



*The Moral Geographies of Political Violence:  
Using GIS to Map and Explain  
Public Opinion on Political Violence*

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## **Abstract**

Conflict research is generally focused on explaining those people that engage in violence. This thesis suggests that we also study ordinary civilians and their opinions and support for violence. Such a civilian-centered research focus is necessary because implicit in much of conflict research there are some underlying assumptions, moral judgments, and geographic ideas about violence-supporters. These ideas which can be called imaginary moral geographies of political violence (MGPV) are causing large divides in the conflict literature. It is preferable to study violence-support directly rather than to imagine them. Attempting to empirically explain and describe the spaces and geographies of support for violence in a GIS may be one fruitful way to better understand political violence and its supporters. Using multilevel modeling various theories are tested to find out why people really support the use of violence. Generally, the finding in the thesis is that most of the varied theories have some influence on support for violence. Similarly, based on geo-locating levels of support to the national and province level, we also find that the real MGPV's can be said to be mixture of most imagined MGPVs. Violence-support is neither entirely supported, nor entirely opposed and that neither is it only located 'over there' or 'over here'. Nor should violence-support be judged since it clearly can happen to any of us, depending on our situation.

**Keywords:** Support for political violence, moral geography, survey research, geography of conflict, multilevel modeling, Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 – How We Imagine the Spaces and Supporters of Political Violence .....	5
Imaginary Moral Geographies .....	5
How Imaginations Have Divided the Study of Political Violence .....	7
Different Types of MGPVs.....	10
The Dual Meaning of MGPVs.....	15
Chapter 2 – Why Is There Moral Support for Violence?.....	17
Two Pathways towards Support.....	17
Group Motives .....	18
Universal Motives.....	22
Strategic Factors as Necessary Enablers of Support.....	24
Chapter 3 – A Method to Research Conflicts and Their Moral Geographies.....	29
Defining and Measuring Support for Violence.....	29
Selecting the Case Focus and Dependent Variable.....	32
Building a Dataset of Explanatory Causes.....	36
The Explanatory Variables .....	38
Preparing Data for Analysis.....	44
Analyzing the Data .....	45
Multilevel Regression Analysis .....	45
Chapter 4 – Results and Findings .....	49
An Initial Look at the Spaces of Violence-Support .....	49
Testing the Various Categories of Causal Theories.....	53
Findings for Group Motives.....	53
Findings for Universal Motives .....	57

Findings for Strategic Factors.....	60
Summary and Conclusion.....	63
Appendix: Method for Coding Difficult to Use Variables .....	67

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Different Types of Imaginary MGPVs.....	11
Figure 2. Map of Case-Study Area and Contextual Information.....	35
Figure 3. Dataset Structure and Types of Data Sources Used. ....	38
Figure 4. Map of National Support for Political Violence.....	50
Figure 5. Maps of Sub-National Support for Political.....	52
Figure 6. Results Graph for Communal Bonds Theories.....	54
Figure 7. Results Graph for Local Competition Theories.....	55
Figure 8. Results Graph for Anti-Global Theories .....	56
Figure 9. Results Graph for United by Conflict Theories.....	57
Figure 10. Results Graph for Government Massacres Theories.....	58
Figure 11. Results Graph for Unjust Political System Theories.....	59
Figure 12. Results Graph for Government Neglect Theories .....	60
Figure 13. Results Graph for Nothing to Lose Theories.....	61
Figure 14. Results Graph for Probable Success Theories.....	62

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Empty Multilevel Model Showing Spatial Variation in Support .....	53
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## Introduction

It is widely argued that the outcome of irregular wars hinges on the behavior of civilians...that no insurgent movement can survive without 'civilian support', and neither can incumbent victory be achieved without it.

-- Stathis N. Kalyvas, 2006.<sup>1</sup>

Since the dawn of history, warfare has been an ever-present aspect of human life. As we have clubbed, speared, and arrowed each other, warfare has often consumed our entire societies and lives.<sup>2</sup> It has not always been the case, however, that some have fought while others have stood by watching or commenting. The division between combatants and 'civilians' first began with the rise of the first civilizations a few millennia ago. Since then warfare has increasingly become a rare event<sup>3</sup> and those that engage in fighting have increasingly been distinguished from the general civilian populace. The reason for this historical change in warfare was that only with the advent of large and complex societies was there enough social distance and anonymity between members of society to allow warfare to be limited to far-away battlefields where armies of professional soldiers would meet.<sup>4</sup> As agricultural innovations allowed for greater populations, people became so numerous that it was no longer practical to exterminate and annihilate the enemy populations; instead, the aim became to wage war on a geographic territory and let the conquered people continue to live in them.<sup>5</sup> Because people were expected to keep living in the area that had been conquered, it became crucial for rulers to win their loyalty and affection. This importance of people and their opinions would soon become one of the defining characteristics of modern historical warfare. Peace activist Jonathan Schell refers to this power of

