Bayat 2007a, 39), the IG established its most successful stronghold in the Giza neighborhood of Imbaba. Informal areas of Imbaba—like the poverty-stricken neighborhood known as Western Mounira—had no public schools, hospitals, clubs, sewerage, public transportation, or police station in the mid-1980s, leading Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim (2002, 75) to describe the area as "Hobbesian" before the Islamists stepped in.[5] According to one journalist, the residents of this neighborhood had been "orphaned by the central government" (Abdo 2000).

The IG sought to provide residents with direct assistance for their most pressing economic concerns. According to Ismail (2003, 100) the group provided services through a social work committee with a mandate of helping the poor with health and educational services.[6] This included the distribution of food, books, and school supplies for the poor (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004; Mubarak 1995, 261). These services also frequently included the payment of school fees, the supplementing of marriage trousseaus, the distribution of meat on Islamic holidays, and support for orphans. The IG would provide money to families upon the death of a breadwinner and free medication.[7] Physicians have tended to be very well represented in the IG,[8] particularly doctors with hospital privileges who extended their services to local residents.[9] As a result, the IG was very effective in its provision of health services to the local population through both primary care clinics and more specialized services, like drug rehabilitation programs.[10]

The group's activities reached beyond the provision of social services, however, to also include arbitrating conflicts and meting out the group's interpretation of justice. IG activists sought "the control of public space and the imposition of the moral code," engaging in activities like sex-segregating public gatherings, forbidding music and dance, and encouraging women to veil (Ismail 2003, 80). In some cases, women who refused to veil were threatened and even had acid thrown in their faces (Mubarak 1995, 265). The spiritual directives of the IG were discussed in regularly held meetings and religious training workshops (Hassan 2000).

Interestingly, the IG was unique within Egypt as a group that could hold mass meetings and conferences without a state security permit as a result of the autonomy it enjoyed within Imbaba (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004, 76). The type and scope of IG activity in Imbaba have ultimately led some to call what emerged a society existing in parallel to the one being administered by the state (Murphy 2002; Singerman 2009). A great deal has been written about the nature of IG activity in Imbaba, but the question of why the IG succeeded in Imbaba, rather than some other area in Greater Cairo, has not been addressed.

Why Imbaba and not Bulaq al-Dakrur?

Over 100 informal communities in Greater Cairo house around 60% of the city's 17 million residents (Kipper and Fischer 2009). Given the size of the city and the large number of *'ashwa'iyaat* as locations of housing for poor Cairenes, how can we understand the success of the IG in some areas and not others? As part of the group's desire to expand its influence from upper Egypt to Cairo, the IG sent group leaders to a number of Cairo neighborhoods (Bayat 2007a, 39; Mubarak 1995, 237–238). This included upmarket areas as well as poor but well-established "popular" neighborhoods (Bayat 2007a, 139).[11] The IG enjoyed its greatest success, however, in the crowded *'ashwa'iyaat*.

The informal neighborhoods of Cairo provided a favorable location for IG penetration for a number of reasons. First, the "chronic absence of the state" (Denis 1996) meant that the group would not need to contend with local police and political authority as it sought to extend its influence. In addition, the lack of state-provided services offered an opportunity for the group to win over support from locals who felt neglected by the central government. The informal neighborhoods of Giza provided the additional benefit of being heavily populated by upper Egyptian migrants who may have been familiar with the IG's activities in southern Egypt.

Demographic and socioeconomic conditions alone, however, cannot predict the IG's successful establishment of local hegemony in Imbaba as a number of areas would have met the criteria outlined above. In particular, the informal neighborhood of Bulaq al-Dakrur resembled Imbaba on many of these dimensions. Bulaq al-Dakrur—like Imbaba—is an informal area located geographically close to the city center but peripheral to the city in terms of "social distance" (Ismail 2006, 7). Ismail argues that residents of Bulaq al-Dakrur have historically believed either that there is no state presence in their area or that they live in a state-within-a-state, though not one run by Islamists (2006, xxxiii).[12] She contends that Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba were highly comparable in socioeconomic terms, even quoting one informant who argues that "Bulaq can only be compared to Imbaba. The two areas compete in negatives" (Ismail 2006, 21).

