

Support for asymmetric violence among Arab populations: The clash of cultures, social identity, or counterdominance?

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Abstract

Using a random sample of 383 Muslims and Christians in Lebanon and Syria, we explored the degree of public support for two distinct kinds of asymmetric violence—“fundamentalist violence” and “resistance violence”—against the United States as a function of three explanatory narratives: a clash of cultures narrative, social identity/self-categorization theory, and a counterdominance perspective. Multiple regression analyses showed that the factors most closely associated with support of asymmetric violence among Arab populations was very much dependent upon the *type* of asymmetric violence. Among both Christians and Muslims, the results showed that perceived incompatibility between Arab and American cultures was the best predictor of support for fundamentalist violence, while perceived American domination of the Arab world was the distinctly strongest predictor of support for resistance violence. The theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords

asymmetric violence, clash of civilizations, counterdominance, social identity, terrorism

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Understanding the roots of support for political violence has long been a question of central interest to a variety of researchers across a range of disciplines (e.g., Huntington, 1993; Lewis, 1990; Pape, 2005; Sidanius, Henry, Pratto, & Levin, 2004; Tausch et al., 2011). The rise of groups such as Hamas and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and events such as the September 11th, 2001 attacks have ensured that the question of understanding support for violent asymmetric action has also occupied the attention of people around the world.

A variety of theories attempting to explain violent asymmetric action have been proposed,

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each giving prominence to different narratives. Broadly speaking, these perspectives can be classified into three categories. According to a clash of values perspective, individuals come to support violence against another group because they see that group as holding values that clash with those of the ingroup. According to a counter-dominance perspective (Mostafa & El-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004), individuals are driven to support violence against outgroups primarily when they are perceived as plundering the ingroup's resources, supporting their enemies, subordinating them, and/or occupying their lands. From a third, social identity perspective, it is primarily highly identified members of the group—those who are invested in and care about its outcomes—who are willing to support asymmetric action on its behalf.¹

In spite of the evidence that has been amassed for each of these theoretical perspectives, they have only very rarely been compared to one another empirically (but see Berger, 2014; Mostafa & El-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004). Moreover, little is known about potential moderators of each of these three predictors of support for asymmetric violence. In the present work, we simultaneously test the effects of all three predictors on support for asymmetric violence against the US among a sample of Lebanese and Syrians, controlling for their intercorrelations and a range of relevant demographic variables. We further consider two potential moderators of the relationships. First, we investigate the effect of the *type* of asymmetric violence in question. Secondly, we investigate the role of religious group membership, comparing the predictive potency of value clash, antidominance perceptions, and intensity of Arab identification among Muslims versus Christians.

A Clash of Values Perspective

The notion that a clash of values and cultures is at the root of animus and intolerance between groups has received support from a variety of scholars (Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, & Wetherell, 2014; Graham,

Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Huntington, 1996; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Lewis, 1990; Morgan, Wisneski, & Skitka, 2011; Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). Much of this research has focused on outcomes other than support for violence. Nevertheless, it provides useful insights into the motivating effects of the violation of cherished values and cultural practices. For example, Tetlock et al. (2000) showed that individuals who trade off “sacred values” for “secular goods” (e.g., money) are targets of moral outrage and greater sanctioning.

One prominent theory that has proposed a role for value clash in predicting support for violence among Muslim populations is the “clash of civilizations” thesis, first articulated by Bernard Lewis (1990) and expanded upon by Samuel Huntington (1996). This thesis essentially claims that “inter-civilizational” hostilities are driven not by specific conflicts of interest or material disputes, but rather by a wholesale rejection of other civilizations as such. In articulating this idea, Lewis (1990, p. 2) suggested that Islamic hostility towards the West is driven by:

not only for what it [Western civilization] does, but what it is, and the principles and values that it practices and professes. These are indeed seen as innately evil, and those who promote or accept them as the “enemies of God.”

Despite the influence of this theory among American policy-makers (Abrahamian, 2003), careful empirical work using both historical and survey research has shown little support for the clash of civilizations perspective (for a recent review of the clash of civilizations theory, see Waheed et al., 2012). Historical evidence indicates that violent conflict across cultural and “civilizational” boundaries is no more likely to occur—nor any more violent—than conflict within these boundaries (see e.g., Acevedo, 2008; Chiozza, 2002; Fox, 2005; Henderson & Tucker, 2001; Neumayer & Plümper, 2009; O’Neal & Russett, 2000; Russett, O’Neal, & Cox, 2000; for an exception, see Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Little research,

however, has examined the influence of the clash of civilizations narrative from a *psychological* perspective, or compared it to other explanatory frameworks (but see Mostafa & El-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004).

A Counterdominance Perspective

A second explanatory framework that has been proposed to account for support of asymmetric violence among Arab populations is the “counterdominance” narrative (Mostafa & Al-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004; Tessler & Robbins, 2007; Thomsen, Obaidi, Sheehy-Skeffington, Kteily, & Sidanius, 2014). This view argues that, rather than being driven by “symbolic” value clashes, asymmetric violence is primarily motivated by a desire to resist what are perceived to be political acts of domination and oppression. This perspective is consistent with the focus on “realistic” (rather than symbolic) threats highlighted by realistic group conflict theory which argues that conflicts of interest and competition over real resources are the primary engine in intergroup hostility (e.g., Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Sherif, 1966; see also Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000). Thus far, survey research among Arab populations has shown strong support for the counterdominance framework (Haddad & Khashan, 2002). For example Tessler and Robbins (2007) found that support for “terrorist” violence against the United States was associated with disapproval of American foreign policy and domestic political institutions that supported this policy among Algerians and Jordanians—not to their degree of religious fervor or embrace of political Islam (see also Mueller, 2013; Nesser, 2006; but see Neuberg et al., 2014). Sidanius et al. (2004) found that Lebanese university students interpreted the 9/11 attacks as having been motivated by antidominance rather than clash of civilizations concerns. In a study across several Arab nations, Mostafa and Al-Hamdi (2007) found evidence strongly supportive of the antidominance thesis rather than the clash of civilizations thesis. Moreover, in a comprehensive empirical study of suicide “terrorism,” Pape (2006) argues that the

root cause of support for suicide attacks is resistance to foreign occupation, consistent with the antidominance perspective.