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<sup>1</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University, 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> A few decades ago there were quite heated debates about whether 'ancient man' was primarily peaceful or violent, but more recent archeological and ethnographic evidence suggest that the tendency of ancient hunter-gatherer societies was more on the violent side. Gat, Azar. 2006. *War In Human Civilization*. New Your, USA: Oxford University Press Inc; Thorpe, I. J. N. 2003. "Anthropology, archeology, and the origin of warfare." *World Archeology* 35:1.

<sup>3</sup> Eckhardt, William. 1992. *Civilizations, empires, and wars: A quantitative history of war*. USA: McFarland.

<sup>4</sup> While it is true that 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century conflicts have not been exclusively fought on the battlefield and involve their fair share of civilian casualties, the societal percentages of civilian casualties of today are a far cry from those experienced by 'ancient man'. See for instance calculations made by Gat, Azar. 2006. *War In Human Civilization*. New Your, USA: Oxford University Press Inc, 575.

<sup>5</sup> Sagan, Eli. 1985. *At the dawn of tyranny: The origins of individualism, political oppression, and the state*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

people and their opinions when he speaks of our “unconquerable world;” a description of our modern epoch in which warfare has begun to be decided more by the will of the people rather than of rulers.<sup>6</sup> Today’s rebel groups are well aware of this ‘people-power’ and the importance of gaining support from the people. As the Chinese communist revolutionary Mao Zedong famously put it, people are “the sea in which rebels must swim.”<sup>7</sup>

Gaining the support of ordinary people therefore lies at the heart of what characterizes modern warfare (as opposed to ancient warfare). The recognition of population-legitimacy so often acknowledged throughout history has not had an equal foothold in modern academic discourse. It is not that academia has disagreed or had any issue with the importance of populations in warfare, but rather that academic research has tended to ignore or failed to acknowledge their importance.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the focus has been only on the violent actors. The large literatures on civil wars are frequently focused on the dynamics between insurgent and government actors, negotiations between them, the probability of observing a conflict between them, factors that prolong their motivations to prolong such conflicts, within-group dynamics that lead to divisions and splits, and so on and so forth. Meanwhile, the broader population and socio-cultural-psychological basis for political violence have been ignored. Civilians are frequently brushed aside and portrayed as “unsuspecting” and “innocent” victims of “externally imposed” violence.<sup>9</sup> Ordinary people are thought to be insignificant to conflict, because, as the reasoning goes, how could insurgents care about people when they regularly target them with ruthless violence? The point that is missed in much of the literature, however, is that ruthless tactics tend to be directed at those who the insurgents consider their ‘enemy’ and whose support they would not desire anyway. Support from the population matters because violence against an enemy is a way for insurgents, warlords, and even terrorists<sup>10</sup> to please a population with whom

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<sup>6</sup> Schell, Jonathan. 2004. *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*. USA: Holt Paperbacks.

<sup>7</sup> Mao’s quote has become the most famous and oft-repeated adage to studies that emphasize the importance of populations during war and violence. Mao was not alone however; variations of his quote has indeed been repeated by other more recent rebel insurgents, such as Northern Irish militants proclaiming that “a guerrilla force will be unable to operate in an area where the people are hostile to its aims.” Berman, Eli, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter. 2008. “Can hearts and minds be bought? The economics of counterinsurgency in Iraq.” NBER Working Paper No. 14606 (revised April 2011), 4.

<sup>8</sup> The silence has been especially pronounced in the data-driven statistical research on violent conflict, whose positivist logic has traditionally tended to shy away from any topics relating to the domain of the untangible and unobservable, i.e. thoughts, ideas, emotions. Instead, traces of a rationalist paradigm has dominated most such quantitative studies on conflict, a paradigm that “*compels us to discount the role of ideas and human ingenuity*.” Elman, Miriam Fendius. 2012. “The Arab Spring and the Future of Democracy in the Middle East: Rethinking Middle Eastern Studies.” *Palestine-Israel Journal* 18(1):98-105., page 99.