Information collected about the two neighborhoods as part of the 1986 Egyptian census also suggests a number of demographic similarities

between Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba. The neighborhoods had almost identical percentages of young and old residents, students and self-employed, illiterate and more educated individuals, for example. Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba were also much more similar to each other on social and demographic indicators than to neighboring areas like Agouza and Dokki. Despite these important points of similarity between the two neighborhoods, the IG only emerged as the key local arbiter and authority in Imbaba, whereas in Bulaq al-Dakrur governance was managed by local clan leaders and strongmen who were not explicitly religious in their orientation (Ismail 2006, 56).[13]

This raises the question of whether underlying levels of religiosity made Imbaba more susceptible to Islamist influence than Bulaq. Yet there is no historical evidence to suggest that the residents of Imbaba were more religious than individuals in other informal areas surrounding Cairo. Bulaq al-Dakrur was known to have housed one of the first cells of the IG, with cells only later spreading to areas like Imbaba and Haram in the Giza governorate (Morour 1990). Assuming that the group would first settle in areas where it was best connected and most likely to succeed, this suggests that Bulaq al-Dakrur was at least as religious as Imbaba. In addition, both Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur were home neighborhoods to more than 10 defendants in the Sadat assassination trial (Kepel 1993, 222). If the number of Sadat assassination defendants might be taken as a proxy for the underlying religiosity of an area, then Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur, again, are highly comparable. Finally, socioeconomic factors have long been thought to be correlated with but not deterministic of support for Islamist groups and practices. Literacy, for example, has been shown to be a robust determinant of support for fundamentalism among Muslim women (Blaydes and Linzer 2008). Yet Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur had virtually identical rates of female literacy leading up to the late 1980s.

Individuals well positioned to speak about the social and political development of Giza governorate have argued that although both Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba were characterized by comparable levels of physical and social inaccessibility for the areas' citizens, the neighborhood of Imbaba posed a unique *geographic* challenge for the state and security services. The vast majority of informal areas in Greater Cairo are characterized by narrow streets, minimal public space, and extremely high population density (Ismail 2003, 92). The frequent lack of established street names, house numbers, and accurate maps of these areas offer possibilities for "safe haven" from state authorities (Bayat 2007b). Yet Imbaba posed a particular challenge. According to Fouad Allam, the Egyptian official tasked with cracking down on Islamist organizations in Egypt during the 1980s and 1990s, the physical space of Imbaba was harder to control than other informal areas because of the many dead-end and one-way streets found there.[14] Suhair Lotfi, a long-time researcher at the National Center for Criminological and Sociological Research located in Imbaba, concurs arguing that the physical geography of Imbaba was particularly

inaccessible for state security and that the IG eventually invested more resources in Imbaba because it would be easier to defend against state authorities.[15] According to Lotfi, the geography of Imbaba resembles a "citadel" with few points for vehicle entry and exit and many one-way roads and narrow alleys.[16]

This view is echoed in both scholarly and journalistic accounts. Imbaba came to be favored by Islamists because of its "invisibility" (Ismail 2003, 99) where the possibility of police interference would be minimized (Mubarak 1995). It was this ability to expand without fear of security interference, according to one IG representative, that provided the group with the opportunity and incentive to grow its activities in Imbaba (Mubarak 1995, 247). Streets in Imbaba were also very narrow and unpaved,[17] not serviceable by police vehicles,[18] and sometimes maze-like where a single narrow alley might run for hundreds of meters with dozens of tributary alleys.[19] Satellite images of Imbaba from 1976 show a densely populated quarter with very few cross-cutting roads, making it virtually impossible for emergency vehicles to access (El-Sioufi 1981).[20]

The difficulty of police penetration of Imbaba became particularly clear after the December 1992 raids that swept the IG from its hegemonic position. According to one expert, many areas of Imbaba were highly inaccessible to the armored and other vehicles of state security.[21] Although the security officials were eventually able to root out IG activists, the process took longer than anticipated because of the geographic conditions of Imbaba.[22] Is it possible that the geographic characteristics of Imbaba impacted the ability of women from the area to receive health, educational, and other services? One-way streets and narrow roads would not have impacted the ability of *pedestrians* to move both within and to areas outside of the slum neighborhood. Indeed, residents of either of the two informal areas travel on foot to leave their neighborhoods and then by city bus, metro, or perhaps most frequently privately owned microbus to their destination. To move from the informal areas of Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur to areas with more social services, individuals would need to cross railroad tracks and traverse other types of obstacles in both cases.[23] As a result, it is does not appear that the types of geographic impediments to state sector intervention would impact ordinary citizens in the same way. Exploiting this difference between Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur is part of the identification strategy I employ.