A Social Identity Perspective

A third major perspective which can be used to understand asymmetric violence among Arab populations is the social identity/self-categorization approach based in the collective action literature (e.g., Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). This perspective privileges group identification and categorization processes, arguing that individuals come to act on behalf of their most salient ingroups to the extent that they identify with these ingroups. Thus, according to this view, it is neither the perception of being dominated per se, nor outgroup violation of one’s cherished values that motivates collective action against them, but instead a sense of commitment to and identification with the group. Thus, it is identification with the group that provides the basis for experience of collective grievances and injustices.

There is a long tradition of research supporting the relationship between group identification and support for collective action (though not necessarily violent in nature). Indeed, van Zomeren et al.’s (2008) social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) provides meta-analytic support for social identification as a root cause of collective action support (see also Drury & Reicher, 1999; Kawakami & Dion, 1995). According to this model, group identification increases collective action support both directly and indirectly (by increasing perceptions of injustice and perceptions of collective efficacy, respectively).

Importantly, however, identifying with one’s ingroup does not necessarily imply support for violence against (or hostility towards) outgroups (e.g., Brewer, 1999, 2007; Brown, 2000; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Turner & Brown, 1978). Rather, as Brewer has argued (1999, 2007), ingroup identification morphs into outgroup aggression, and even hatred when the ingroup and the outgroup are perceived as locked into intergroup conflict or competition (see also Parker & Janoff-Bulman,

2013). Given the long and infected history of zero-sum conflict between the USA (and its closest ally, Israel) on the one hand, and the Arab world on the other hand (Kelman, 1987), this reasoning would predict a strong relationship between the degree of Arab identification and support for violence against the United States. Indeed, consistent with this framework, Levin, Henry, Pratto, and Sidanius (2003) found that Arab identification among students in Lebanon was a strong predictor of both support for endorsement of anti-U.S. violence as well as perceptions that the 9/11 attacks were justified.

A Comparison of the Three Narratives

Understanding which of the three concerns is most potent is both theoretically important and practically consequential; indeed, in order to develop effective policies in response to asymmetric violence, one needs to understand its root causes. However, to the best of our knowledge, no research to date has compared the relative net potencies of all three influential explanatory narratives.

Another shortcoming of existing research on the causes of asymmetric violence among Arab populations is the dearth of empirical work examining moderators of the relationships. We argue that it is not enough to simply ask which variables predict support for asymmetric collective violence; rather, one also needs to consider the *type* of violence in question (see also Tausch et al., 2011). Indeed, the reasons why one group engages in asymmetric violence might differ dramatically from the reasons why another group engages in such violence. For example, anti-American violence by groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) has been influenced by a secular Marxist/Leninist ideology with the stated aim of freeing the Palestinian people from Israeli occupation. In contrast, groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) espouse a fundamentalist and expansionist interpretation of Islam that has, alongside claims about American

domination of Muslims, been frequently invoked as an inspiration for their attacks (Glain, 2011). In the current work, we examine support for a range of groups (Al-Qaeda, Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, and Hamas) endorsing violence against the US (and its allies), as well as support for two different forms of violent actions (killing civilians and attacking military targets). In order to examine whether meaningfully distinct dimensions emerge, we factor analyze support for these groups and policies.

In particular, we predict that support for fundamentalist groups (Al Qaeda and the Islamic Brotherhood) and their violent tactics (support for killing civilians) will be distinct from support for resistance groups (Hezbollah and Hamas) and their tactic of attacking military targets. Our predictions are based in the differing ideologies and tactics that these groups have tended to endorse. Al Qaeda and the Islamic Brotherhood have primarily positioned themselves on the basis of a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and a desire to extend and expand a religious rule of law and social order. Indeed, the ideology of both Al Qaeda and the Islamic Brotherhood includes explicitly endorsing violence against religious outsiders (in part *because* of their religious and cultural differences) in order to “restore” Arab civilization and cultural standing in the face of religious and cultural corruption by nonbelievers (e.g., Gregg, 2010; Turner, 2010).

On the other hand, Hezbollah and Hamas, while also religiously based organizations, model their groups as *resistance movements*, responding to Israeli threat (and associated U.S. support). Indeed, Hezbollah centers its rhetoric on responding to and targeting conventional military occupation. In opposition to Al Qaeda, it denounced the 9/11 attacks as “terrorism,” and claims to reject the purposeful targeting of civilians (Shatz, 2004; Wright, 2006). Similarly, although Hamas has shared ideological roots with the Islamic Brotherhood, it too primarily positions itself as a movement concerned with resisting military occupation. Hamas renounced suicide attacks in 2006 and has claimed that its previous use of these attacks was a tactic of

necessity in its asymmetric warfare against Israel rather than an end in itself (Urquhart, 2006).