<sup>9</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University, 390.

<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the common perception that warlords are purely motivated by self-aggrandizement, “warlords enjoy legitimacy among a class of lesser military commanders, who in turn control small pockets of territory and the local population.” Giustozzi,



they share similar political goals and desires. While it is true that in some cases insurgents and terrorists attack their own supporting communities, even here the purpose is to coerce and punish defectors in order to maintain a certain level of support from the population.<sup>11</sup>

Attempting to compensate for the lack of research on violence-support, this thesis begins by pointing out the problem that arises when the literature neglects to study population-support. Chapter 1 deals with this problem in detail and discusses how in the absence of empirical knowledge researchers have simply *imagined* what people think about violence, while simultaneously projecting their own value judgments of violence onto the general population. These imaginations give rise to what may be referred to as *moral geographies of political violence* where different areas of the world are assumed to have certain moral standards and opinions about violence. The problems of such imaginations is that they mold and influence the direction and conclusions of much of today's conflict research. Many of the debates and controversies found in the conflict literature can be partly traced, it will be argued, to these various forms of imagined moral geographies.

The most important innovation of this thesis, however, is that it embarks on a more 'constructive' critique of the above stereotypes in the sense that it incorporates an empirical element and exploration of the world of violence-support that our stereotypes claim to represent. If we are to do as suggested and empirically study popular support for violence and their geographies rather than just imagining them, then the first question that we need to ask is: *why* do people support violence in the first place? Chapter 2 therefore reviews some of the most common theories that have been proposed to explain violence and violence-support. Not only is understanding which causes lead people to embrace violence-support interesting, doing so may additionally give clues to explain what the moral geographies of support look like, and why they look the way they do. For instance, some causes may apply universally to all individuals in all places, while other causes may be limited to only certain individuals or places; if any of them are true then this has implications for the geography of support. Organizing the various theories into

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Antonio. 2005. "The Debate On Warlordism: The Importance Of Military Legitimacy." Crisis states development research centre, Discussion paper no. 13. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/13316/1/dp13.pdf> (accessed on May 12, 2013), 16. Regarding popular support for terrorism, Lee et. al. have noted how "if there is no social group that views a terrorist act as justified, the act probably fails to meet the criteria of a bona fide terrorist act." Lee, Yueh-Ting, Seiji Takaku, Victor Ottati, and Gonggu Yan. 2005. "Ch 11: Perception and Interpretation of Terrorism, Justice, and Conflict: Three Cultures and Two Sides of One Coin." In: Yueh-Ting Lee, Clark McCauley, Fathali Moghaddam, and Stephen Worchel (eds.) *Psychology of Ethnic and Cultural Conflict*. USA: Praeger Publishers, 228.

<sup>11</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University.

a moral psychological framework, the chapter forms the backbone of hypotheses to be tested in the empirical section, so that we may know where to look as we explore the conditions and causal factors that make people support the use of violence.

With our mind set on empirically exploring the geographies and causes of violence-support the thesis then devotes chapter 3 to propose a novel geo-spatial quantitative methodology. The methodology outlined there involves the use of public opinion data from 17 different countries with significant Muslim populations in a Geographic Information System (GIS), which enables us to geo-locate individual survey opinions down to the province-level. With a case-focus on Muslims who would justify the use of violence to defend Islam, we can explore whether such support for violence is a problem geographically confined to certain regions, or if it is one that is more spread out and shared by various local areas and individuals everywhere. In addition, a novel dataset on province-level contextual factors is constructed to link local levels of support with local causes. To generate some conclusions from the data about the underlying causes that drive people to support the use of violence, chapter 4 makes use of multi-level regression analysis and reports the findings. It is hoped that by the end of reading the results chapter, after several rounds of honest inquiries into empirically based data, the reader will be left with some curious observations about and inspiring more refined questions regarding the causes and geographies of moral support for political violence.