Empirical Tests

The IG's ability to establish political and social control in Imbaba depended on a number of factors, particularly the area's informal status and the challenges Imbaba's geography posed for police and security sector intervention. Though IG local hegemony emerged in Imbaba, the neighborhood of Bulaq al-Dakrur—also informal but with a geographic configuration that permitted a greater probability of security sector

success—developed its own, informal forms of internal governance. Local authority figures and strongmen helped to mediate disputes and sought to provide public goods for residents of the area. Indeed, some of these individuals even represented Islamic charitable organizations (Ismail 2006). The key distinction, however, between Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba is that in Imbaba, IG local governance represented a more structured and deliberate attempt to do so. The empirical question explored here involves the impact of the IG on the health and well-being of the women of Imbaba.

In order to address this question, I use original survey data for female residents of Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur. The women were asked a number of retrospective health and well-being questions that constitute the dependent variables in this analysis. The key explanatory variable is the neighborhood in which they lived during the late 1980s and early 1990s when the IG dominated Imbaba. Although I have tried to carefully match Imbaba to another neighborhood that closely resembles it in all respects except Islamist local governance, in order to ameliorate concerns about neighborhood equivalence I also use statistical matching to control for any remaining confounding influence.

Data and Variables

The data used in this article were collected in July–August 2009 using sampling procedures very similar to those used in recent waves of data collection for the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of Egypt.[24] The women selected for the face-to-face interviews constitute a random, representative sample of each area where not more than one woman per household was interviewed. Following Kudamatsu (2008), I use each woman's retrospective history to create variables of interest.

I consider a number of dependent variables related to the health and well-being of women. I have chosen these variables because they are ones that were both (1) possible to ask on a survey in authoritarian Egypt and (2) related to issues that women are likely to remember, even many years after the fact. This is significant because Islamist hegemony in Imbaba took place between 1989 and 1992. Each variable is described below and the variables refer specifically to the treatment period.

1 Fertility: the total number of children born to each woman.
2 Prenatal care: the percentage of births for which the woman received prenatal care.
3 Home births: the percentage of births for each woman that took place at home versus at a hospital or clinic.
4 Infant deaths: the percentage of infants born that died in the first year of life.
5 Left school: a dummy variable for if the woman left formal schooling.
6 Circumcision: a dummy variable for if the woman was circumcised.

7 Early marriage: a dummy variable for if a woman married at or
   before the age of 15.

A number of other variables were also collected for use in the analysis.
The first is the length of time the woman has lived in her current neigh-
borhood. Women who did not reside in each neighborhood during the
period in question are relatively rare in the sample and excluded from the
analysis. Data were also collected on a series of variables that are used for
statistical matching.

Examining Variation across Districts

In my pairing of Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur for comparison, I have
chosen two neighborhoods with very similar underlying characteristics
(see Figure 1). The use of statistical matching provides a second opportu-
nity in the research design to reduce the effects of any confounding
variables by pruning observations from treatment and control groups that
lack comparable counterparts (Iacus, King, and Porro 2008).[25]
   The variables used to match are ones that might be correlated with
both support for Islamist governance and health outcomes and ability to
access local health, educational, and public resources. This includes a
woman's age, her religion, the educational level of her mother, and the
educational level of her father.[26] Age is coarsened to five-year blocks.
Religion is a dummy variable that takes on values of either Christian or
Muslim.[27] Parental education precedes Islamist intervention and should
be highly correlated to a woman's own educational level and economic
standing. Given the predictive power of income and education on many
of the outcome variables of interest as well as potentially the treatment,
controlling for both her mother's and father's educational levels would
appear to be an important potential source of confounding. Both mater-
nal and paternal education levels are coarsened to six categories that
correspond to important milestones in the Egyptian educational system.
Exact matching is employed for both the religion and the parental edu-
cation variables.
   Analysis of imbalance in the pretreated data suggests that even before
matching, overall levels of balance in the data were quite favorable. The
only variable that exhibited a potentially significant difference in means
and distribution was age, where the mean age in Imbaba was two years
higher than in Bulaq al-Dakrur. After matching, however, both the mean
and distribution of the age variable converge. In order to achieve this
balance, 19 observations in the control group and 40 observations in the
treatment area were not matched.
   To estimate the treatment effect after matching, I use a weighted linear
regression model of each dependent variable on Islamist "treatment" (i.e.,
residence in Imbaba during period of IG hegemony). Weighting is used to
adjust for different stratum sizes (Iacus, King, and Porro 2008). Results are