Thus, we expect that support for fundamentalist groups (Al Qaeda and the Islamic Brotherhood) and their violent tactic (killing civilians), on the one hand, and support for resistance groups (Hezbollah and Hamas) and their tactic of attacking military targets, on the other hand, will form two distinct dimensions of asymmetric violence support.²

Besides the dimension of asymmetrical violence, another potential moderator that we consider in the present work is religious group membership. The majority of research thus far has explored factors associated with support for asymmetric violence among *Muslim* Arab populations in the Middle East (e.g., Acevedo, 2008; Fisher, Harb, Al-Sarraf, & Nashabe, 2008; Fox, 2005; Haddad, 2002; Haddad & Khashan, 2002; Mostafa & Al-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004; Tessler & Robbins, 2007). However, support for asymmetric violence among *Christian* Arab populations of the Middle East remains vastly understudied. Such an investigation is important for a number of reasons. First, Christians represent an important subsection of Arab society, playing an influential historical, cultural, and political role in Arab countries such as Lebanon and Syria.

Second, given the Islamic nature of the fundamentalist ideologies of Al Qaeda and the Islamic Brotherhood, support for these types of groups and their violent tactic of killing civilians should be lower, on average, among Christian Arabs—who do not share their Islamic beliefs—than among Muslim Arabs. Furthermore, beliefs about a value clash between the US and Arabs among Christian Arabs may not translate as strongly into support for Islamic fundamentalist organizations with a religious agenda that may be less appealing to Christians. In comparison, Muslims perceiving such a value clash may find the fundamentalist aspect of the groups' ideology (and tactics) that is rooted in a rejection of foreign values to be more appealing. The relationship between value clash and support for Al Qaeda, Islamic Brotherhood, and killing civilians should be greater than for counterdominance or social identification given

the greater fit between value clash concerns and the goals and tactics of these groups.

In contrast, given that Christians and Muslims share a common identity as Arabs, and also share their subordinate position in the power relationship between Arabs and Americans, the two groups should show similar levels of support for resistance-focused violent groups (and associated tactics), which are assumed to have ambitions less rooted in religion. Moreover, such support should be motivated to a similar (and large) extent by counterdominance considerations, which, relative to value clash and social identification, fits a resistance agenda especially well.

In sum, the previous discussion leads to the following six hypotheses:

1. Support for asymmetric violence among Arabs will be multifaceted, distinguishing among at least two distinct dimensions. One dimension should be inspired by Islamic fundamentalism and primarily concern support for Al-Qaeda, Islamic Brotherhood, and support for killing civilians. A second dimension should be primarily defined by "resistance"-based ideology, including support for Hezbollah, Hamas, and support for attacking military targets. (H1).
2. If evidence for these two distinct dimensions of asymmetric violence support is found, one should then expect that the relative degree of Muslim and Christian support for violence should be moderated by which dimension of violence is in question. Because of its heavily Islamist overtones, the difference between Christians and Muslims with respect to overall support for the hypothesized "fundamentalist" dimension should be greater than religious group differences with respect to support for the hypothesized resistance dimension (H2).
3. While Arab identification and perceived American domination of Arabs may each contribute to support for fundamentalist violence, the perceived clash of Arab and

American cultures should be the strongest predictor of support for this form of violence (H3A), especially among Muslims (H3B).

4. Perceived American domination of the Arab world should be a stronger predictor of support for violent resistance than perceived clash of cultures and Arab identification (H4A), among both Muslims and Christians (H4B).

Method

Participants and Procedure

An interview survey in March, 2010, was conducted in a number of cities in Lebanon, as well as in Damascus, Syria. Random samples were stratified by religious sect. In Lebanon, stratified samples were taken from ethnic Arabs primarily belonging to one of the three dominant religions and religious sects: Sunni Muslims ($n = 61$), Shi'a Muslims ($n = 29$), and Maronite Christians ($n = 63$). The remaining participants were Muslims who did not identify their sect ($n = 11$), Orthodox Christians ($n = 14$), Roman Catholics ($n = 9$), and Druze ($n = 13$). For current purposes we used data only from Muslims and Christians of all sects (Muslims: $N = 101$; $M_{age} = 37.34$; Christians: $N = 86$, $M_{age} = 37.78$, respectively).

In Syria, we interviewed Muslim Arabs ($N = 159$; $M_{age} = 37.01$) and Christian Arabs ($N = 37$, $M_{age} = 34.57$).

In the entire sample there were 260 Muslims (Sunni: $n = 179$; Shi'a: $n = 35$; unspecified sect: $n = 46$) and 123 Christians (Maronite: $n = 63$; Roman Catholic: $n = 35$; Orthodox: $n = 25$).

Within each household, we inventoried all family members and randomly selected one individual to be interviewed in a way that ensured that both genders had an equal chance of inclusion.³ To achieve this, the Kish grid approach was used (see McBurney, 1988). The interviews were conducted in Arabic by trained residents contracted by the polling firm Zogby International. Participants received the equivalent of \$10.00 for participating. All measures were translated into

Arabic by Zogby International and subsequently back-translated into English to ensure accuracy of meaning.

Measures

The interview schedule was an omnibus instrument containing some 226 items, administered in a fixed order and which queried respondents across a broad range of social attitudes. Only the items directly relevant to this project are used here. All questions were measured on 5-point response scales.