## Chapter 1 – How We Imagine the Spaces and Supporters of Political Violence

*An artificially intelligent “Gorgonite” toy robot was once coming to grips with what it meant to be alive, and wondered whether a window was not simply just another box or container. Alan, his human friend, answered him:*

*Alan: There’s nothing in windows. There’s stuff outside them.*

*Gorgonite: What stuff?*

*Alan: You know, outside. Trees, powerpoles, Christy’s house.*

*Gorgonite: And beyond that?*

*Alan: The mall.*

*Gorgonite: And beyond that?*

*Alan: That’s the highway.*

*Gorgonite: And beyond that?*

*Alan: About a million acres of farm.*

*Gorgonite: And what’s beyond that?*

*Alan: (pause...) I don’t know.*

*From the motionpicture movie *Small Soldiers*, 1998 <sup>12</sup>*

### Imaginary Moral Geographies

Rarely do we as people have the ability to escape the constraints of knowledge inherent from living in a physical world. Large stretches of land, water, and other geographic boundaries separate the world’s populations,<sup>13</sup> thus limiting what we can and cannot know about each other. Despite our inevitable distance from and ignorance of other places we still have certain perceptions of who and what they contain. The academic discipline of geography<sup>14</sup> is one that has been particularly attuned to this observation. Thus, much geographic research has gone into exposing how we perceive all the places that we do not really know anything about. With the

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<sup>12</sup> Dante, Joe (director). 1998. *Small Soldiers*. USA: Universal Pictures.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, although there are 7 billion of us, if the entire world population (including infants and children) was gathered on a dance-floor we would only take up 0.001 percent (roughly 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of the world’s land-surface (150,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Such a dance-floor would only require an area the size of Los Angeles metropolitan area. For a local comparison based in Tromsø, Norway, imagine a cluster of 200 identical Tromsøya islands (each roughly 20 km<sup>2</sup>) packed with dancers, measuring only 14 islands from North to South, and 14 islands from East to West. Calculations and numbers are based off the video illustration by Holmes, Nigel, and Rowland, Holmes. 2011. “7 Billion World Party.” *National Geographic Online*. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/video/player#/?titleID=7-billion-animation&catID=1> (accessed on May 29, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Though most people know “geography” as the memorization of countries and capitals, mountains and rivers, geography is also a professional discipline equally devoted to understanding human societies, behavioral patterns, and philosophical issues, engaged as much with causal explanation and theory as with simple description. Within academic geographer circles, conferences, journals, and stray article contributions one finds plenty of new spatially minded theories, and innovative spatial techniques applied to old research questions. See for instance such journals as the *Journal of Cultural Geography*, or the *Professional Geographer*.

help of what geographer Doreen Massey has called the “geographical imagination,”<sup>15</sup> we create a library of ‘mental maps’ that come in a variety of local, sub-national, national, regional, and global scales. For each time we ‘zoom in’ to a desired area, we redraw the lines and borders with added complexity and detail, and as we ‘zoom out’ for a global view we reduce and simplify. Equipped with these mental maps we convince ourselves that we can everything about everyone, everywhere, thus turning the world from unknown and chaotic to known and manageable. Yet, in most cases, our mental maps are at a loss since they cannot possibly contain all the complexity and uncertainties of our real world, especially when our mental maps are not based on actual experience. These ‘self-delusions’ can be problematic because they often result in wildly inaccurate notions and stereotypes of the world’s peoples and places, often with favorable portrayals of the near and familiar at the expense of the distant and unknown. To raise awareness of the spatial nature of this human fallacy is a crucial point of much geographical research, highlighting how human “knowledge is always a view from somewhere—partial, incomplete, embodied, situated.”<sup>16</sup> We may know this idea more commonly as human ignorance, prejudice, or stereotypes.

Geographic imaginations are not only concerned with facts or knowledge, but can also be layered with moral judgments and assumptions. Morality can be defined as the practical everyday practices and beliefs about what is the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ thing to do, and consequently almost any social activity has a moral aspect to it.<sup>17</sup> By geographically imagining our world we are therefore also implicitly adding moral layers to our imagined map, for instance by assuming that some places contain people and traditions that are more or less immoral than other places. These imaginings, which are called *moral geographies*, have become the topic of much research in recent years.<sup>18</sup> This moral geography research, however, appears to be limited to circles of devoted geographers and philosophers, so that extending the concept of moral geographies to other fields of research can be very helpful. In this thesis it is proposed that the concept of moral

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<sup>15</sup> Massey, Doreen. 2006. "The geographical mind." In *Secondary geography handbook*, ed. D. Balderston. Sheffield: Geographical Association.

<sup>16</sup> Graham, Elspeth. 2005. "Theory and theorizing." In *Questioning geography*, eds. Noel Castree, Alisdair Rogers and Douglas Sherman. USA: Blackwell Publishing., page 267.