FIGURE 1
Map of Greater Cairo with Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur Identified
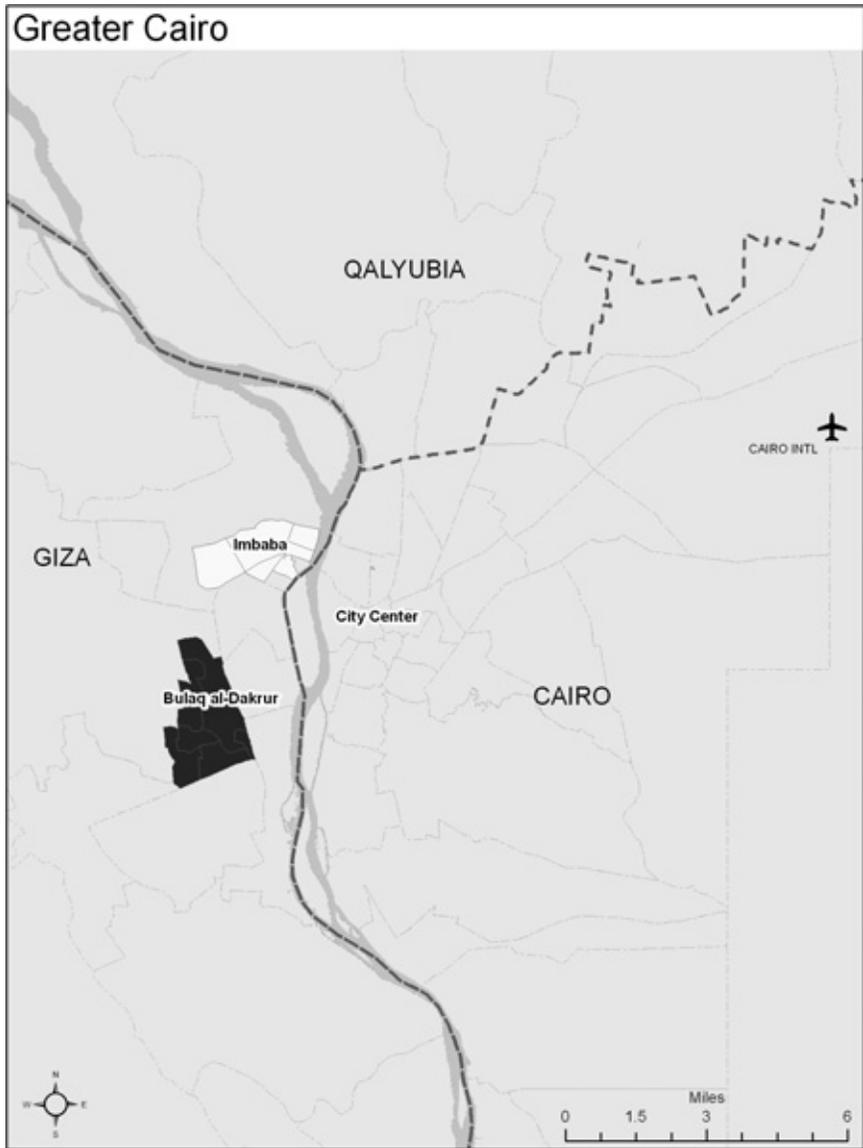
presented in Table 1.[28] The results suggest that women living in Imbaba during the period of IG rule had lower fertility rates, higher levels of prenatal care, and fewer home births than their counterparts in Bulaq al-Dakrur. These results are all significant at the 0.01 level. For example, a

TABLE 1
Average Impact of Islamist Local Governance (i.e., Residence in Imbaba during Period of IG Hegemony) on Seven Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	Islamist Effect
Fertility	−0.117 (0.046)
Prenatal care	0.237 (0.064)
Home births	−0.195 (0.067)
Infant deaths	0.006 (0.021)
Left school	0.000 (0.013)
Circumcision	−0.018 (0.016)
Early marriage	0.006 (0.006)