Dependent measures: Support for asymmetric violence. We assessed support for this construct by the use of six indices concerning support for various forms of violence against Americans, and organizations that have engaged in or supported asymmetric violence against American targets. We began with the following stem question: "How much do you support or oppose each of the following actions against Americans?" The two actions against Americans were: (a) attacking American military targets, and (b) killing American civilians. Scale answers coded as 1 = *strongly oppose*; 2 = *oppose*; 3 = *neutral*; 4 = *support*; or 5 = *strongly*. Responses of *don't know*, *not sure*, or refusals were coded as missing data.

In addition, we also assessed respondents' support of four political organizations, the first three of which are officially classified as "terrorist" organizations by the United States Government. The groups were: (a) Hamas, (b) Hezbollah, (c) Al-Qaeda, and (d) the Muslim Brotherhood. Attitudes towards each of these groups were assessed on response scales ranging from 1 = *very unfavorable* to 5 = *very favorable*. The six items indexing support for asymmetric violence formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .81$).

Independent variables. *Participants' perceived clash of values* was indexed by three items: (a) "Americans, as a group, possess values that directly oppose the values of Arabs," (b) "Americans, as a group, hold values that are morally inferior to the values of Arabs," and (c) "In general, how do you perceive

Table 1. Factor pattern loadings for principal components solution defining fundamentalist terrorism and secular terrorism.

Variables	Factor pattern loadings	
	Fundamentalist violence	Resistance violence
Support for attacks against American military targets	.60	.40
Support for killing American civilians	.77	-.06
Support of Hamas	.44	.70
Support of Hezbollah	-.18	.97
Support of Al Qaeda	.91	-.14
Support of Muslim Brotherhood	.80	.04

the cultural values of Arabs and Americans?" Scales for the first two items ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Scale endpoints for the last question were labeled 1 = *American culture is far superior to Arab culture* to 5 = *Arab culture is far superior to American culture* ($\alpha = .71$).

Arab identification was indexed by four items: (a) "How important is it to you to be Arab?" (b) "How close do you feel to other Arabs?" (c) "How much do you have in common with Arabs across the Arab world?" and (d) "How close do you feel to other members of the Arab world?" Scale endpoints were labeled 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much* ($\alpha = .93$).

Perceived American domination of Arabs was measured with five questions. The first three items were: (a) "Americans exploit Arabs for resources and keep all of the profits for themselves," (b) "I oppose American domination in the world," and (c) "The American government wants to humiliate Arabs" with scale endpoints 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. (The last two items were preceded by the stem question, "How much do you think Americans want their government to accomplish the following goals?"). (d) "Americans want their government to dominate Arab societies," and (e) "Americans want their government to maintain control over the oil resources in the Middle East" with scale endpoints 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much* ($\alpha = .84$).

Demographic variables. We controlled for seven demographic variables: gender, age, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, country

of residence, and whether or not a family member or close friend had been injured as a result of political activity.

Results

The Dimensionality of Support for Asymmetric Violence

The first question examined was whether or not support for the six items measuring asymmetric violence actually reflected at least two or more distinct dimensions. To explore this issue we submitted the six variables to a principal components analysis rotated into oblimin simple structure ($\delta = 0.00$). Using Kaiser's criterion and the Scree test, two factors were suggested, accounting for 56.1% and 21.1% of the total variance, respectively (see Table 1).

As can be seen by examining the factor pattern loadings in Table 1, the first factor was most strongly defined by support for: Al Qaeda (.91), the Muslim Brotherhood (.80), and the killing of American civilians (.77). Factor 1 included support for groups whose ideology has been accepted to be more religiously oriented or Islamic in nature, opposing the influence of American culture and seeking the implementation of Islamic law as a system of governance. Moreover, also loading strongly on Factor 1 was an action (support for killing American civilians) that has been closely associated with fundamentalist religious groups such as Al Qaeda, who have justified violence against the US largely on the view of the religious

outsider as “apostate.” Support for attacking military targets also loaded positively on this factor (.60), though to a lesser extent than killing civilians did.⁴ Interestingly, support for Hamas also loaded positively but moderately on this factor (.44), perhaps reflecting the similarities between its Islamic ideology and that of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, support for Hezbollah, a group that regularly prioritizes resistance to occupation in its public rhetoric (rather than a focus on implementing Islamic or Sharia law) was *negatively* (-.18) associated with this factor. Given the preferentially strong loadings of support for religiously oriented groups and their tactics (as opposed to groups emphasizing antioccupation ideology), it seemed to confirm our prediction of a dimension based on support of “fundamentalist violence.”

Factor 2, in contrast, was marked most strongly by support for Hezbollah (.97) and Hamas (.70), and moderately by support for attacks on the American military (.40). Moreover, it was associated with a *rejection* of both Al-Qaeda (-.14), and the two items concerning the killing of American civilians (-.06) and support for the Muslim Brotherhood (.04). Thus, Factor 2 included support for groups which, while religious in orientation, primarily espouse an ideology of resistance to Israeli occupation and its backing by the US (e.g., Gleis & Benedetta, 2012). Given this pattern of loadings consistent with our predictions, we labeled Factor 2 as “Resistance Violence” (for additional support of these interpretations, see El Husseini, 2010). The correlation between these two dimensions of asymmetric violence was positive, but relatively modest ($r = .26$).⁵ Standardized factor scores were generated for all respondents on both factors (using the regression approach, see Gorsuch, 1983) such that all the information present in the factor solution could be taken into account. These factor scores then served as the dependent variables in all subsequent analyses.⁶

Religious Group Differences in Support of Asymmetric Violence

Hypothesis 2 (H₂) posits that the Christian/Muslim difference in support of asymmetric

violence will be substantially larger with respect to fundamentalist violence than with respect to resistance violence. To address this question we computed a two-way mixed-effects ANOVA, with the two forms of asymmetric violence support serving as the within-subjects factor and religious group (i.e., Muslim Arab vs. Christian Arab) as the between-subjects factor. There was a main effect for religious group, with Muslim Arabs generally more supportive of both forms of violence than Christian Arabs, $M = .23$ vs. $M = -.50$, respectively; $F(1, 378) = 84.06, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$. At the same time, we also found, congruent with our hypotheses, an interaction between religious group and violence type such that while Muslims were still significantly more supportive of resistance violence than Christians, the Muslim versus Christian group difference was substantially greater with respect to religiously motivated fundamentalist violence, as predicted, see H₂; $F(1, 378) = 24.68, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$; see Figure 1.