<sup>17</sup> Some examples include how different communities have different societal norms regarding such topics like abortion, how to run a government, or how to fairly distribute resources.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, D. 2000. *Moral geographies: ethics in a world of difference*. USA: Edinburgh University Press.

geography can indeed be made relevant and useful to conflict studies.<sup>19</sup> An argument is given for how conflict scholars themselves are plagued with their own imagined moral geographies, leading to problems and divisions in the literature. A path forward is then suggested for how these problems can be mitigated if a more conscious and empirically driven approach to study moral geographies is taken. This chapter therefore lays out the problem and theoretical motivations for the main empirical part of the thesis.

### **How Imaginations Have Divided the Study of Political Violence**

Despite claims that research on conflict and violence is value-neutral and objective, conflict studies must face the same problems of imaginary moral geographies described previously. Just like any person, conflict researchers are geographically bounded to their work- and living-spaces, often facing them with an absence of first-hand observation of other geographical places and forcing them to ‘imagine’ theories and assumptions of what lies beyond their windows.<sup>20</sup> Admittedly, these leaps of faith are necessary in academia. Without them research would sink into a deep hole of relativity and not be able to say much about the world around it. Usually, as research progresses and evidence amounts, we become more and more certain about these assumptions, and a certain consensus arises. However, it is argued here that in the field of conflict research such a consensus has so far failed to materialize sufficiently. Given the highly political and moral relevance of the topic, conflict researchers find themselves in a ‘battlefield’ with each other over who has the ‘truth’ to explaining the topic.<sup>21</sup>

These dividing lines in conflict research are often a result of underlying ideological cleavages and value differences, rather than being based in systematic empirical efforts. One of the earliest approaches for explaining violence stemming from colonial times had been to frame

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<sup>19</sup> The phrase “conflict research” is used in this thesis to refer to any individual piece of research studying some aspect of political violence, not only those authors regularly and explicitly claiming to be a conflict researcher.

<sup>20</sup> Such second-hand conflict research is particularly common among political scientists and theoreticians who base themselves off what others have observed in conflict zones but have never done so themselves. This thesis is in fact no exception here, but the problem is attempted alleviated by basing my conclusions directly on empirical data from real people in conflict zones. Exceptions to the problem include conflict ethnographers whose main method is precisely to travel to and observe conflicts up-close. However, as is argued in this chapter, even in those cases their conclusions can be clouded and shaped by their own worldviews.

<sup>21</sup> At least in the case of *Terrorism Studies* Lane has described the field as experiencing “raging battles” between scholars of different opinions. Lane, B. 2008. “Battles Rage Within Terrorism Study.” *The Australian*, October 8 2008. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/opinion-analysis/battles-rage-within-terror-study/story-e6frgcko-1111117688602> (accessed on September 13, 2010)

violence as an outcome of primordial racial hatreds and stereotypes of certain regions and cultures as inherently angry and violent.<sup>22</sup> From the 1960s the primordial hypothesis morphed into other theories that were less racially focused but equally focused on cultures and emotions, such as the frustration and grievance theories of prominent conflict researcher Ted Gurr.<sup>23</sup> After the Cold War this came to be supplanted with an explanation of violence that emphasized the role of individual greed, strategic interests, and economic aspirations. This new view was tied to the economic, rationalist, and interest-based background of economists who, living in an era optimistic about economic globalization and prosperity, attempted to export their expertise to conflict research.<sup>24</sup> In time, an unexpected rise of (or perhaps just increased attention to) identity-based conflict in places like Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and later with the 9/11 attacks on the United States served to shatter economic optimism and hope for peace and replace it with perceptions of a resurgence of emotional grievance, violence, and despair.<sup>25</sup> And so the pendulum has swung back and forth in waves between those who explain violence through interest and rationalism and those who focus on emotions and culture. The divide between greed- and grievance-based can be said to be a reflection of scholars with different backgrounds and fundamental beliefs about human nature and the world, thus contributing to a recurring bipolar debate and divide in conflict studies. While the debate may at times appear to have subsided, some of the new explanations proposed to move “beyond greed or grievance” keep being heavily anchored in either the interest or the emotional side of the debate, such as Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner’s strategic interest-based narrative of feasibility.<sup>26</sup>

The division in the conflict literature becomes clearer when looking at other fields of studies that have taken more plural approaches to explain socio-political phenomenon. In the transitional justice literature it has been argued that ideas of justice are shaped and caused by both interest and emotion.<sup>27</sup> Among moral philosophers and psychologists a third source has been suggested for how we form our political and moral attitudes; while generally overlooking

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<sup>22</sup> Greeley, Andrew M. 1971. *Why can't they be like us? America's white ethnic groups*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 43.