Note: Each estimate is the product of a separate regression estimated after statistical matching of treatment and control groups. Standard errors are in parentheses.

matched set of women in Bulaq al-Dakrur had approximately 25% more children during the treatment period of 1989–1992. This is contrast to an average difference of just 0.04 children during the four years prior to Islamist local rule in Imbaba. Although Bulaq al-Dakrur and Imbaba had virtually identical rates of home births during the period of 1985–1988 (0.450 and 0.448, respectively), the probability of a woman having a home birth in Imbaba dropped substantially during the treatment period compared to her matched counterpart in Bulaq. In fact, a woman in Imbaba was 35% less likely to have a home birth than her matched counterpart living in Bulaq al-Dakrur. Women living in Imbaba were also almost twice as likely to receive prenatal care than women in Bulaq al-Dakrur during the treatment period.

Women in Imbaba did not, however, see a statistically significant difference in terms of infant deaths. There are at least two possible explanations for a null result on infant death even if we believe that women were enjoying greater access to health resources in Imbaba during the treatment period. First, health interventions are not always effective and the null result may, in part, reflect a lack of quality care rather than a total lack of care. A second possibility is that because infant death is a relatively rare event, the sample size and focus on the 1989–1992 period may not offer enough statistical power to yield a statistically significant result.

What impact did IG local governance have on aspects of women's well-being related to cultural interventions? Women were no more likely to drop out of school, be subject to the practice of female circumcision, or forced into early marriage in Imbaba than in Bulaq al-Dakrur. In fact, though not statistically significant, the sign on the treatment effect for circumcision is negative. This suggests that IG activities to promote female circumcision were not strongly enforced. The coefficient on school dropout suggests that, at worst, the IG was neutral for women in terms of education.

Examining Variation over Time

Rather than considering each woman as the unit of analysis and comparing women in Imbaba with their matched counterparts in Bulaq, can the results presented above be affirmed using variation across years of a woman's life or across births for the mothers in the sample? Three of the variables presented in the previous section can be analyzed for each of the children born to a particular mother across her lifetime: prenatal care, home births, and infant death. A fourth variable, fertility, can be analyzed over the life of a particular woman.

To analyze over time—rather than cross-sectional—changes in fertility, consider every woman–year combination as an opportunity for a birth. The dependent variable measuring fertility, then, is equal to 1 if a birth occurred in that year, and 0 otherwise. It is also possible to consider over-time changes in medical care and outcomes where the unit of analysis is the birth. A small minority of the 1,200 ever-married women in the original sample were childless. Mothers sampled in Imbaba who were not living in Imbaba during the treatment period as well as all births from both neighborhoods in the post-1992 period are excluded. Mothers interviewed in Imbaba who are not long-time residents are excluded to avoid mistakenly attributing the treatment effect to individuals who were not living in Imbaba at the time of IG local hegemony. Post-1992 births in both neighborhoods are excluded from the analysis because the nature of state intervention in the informal areas changed considerably after the December 1992 government action in Imbaba. After these exclusions, we are left with a sample of over 2,000 births taking place between 1957 and 1992 for this sample of mothers in Imbaba and Bulaq.

I employ both random and fixed effects specifications to test the robustness of the results from the previous section. Though the estimation of fixed effects models may be appropriate for a lab experimental setting, in quasi-experimental research, fixed effects assumptions are rarely met, suggesting that treatment effects should be viewed as random. Fixed effects—which represent a very strict test of the hypotheses under consideration—yield largely similar results to the random effects estimation though with some attenuation of coefficient size and significance.

The dependent variables here are dummy variables equal to 1 if a woman gave birth to a baby in a particular year, if the baby in question received prenatal care, was born at home (rather than in a hospital or clinic) or died within the first year of life. Following Kudamatsu (2008), I estimate a set of linear probabilities models instead of a fixed or random effects logit. The treatment is for Muslims living in Imbaba during the period 1989–1992.[29] I also include a series of dummy variables for the decade the birth occurred in to control for the possibility of an over-time increase in the availability of health services. Table 2 reports estimated coefficients for each of the four dependent variables for both the random and fixed effects models.