Tables 2 and 3 contain the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all variables.

Support for Fundamentalist Violence

Hypothesis 3 suggests that the single most important net contributor to the prediction of fundamentalist violence would be perceived clash between American and Arab cultures (H_{3A}), especially among Muslims (H_{3B}). To examine this issue we estimated two, two-stage, hierarchical multiple regression analyses, once among Muslims and once among Christians. At the first step, we regressed support for fundamentalist violence on the set of seven demographic variables (Stage 1: gender, age, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, country of residence, and whether or not a family member or close friend had been injured as a result of political activity). At the second step, we added the set of three focal variables: (a) perceived clash of cultural values, (b) perceived American domination of the Arab world, and (c) the degree of Arab identification.⁷ Inspection of the semipartial correlation coefficients in Table 4 seems to indicate results consistent with Hypothesis 3A.

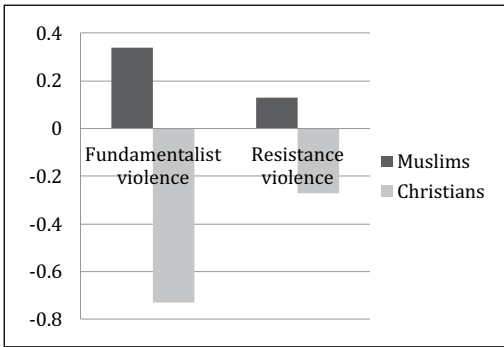


Figure 1. Asymmetric violence support as a function of violence dimension and religious group.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for terrorism scores, and the three focal variables for Muslims and Christians.

Variables	Means (and standard deviations)	
	Muslims	Christians
Fundamentalist violence	0.29 (0.95)	-0.62 (0.69)
Resistance violence	0.13 (0.91)	-0.29 (1.12)
Perceived cultural clash	3.59 (1.02)	2.80 (0.93)
Arab identification	3.87 (0.86)	3.25 (1.00)
Perceived American domination	4.38 (0.61)	3.87 (0.91)

Note. The asymmetric violence variables were standardized scores, while the three focal variables were measured on 1–5 scales.

Table 3. Correlations among variables for Christians (above diagonal) and Muslims (below diagonal).

	1	2	3	4	5
1	–	.31***	.62***	.49***	.42***
2	.14*	–	.56***	.58***	.73***
3	.56***	.44***	–	.64***	.53***
4	.45***	.35***	.57***	–	.45***
5	.47***	.49***	.51***	.28***	–

Note. 1 = fundamentalist Violence, 2 = resistance violence, 3 = perceived cultural clash, 4 = Arab identity, 5 = perceived American domination of Arabs.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Starting with Muslim Arabs, perceived clash of values appeared to be the most important net

contributor to the prediction of support for fundamentalist violence (i.e., perceived clash: $r_{\text{semipartial}} = .29, p < .001$; Arab identification: $r_{\text{semipartial}} = .17, p < .001$; perceived American domination of Arabs: $r_{\text{semipartial}} = .09, p < .05$). Post hoc contrasts revealed that perceived clash of cultures was, as predicted, a significantly more powerful predictor of fundamentalist violence than was perceived American domination, $-.31, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.52, -.10]$.⁸ Arab identification was a significantly stronger predictor of fundamentalist violence support than was perceived American domination, $-.21, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.42, -.00]$, while the effect contrast between Arab ID and perceived American domination was not significant, that is, Arab ID versus American domination: $-.10, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.26, .06]$.

It is noteworthy that, contrary to Hypothesis 3B, the relative sizes of the regression weights were similar for Christians and Muslims. Perceived clash of American versus Arab values was the strongest of the three focal variables. Despite the lower levels of support for fundamentalist violence among Christians compared to Muslims, the factor most strongly determinative of support for fundamentalist violence among Christians was generally of the same magnitude as it was among Muslims (i.e., $b = .34, p < .001$ vs. $b = .39, p < .001$; see Table 4).⁹ To test whether or not perceived cultural clash was significantly more powerful than the other two focal variables, we again computed post hoc contrasts of effect sizes. The results for Christians were very similar to those for Muslims. Thus, while the perceived clash of cultures was significantly more powerful than perceived American domination, $-.46, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.76, -.17]$, the effect size for perceived cultural clash was not significantly greater than the effect size for Arab ID, $-.26, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.58, .08]$.

Indeed, confirming the similarity in the pattern of unstandardized regression coefficients across religious groups, the regression slopes of fundamentalist violence on the focal variables were not significantly different for any of the three cases (i.e., $t < 1.50, p > .13$ in all cases; see Table 4, column 4).

Table 4. Fundamentalist violence as a function of demographic variables and focal variables.

	Fundamentalist violence $B_{(r\text{-semipartial})}$		Slope differences
	Muslims	Christians	<i>t</i> -values
Demographic controls			
Female	.05 (.02)	-.15 (-.11)	-1.04
Age	-.01 (-.13)	-.01 (-.11)	0.00
SES	-.22* (-.15)	-.20** (-.22)	0.12
Education	-.07 (-.13)	.03 (.05)	1.47
Married	.26 (.09)	.24 (.14)	-0.08
Country(Syria)	.40*** (.18)	.20 (.12)	-0.90
Family or friend injured	.15 (.06)	-.16 (-.09)	-0.88
R^2_{adj}	.15***	.09*	n.a.
Focal variables			
Clash of values	.39*** (.29) ^a	.34*** (.32) ^I	0.48
	95% CI [.27, .51]	95% CI [.21, .48]	
Arab ID	.23* (.17) ^{a,b}	.15* (.17) ^{I,II}	-0.79
	95% CI [.11, .36]	95% CI [.27, .55]	
Perceived American domination	.17* (.09) ^b	.02 (.02) ^{II}	-1.33
	95% CI [-.04, .35]	95% CI [-.10, .14]	
R^2_{change}	.33***	.37***	n.a.
Total R^2_{adj}	.48***	.47***	n.a.

Note. "a" and "b" superscripts refer to between-parameter differences within Muslims; "I" and "II" refer to between-parameter differences within Christians.

Support for Resistance Violence

We followed the same approach in examining the predictors of support for resistance violence as we had for fundamentalist violence. Inspection of Table 5 shows the results to be consistent with Hypothesis 4 among both religious groups. Among both Muslim and Christian Arabs, the strongest predictor of support for resistance violence was perceived American domination of the Arab world ($r_{\text{semipartial}} = .31, p < .001$; $r_{\text{semipartial}} = .48, p < .001$, respectively). Among Muslim Arabs, the post hoc contrasts showed that the effect of perceived American domination was significantly stronger than that of Arab ID, .28, 95% CI [.09, .46]. On the other hand, although it was trending, perceived American domination was not significantly more powerful than that of perceived values clash, .20, 95% CI [-.04, .44].

The results for Christian Arabs were much the same and even clearer. Among Christians

not only was resistance violence most strongly predicted by perceived American domination of Arabs (i.e., $r_{\text{semipartial}} = .48, p < .001$), but the use of post hoc contrasts among the semipartial coefficients, showed the effect of perceived American domination to be significantly more potent than both perceived clash of cultures, .53, 95% CI [.28, .79], and Arab identification, .42, 95% CI [.19, .666]. Moreover, as with fundamentalist violence, inspection of the slope difference tests between Christians and Muslims showed that there were no significant differences in the effects of the three focal variables across religious community (i.e., $t < 1.50, ps > .10$). Thus, support for resistance violence was predicted by similar factors among both Muslims and Christians. Across the total sample the mean level of support for fundamentalist violence was $M = 2.82$ and for resistance violence was $M = 4.14, F(1, 378) = 280.17, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .38$.

Table 5. Resistance violence as a function of demographic variables and focal variables.

	Resistance violence $B_{(r\text{-semipartial})}$		Slope differences
	Muslims	Christians	<i>t</i> -values
Demographic controls			
Female	.11 (.06)	-.39 (-.17)	-2.29*
Age	-.00 (-.04)	-.01 (-.08)	-0.52
SES	-.04 (-.03)	-.33 (-.21)	-1.97
Education	.03* (.05)	-.03 (-.04)	-0.75
Married	.03 (.02)	.50 (.17)	1.67
Country(Syria)	.25 (.12)	-.13 (-.05)	-1.47
Family or friend injured	.40** (.17)	-.24 (-.09)	-0.62
R^2_{adj}	.04	.14*	n.a.
Focal variables			
Clash of values	.17** (.13) ^{a,b}	.11 (.06) ^I	-0.48
	95% CI [.04, .31]	95% CI [-.10, .32]	
Arab ID	.12* (.09) ^b	.23* (.14) ^I	0.89
	95% CI [-.01, .26]	95% CI [.27, .55]	
Perceived American Domination	.58*** (.31) (.09) ^b	.77*** (.48) ^{II}	1.40
	95% CI [.39, .77]	95% CI [.59, .96]	
R^2_{change}	.28***	.50***	n.a.
Total R^2_{adj}	.30***	.61***	n.a.

Note. “a” and “b” superscripts refer to between-parameter differences within Muslims; “I” and “II” superscripts refer to between-parameter differences within Christians.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In sum, all but one of our hypotheses was supported. As expected, two distinct dimensions of support for asymmetric violence emerged, and Muslims were especially more supportive of “fundamentalist” violence than Christians were. Moreover, cultural clash emerged as the strongest predictor of fundamentalist violence support, whereas counterdominance emerged as the strongest predictor of resistance violence support (among both groups).¹⁰ Although the pattern of predictors of resistance violence was the same for Muslims and Christians (consistent with Hypothesis 4B), this was also the case for fundamentalist violence (contrary to Hypothesis 3B). Somewhat surprisingly, perceived cultural clash predicted Christian support for fundamentalist violence essentially just as strongly as it predicted Muslim support for this form of violence.