TABLE 2
**Coefficient Estimates and Standard Errors for Four Dependent Variables,
Each Estimated with a Random and Fixed Effects Specification**

Dependent Variable	Islamist Effect (Random Effects)	Islamist Effect (Fixed Effects)
Fertility	−0.044 (0.010)	−0.033 (0.010)
Prenatal care	0.077 (0.027)	0.033 (0.029)
Home births	−0.148 (0.036)	−0.122 (0.041)
Infant deaths	−0.008 (0.020)	−0.004 (0.031)

The results suggest that IG governance decreased fertility, increased access to prenatal care, and decreased the likelihood of a home birth. The results for fertility and home births are highly statistically significant for both model specifications. The treatment effects for prenatal care are significant at the 0.005 and 0.25 levels, respectively, for the random and fixed effects specifications. There is no discernible impact of treatment on infant deaths. These results are consistent with the estimates from the "matched" comparison described in the previous section.

Interpretation

The empirical results presented above offer cross-sectional and time-series evidence suggesting that women in Imbaba had statistically better outcomes in three areas related to maternal health service provision. The causal mechanism linking IG intervention and better health outcomes for women is not directly known, however. A previous section points to the "state-like" functions taken on by the IG during its period of hegemony in Imbaba, including health and service provision. The most straightforward interpretation—and one that receives support in the secondary literature—is that radical Islamist organizations, like the IG, provided health services to citizens in a bid to supplant the underperforming Egyptian state (Roussillon 1991) and that this had a net positive benefit for women in areas dominated by Islamists. A slight variant on this interpretation relies on the fungibility of resources within households where Islamist social service provision of any sort (i.e., education, food, clothing, employment) created a net gain for beneficiary households where resources could then be shifted to maternal health services. Though I cannot rule out the possibility of alternative interpretations, I find no evidence in the existing journalistic and secondary sources or from my interviews to support another interpretation.

This section provides additional evidence for these linked conjectures. In particular, a number of scholars have pointed to the incentives Islamist

organizations might have for providing health and other services to underserved Egyptians. Roussillon (1991) argues that Islamist groups, which have historically been weak relative to the authoritarian government in Egypt, seek to assume the functions of the state at the local level in their bid to challenge status quo governance structures. By taking responsibility for provision of local services, Islamists seek to incrementally displace both the state and traditional elites (Roussillon 1991, 23). Though this type of social service provision has long been associated with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, more conservative Salafi leaders have also played a major role in such outreach (Hassan 2000).

Research undertaken by anthropologists, investigative journalists, and political ethnographers also point to the role played by Islamist organizations—like the IG—in improving health care accessibility for the urban poor. El-Kholy (2002, 44) finds that "clinics attached to mosques have played an increasingly important role in the provision of high quality affordable health care" for poor women in Cairo. In four slum neighborhoods she examines, El-Kholy finds that health services were among the most important offered by Islamist organizations (2002, 181). In the particular context of Imbaba, Hassan (2000, 232–234) finds that the IG made a point of focusing on the "micro" problems of slum dwellers in an effort to gain public support. IG efforts included the establishment of literacy classes, the distribution of food and clothing to the poor, and the provision of health services and medicines. The IG also supported small-scale economic projects like poultry raising and sewing and embroidery work.

The IG's focus on service provision appears to be consistent with what Imbaba residents sought from the group. Abdo, for example, argues that residents were more concerned with the group's ability to "deliver on life's more mundane requirements" than religious matters (2000, 22). In terms of the group's agenda related to militancy, Weaver finds that schools, clinics, and hospitals were higher on the agenda than terrorist activities (1999, 100). One reason for the popularity of the health services offered by Islamist organizations related to their accessibility in areas traditionally underserved by health services. Beinin (2005) finds that mosques made up the organizational backbone of the IG in Imbaba and 70% of private (i.e., non-state-affiliated) mosques had a health clinic attached to them. The second factor relates to the cost. Mosque clinics in working-class areas of Cairo tended to charge only a small fee for service with the religious organization picking up the remainder of the tab (Hatem 1994, 55). Weaver describes that mosque clinics in Imbaba as offering "discount" services (1999, 147).[30] The results I have presented, taken together with the secondary source evidence, suggest that the IG approached investment in Imbaba pragmatically and that the urban poor in the area also viewed the IG in an "instrumentalist fashion" (Bayat 2007b), seeking out critical health services.[31]

Conclusions

The question of how to improve public service delivery to the poor, and particularly poor women, is one that political scientists, economists, and policymakers continue to grapple with. It is becoming increasingly clear that public goods provision has an important local dimension that needs to be addressed on both theoretical and practical levels. For scholars of the Muslim world, investigating the trade-off between what would appear to be the social service role played by Islamist groups and the reported pro-male tendencies of those same groups is of increasing importance. Using a design-based approach to causal inference with a focus on case selection, the findings of this article suggest that Islamist governance increased health access for women.