Discussion

This study makes several important contributions that distinguish it from previous research in this area (e.g., Ginges, Hansen, & Norenzayan, 2009; Mostafa & Al-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004; Tessler & Robbins, 2007). First, whereas the vast majority of research that has investigated support for asymmetric violence has done so in undifferentiated terms, we theoretically and empirically distinguish between different *dimensions* of asymmetric violence. This is particularly important because different dimensions of violence may be rooted in differing motivations: an insight that would otherwise remain obscured. Indeed, our results affirmed this prediction: we observed that support for a variety of violent groups and tactics broke down into two dimensions, only modestly related to one another. The first dimension,

which we labeled “fundamentalist” violence, reflected support for groups (i.e., Al Qaeda and Islamic Brotherhood) that espouse a religious expansionist agenda, as well as support for the deliberate targeting of American civilians. The second dimension, which we labeled “resistance” asymmetric violence, reflected support for organizations (i.e., Hamas and Hezbollah) that champion their role in fighting military occupation, as well as support for the more limited violent tactic of attacking American military targets (see Gleis & Benedetta, 2012).

Most importantly, the explanatory framework most appropriate for predicting support for asymmetric violence depended importantly on the type of violence in question. Thus, whereas previous research (Brandt et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2009; Huntington, 1993; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Lewis, 1990) has suggested the importance of value clashes in predicting intergroup bias, aggression, and support for violence broadly defined, we found that it provided the greatest unique contribution in predicting support for *fundamentalist* violence in particular. On the other hand, and consistent with research that has highlighted the role of conflict over material resources (e.g., Bobo & Hutchings, 1996) and antidomination beliefs (Mostafa & Al-Hamdi, 2007; Pape, 2006; Sidanius et al., 2004), support for *resistance* violence was most strongly predicted by a rejection of American dominance over Arabs. We also generally observed support for a social identification framework, consistent with the collective action perspectives that have placed social identity at the root of collective action (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2008). Thus, individuals who were more strongly identified as Arabs were also more likely to support violent asymmetric action, although identification did not differentiate between the two types of violence.

Thus, we generally observed a conceptual and functional *fit* between motivations and type of violence support: a perception of value clash led to support for organizations (and associated tactics) that reject and combat “outsider” ideologies and value structures; antidominance beliefs increased support for organizations (and

associated tactics) directly opposing military occupation. In both these cases, the dimension of violence involved groups with goals that fit individuals’ specific concerns.

This has important theoretical and practical implications. On the one hand, the fundamentalist dimension included both support for killing civilians, an extreme and especially counternormative action (e.g., Victoroff & Kruglanski, 2009), and support for attacking military targets. On the other hand, the resistance dimension included support for attacking military targets but *rejection* of killing civilians (and Al Qaeda). This “principle of distinction” between civilian and combatant targets is understood both psychologically (e.g., Pape, 2006) and legally to be an important one, and is even reflected in statutes of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention (the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2005). Thus, the fact that value clash was strongly associated with the more extreme fundamentalist dimension points to the potency of this set of beliefs, and extends recent psychological literature that has been documenting the motivating force of clashing values (e.g., Brandt et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2009) to the domain of support for violence. In contrast, the fact that counterdominance beliefs were largely limited to encouraging support for the “resistance” dimension delineates the boundaries of their effects (Mostafa & Al-Hamdi, 2007; Sidanius et al., 2004). Thus, individuals who come to feel dominated may be more likely to support resistance violence, but stop short of supporting less normative violence.

From a practical perspective, an important interpretation of these overall results is that the peaceful resolution of “resistance” violence against America may be more amenable to political solutions than the more intractable “fundamentalist” violence rooted in value clashes. Thus, at least with regard to tactics such as attacking military targets and support for groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, Muslim and Christian Arab support seems to be driven more by *what Americans do* (in terms of acts of domination) than *who Americans are* (in terms of group values).

Among the group of individuals holding these counterdominance beliefs, attitudes towards anti-American violence would be expected to decrease with a change in America's foreign policy in the region. This is an important point given that there was much more support in our sample, on average, for resistance as compared to fundamentalist violence. Nevertheless, we do not mean to imply that the grievances of those supporting fundamentalist violence cannot or should not be addressed: indeed, value clash perceptions are likely to be stoked by Islamophobic discourse or actions in the West and *mitigated* by more inclusion and tolerance.

These conclusions are reinforced by another feature of our work that distinguishes it from previous research: its examination of both Muslims and Christians. Thus, whereas the majority of research has focused on attitudes of Muslim Arabs (e.g., Acevedo, 2008; Fisher et al., 2008; Haddad, 2002; Tessler & Robbins, 2007), our examination extended to Christian Arabs, who represent an important part of the social fabric and history of the region. A comparison of these two groups led to the important conclusion that the pattern of predictors influencing (and differentiating) support for fundamentalist and resistance violence was essentially the same across both religious communities: in all cases examined, there was no significant difference in the slope of the effect of a given predictor for Muslims versus Christians. This was in spite of the fact that *overall* levels of support for violence was lower among Christian versus Muslim Arabs, particularly with respect to fundamentalist violence. Thus, and importantly, even though Christians in our sample support both types of violence to a lesser degree than do Muslims, the *reasons* for their support appear to be the same.

Practically, this suggests that interventions targeted at improving intergroup attitudes and reducing support for violence will likely have similar effects across these two religious groups to the extent that they influence the predictors we assessed. From a theoretical perspective, it was particularly interesting to note that value clash beliefs were equally influential in promoting

Christian (vs. Muslim) support for "fundamentalist" violence. Again, this speaks to the potency of value clash perceptions—even though groups such as Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood may be less appealing to Christians (on average) for other reasons, those Christians perceiving Arab values to clash with American values are nevertheless more likely to support these groups.