There are at least three important limitations of this project that are worth highlighting. The first involves the article's focus on outcomes that are most easily recalled, observed, and measured. Such data provide no insight into the unobserved, intangible externalities of Islamist local governance including how women felt about themselves and their lives during this period of time. Such impacts are difficult to capture contemporaneously and even more difficult to determine historically.

A second limitation is that the study only explicitly considers one of many potential counterfactual exercises that might be explored: What kind of outcomes could we have expected for women in Imbaba in the absence of IG local governance? Another potential counterfactual would be to consider women's health and well-being outcomes under Marxist or leftist local governance rather than Islamist local governance. Investigating this question could help to reveal if there was anything particularly "Islamic" about the IG's efforts at social service provision. Attempting to answer such a counterfactual, however, presents real challenges as no such organizations have or had the capacity to do what the IG did in Imbaba. It might also be of importance to consider how women in Imbaba fared compared to women in areas that received government services. Women living in areas where the government exercised greater capacity, however, would also have differed from women living in Imbaba and other informal areas on a number of other demographic and socioeconomic dimensions.

Finally, IG activity in Imbaba took place in a particular political and historical context. As a radical religious organization operating in an authoritarian state with strong secularist impulses, the IG's local hegemony existed in a political environment of broader constraints. Inferences about how Islamists would behave in power without such constraints should be thoughtfully considered. It is also important to highlight that Islamist groups seeking higher levels of power may behave differently than groups in power at the national level. As a result, the findings presented here are context specific and speak most directly to the impact of Islamist local governance on observable measures of women's health and

well-being compared to when governed by traditional, nonideological political groups.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. Wiktorowicz (2004, 2) defines Islamic activism as "the mobilization of contention to support Muslim causes." Yadav (2010, 200) defines Islamists as actors who seek to transform the institutional and discursive terms of public debate in pursuit of a set of diverse goals related to Islamization of the public.
2. Blaydes and Rubin (2008) describe the Islamic Group (IG) in Egypt as a militant Islamist organization. During the 1990s, the IG was responsible for assassinations and assassination attempts against Egyptian secularists as well as attacks on foreign tourists. The group publicly renounced violence in 1997.
3. It is difficult to identify a single proximate factor that led the Egyptian government to crack down on the IG in Imbaba. IG statements to the international media about the group's hegemony in Imbaba would have served as a source of embarrassment for the regime. A second factor that may have contributed to the timing of the siege was the October 1992 Cairo earthquake. Islamist organizations responded effectively after the earthquake, attracting media attention for their efforts. See Nadia al-Magd and Ahmed Baraka, "*Al-Mutatarrifun: Yahtafilun bi dikra Ightiyal al-Sadat,*" *Ruz al-Yussef*, November 2, 1992.
4. Though many of Cairo's old quarters near the city center are similarly dense and underprivileged, the new informal areas are distinct from these more established neighborhoods in a number of ways (Ismail 2003, 90). The *'ashwa'iyaat* tend to be inhabited by relative newcomers to the city (Bayat and Denis 2000). Older neighborhoods tend to also be characterized by well-established local elites and institutions to manage day-to-day conflicts and problems. These channels are less apparent in the *'ashwa'iyaat*.
5. Journalists who visited the area report women waiting in long queues to buy plastic jerry cans of water as no reliable water service was available in the area (Sayyid Zaki, "*Audat al-Ruh ila Imbaba,*" *Al-Musawwar*, December 25,

1992). In order to remove the sewage, residents were forced to pay sanitation trucks exorbitant fees in the near total absence of central sewerage ('Abd al-Raziq, "*Taraja'at al-Daula fa Zahar Al-Irhabiyun*," *Al-Musawwar*, January 18, 1993).

6. According to Mubarak (1995, 260), the social work committee (*lajnat al-'amal al-ijtima'i*) was established in 1988 and played an important role in expanding the IG's influence in Imbaba.

7. Interview with Mohammed al-Batran, former Shura Council Member for Giza, August 29, 2009.

8. Interview with Sherif Wali, Shura Council Member for Giza, September 2, 2009.

9. Interview with Montasser al-Zayat, Attorney to Islamic Group defendants, September 3, 2009.

10. Interview with Suhair Lotfi, National Center for Criminological and Sociological Research, August 30, 2009.

11. *Sha'bi* (i.e., popular or folksy) neighborhoods are frequently described as being inhabited by "common" Egyptians.

12. A similar sentiment is expressed by Giza politicians who say that like Imbaba, Bulaq al-Dakrur in this period lacked a state and police presence and was, in this way, highly comparable to Imbaba. Interview with al-Batran, August 29, 2009.

13. Haenni (2009) describes what he calls "self-management" by neighborhood clan leaders as the modal form of local political organization in Egypt's unplanned urban areas.

14. Interview with Fouad Allam, former Deputy Director of State Security Police, August 25, 2009.

15. Interview with Lotfi, August 30, 2009.

16. Interview with Lotfi, August 30, 2009.

17. 'Abd al-Raziq, "*Taraja'at al-Daula fa Zahar Al-Irhabiyun*," *Al-Musawwar*, January 18, 1993.

18. Sayyid Zaki, "*Audat al-Ruh ila Imbaba*," *Al-Musawwar*, December 25, 1992.

19. Sayyid Zaki, "*Imbaba: Al-Talaqa al-Ula fi Ma'raka al-Irhab*," *Al-Musawwar*, December 18, 1992.

20. In addition to narrow, unpaved streets, sewage tanks also obstructed vehicular traffic (El-Sioufi 1981) and annexes built on balconies create a very low "overhang" on Imbaba streets (Herzog et al. 2010).

21. *Jumhuriyat Imbaba, Film am Haqiqa? Al-Arabiya*, aired December 30, 2007.

22. *Jumhuriyat Imbaba, Film am Haqiqa? Al-Arabiya*, aired December 30, 2007.

23. See Ismail (2003, 99; 2006, 7–9) for more details on the impediments for pedestrians moving to and from Imbaba and Bulaq al-Dakrur, respectively.

24. The firm that conducted the survey also carries out the Egyptian DHS.

25. I use coarsened exact matching (CEM) that follows the procedure outlined in the text (Iacus, King, and Porro 2008). First, variables are recoded into coarsened categories so that similar values are grouped together. Next, an "exact matching" algorithm is applied to the coarsened data. Finally, the coarsened data are discarded and the original data are used for postmatching analysis.

26. To avoid overmatching, or the matching for an apparent confounder that may be a consequence of exposure, I only match on variables that *precede* and could not have been caused by the treatment.

27. Religious conversion in Egypt is both rare and highly controversial. It is unlikely then that women are switching religions as a result of the treatment.

28. These results are robust to using the default settings for the CEM algorithm. The results are also robust to using logistic regression for the binary dependent variables and Poisson regression for the dependent variables that are

"counts" rather than a linear model. Finally, the results are robust to inclusion of the variables used for matching as covariates.

29. Previously I did not need to specify treatment for Muslims as I was matching for religion. To include Christian women in the treatment group would likely create bias against finding an effect as many of the services provided by the IG would only be available to Muslims.

30. Where did the group get the funds it needed to engage in these wide-ranging activities? Egyptian and foreign donors provided some of the monies used to fund the IG (Hassan 2000, 236–237). The group also imposed taxes, raised revenue through fines and penalties, and in some cases even robbed Christian-owned gold shops (Hassan 2000, 236–237).

31. What was the impact of the IG on the lives of Coptic Christian women who lived in the district of Imbaba? I arranged a focus group with eight long-time Christian residents of Imbaba that took place on August 28, 2009. The women interviewed reported that the IG exercised considerable social control in Imbaba during the period from 1989 to 1992. The women uniformly reported being intimidated and frightened by IG activists. Women were advised by the group to veil and circumcise their children. Sectarian tensions were reportedly exacerbated during this time as churches were attacked and the homes and vehicles of Christians were set on fire. The situation described by these women closely mirrors the reports of human rights organizations and local media reports from that time. See, for example, Seham 'Abd al-'Al and 'Abd al-Hamid Sha'air, "*Man huwa al-Shaykh Gaber?*" *Al-Ahram*, December 13, 1992 and Sayyid Zaki, "*Audat al-Ruh ila Imbaba,*" *Al-Musawwar*, December 25, 1992.

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