Caveats and Limitations

There are at least five factors which should restrain us from generalizing these findings too broadly or asserting our conclusions too definitively. First, and most obviously, given the correlational nature of the data at hand, care should be taken not to draw definitive causal conclusions. For example, while we consider it more likely than not that support for asymmetric violence is a function of one's prior level of Arab identification, it is at least possible that the reverse causal chain is the correct one, or even that the relationship between Arab identification and asymmetric violence support is reciprocal. Relatedly, this line of research would benefit from experimental evidence showing that priming Arabs with thoughts of American domination increases support for resistance violence whereas priming thoughts of value clash increases support for fundamentalist violence.

Second, although our data were collected from fairly representative segments of the Lebanese and Syrian populations, there is little basis for generalizing the results across other countries in the Middle East or the Arab or Muslim worlds. Future research should explore these questions among a broader segment of Arab society, as well as with groups in other social contexts (e.g., Kurds in Turkey) who perceive domination by another group as well as value clashes with it.

Third, because of the long and contentious history of Arab–American relations, likely due to America's hegemonic position in Middle Eastern politics and its perceived patronage of Israel, we restricted ourselves to support for violence directed at the US. Obviously, this leaves open the question as to whether or not the conclusions we

have drawn here would also generalize to other Western countries as targets, perhaps depending on these countries' values, their policies towards the Arab world, and even their alignment (or lack thereof) with the US and/or Israel. For example, it remains to be seen whether support for asymmetric violence against Sweden would have a different dynamic compared to violence against the United States. For Western countries not involved in direct domination of Arabs, for example, it may be the case that perceived value clash is the dominant motive for violence support. Future research should be sensitive to subtle, yet important differences between different kinds of Western targets.

Fourth, these data were collected prior to the outbreak of the popular Arab uprisings and the emergence of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), and the recent war in Gaza. In light of these potentially paradigm-shifting events, it is unclear whether support for both kinds of asymmetric violence against the United States would remain at the same level, or be motivated by the same factors. The emergence of ISIS and widespread revulsion at its actions may have further tempered any support for fundamentalist violence. This is particularly likely to be the case among those espousing antidominance beliefs, but may even be true among those perceiving a values clash between Americans and Arabs.

Lastly, while the variables composing our operationalization of asymmetric violence were adequate, future research should broaden this operationalization to include an even wider range of expressions of asymmetric violence, such as support for suicide bombings, as well as nonlethal attacks against property and cultural/national symbols. It is our hope that such expanded research will soon be forthcoming.

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Notes

1. These perspectives have not always defined asymmetric violence in exactly the same way,

nor investigated exactly the same phenomena. For example, some researchers have focused on understanding support for "terrorism," whereas others have focused more narrowly on suicide terrorism (Lankford, 2013; Pape, 2006). Still others have investigated support for groups that engage in intergroup violence or radical collective action more broadly (Tausch et al., 2011).

2. We note that the fact that Hamas and Hezbollah primarily model themselves as resistance movements at present does not mean they may not also hold longer term goals involving fundamentalist rule of law. Nevertheless, our claim is that they are "best known for" (and most strongly supported because of) their resistance ideology. Similarly, we do not mean to imply that resistance goals are irrelevant to Al Qaeda or Islamic Brotherhood.
3. Gender was equally distributed over Muslim sect (i.e., Sunni and Shi'a), $\chi_{(1,214)}^2 = 0.02, p = .90$. Similarly, gender was uniformly distributed over religious community (i.e., Muslim and Christian), $\chi_{(1,383)}^2 = 1.52, p = .22$. 51.1% of the entire sample was female. Since there was such a small subsample of Shi'a Muslims ($n = 35$), formal comparisons with Sunni Muslims were not considered reliable.
4. Although support for violent groups and specific violent tactics (e.g., killing civilians or attacking military targets) are not one and the same, they are conceptually related, and factored together empirically in our sample. As such, we did not differentiate between support for groups versus tactics here. Nevertheless, we note that ancillary analyses suggested that the patterns described were consistent when we investigated support for the groups and tactics separately from one another.
5. We also performed separate factor analyses of these items among Muslims and Christians as well as among Syrians and Lebanese. While not identical, the factor solutions were reassuringly similar across both religious groups and nations. Thus, Factor 1 was always primarily concerned with support for: Al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the killing of American civilians. Furthermore, Factor 2 was always primarily concerned with support for Hezbollah and Hamas across all analyses.
6. Results using informal, factor-based scores produced highly similar conclusions.
7. We also examined the regression equations for each religious group within each country. While there were some differences within religion across

country, these differences were not dramatic. This fine-grained data segmentation also reduced some of the religion-by-country sample sizes to very small numbers, making the results difficult to interpret in isolation (e.g., $n = 37$ for Syrian Christians).

8. In computing the significance of these contrasts we implemented Malgady's (1987) technique, involving a modification of Hotelling's (1940) t test for dependent correlations for use with semipartial correlations and employing the `lmatrix` subcommand of SPSS' GLM program (see Howell & Lacroix, 2012).
9. Note that when making effect size comparisons across separate groups, it is more appropriate to use unstandardized regression coefficients (i.e., b). However, when making effect size comparisons within groups, it is most appropriate to use semipartial coefficients.
10. We note that in several cases, these differences were trending but not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the patterns were in the expected directions in all cases. Moreover, in several cases, even where the results did not reach statistical significance, the semipartial correlation of the variable expected to be the strongest predictor was more than double the size of the next strongest predictor (e.g., counterdominance vs. perceived cultural clash predicting the resistance dimension among Muslims).

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