<sup>23</sup> Grofman, Bernard N., and Edward N. Muller. 1973. “The Strange Case of Relative Gratification and Potential for Political Violence: The V-Curve Hypothesis.” *The American Political Science Review* 67:2.

<sup>24</sup> An excellent overview of economic theories can be seen in Sambanis, Nicholas. 2001. “A Review Of Recent Advances And Future Directions In The Quantitative Literature On Civil War.” *Defense and Peace Economics* 13:3, 221.

<sup>25</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72:3.

<sup>26</sup> Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler and Dominic Rohner. 2009. “Beyond greed and grievance: feasibility and civil war.” *Oxford Economic Papers* 61:1.

<sup>27</sup> This is based on Elster, who in turn based himself off of seventeenth century French moralists such as La Bruyère. *Ibid.*, page 81

the role of interest, they often focus on our capacity to reason and use logic to develop ideas about morality.<sup>28</sup> These other fields of study are more embracing of multiple explanations and seemingly less motivated by ideological concerns than conflict research. We may therefore say that the practice of conflict research often amounts to promoting certain ‘stories’ of political violence, stories of how the geographic landscape of political violence looks like outside one’s window. These stories are often influenced by his or her ideology and assumptions of what is good and bad, so that their geographical narrative becomes infused with moral assumptions.

The problem of a divided conflict literature can be traced back to how scholars bring with them a baggage of imagined *moral geographies of political violence* (MGPV). Imagined MGPVs are narratives that use or imply geographic metaphors of moral and immoral behavior to tell the story of political violence. These metaphors usually originate in everyday life and are only later imported into the works of researchers. Evening news is a prime example of how MGPVs can form in everyday life. As the evening news moves from domestic to international events, there tends to be a transition from light and trivial stories to serious and pressing matters of riots, war, terrorism, and other sorts of civil strife. The more we learn and hear about such violence that takes place around the world the more we imagine certain mental maps of how the ebbs and flows of peace and conflict vary across the world’s surface. These geographical images of political violence and suffering inevitably affect us in our intimate moral realm. How we interpret and perceive this TV coverage of political violence varies greatly between people. Depending on whether we consider such violence as right or wrong, virtue or vice, or just simply ‘as is’, the geographical images that we produce become associated with respective geographical layers of societal moral attitudes, both within one’s own society and in other far-away places. Engaging in such moral geographic thinking helps us as people to explain the occurrences of political violence that we hear about, which in turn helps us to define ourselves and our role in the world. While this section has showed how conflict research is often divided due to core value-differences, in the next section we trace these divisions to the different types of MGPVs imagined by conflict scholars.

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<sup>28</sup> Smith, D. 2000. *Moral geographies: ethics in a world of difference*. USA: Edinburgh University Press.

## Different Types of MGPVs

In what follows, a discussion is given of some of the common reactions and ways that people and scholars have imagined MGPVs. The moral and geographical nature of these different types is illustrated in Figure 1. The two first MGPVs are located on the left side of the Figure 1 and belong to the moral stance that can be referred to as the *peace-bias*. That is, there is a growing societal tendency to view violence as an immoral and undesired part our state- and security- based world. The philosophical stance that violence can sometimes be justified if it satisfies a greater good, has apparently been diminishing in philosophical circles to the point of being "relegated to a footnote."<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, most conflict researchers today have in common such an opposition to violence and a desire that their research should somehow help end it. In making sense of why there exists violence in the world when they themselves oppose it, conflict researchers are faced with a dilemma that has implications for how they understand themselves and their role in the world. This discrepancy between peace-minded conflict researchers and the object of study has generally been resolved in one of two ways, through either a regional or a global imagination, both of which keep intact the researcher's benevolent view of him or herself.

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<sup>29</sup> Philosophers know this as the type of consequentialist thinking seen in the double effect that is so central to just-war theory. McMahan, Jeff. 2009. "Intention, permissibility, terrorism, and war." *Philosophical perspectives* 23, 345.



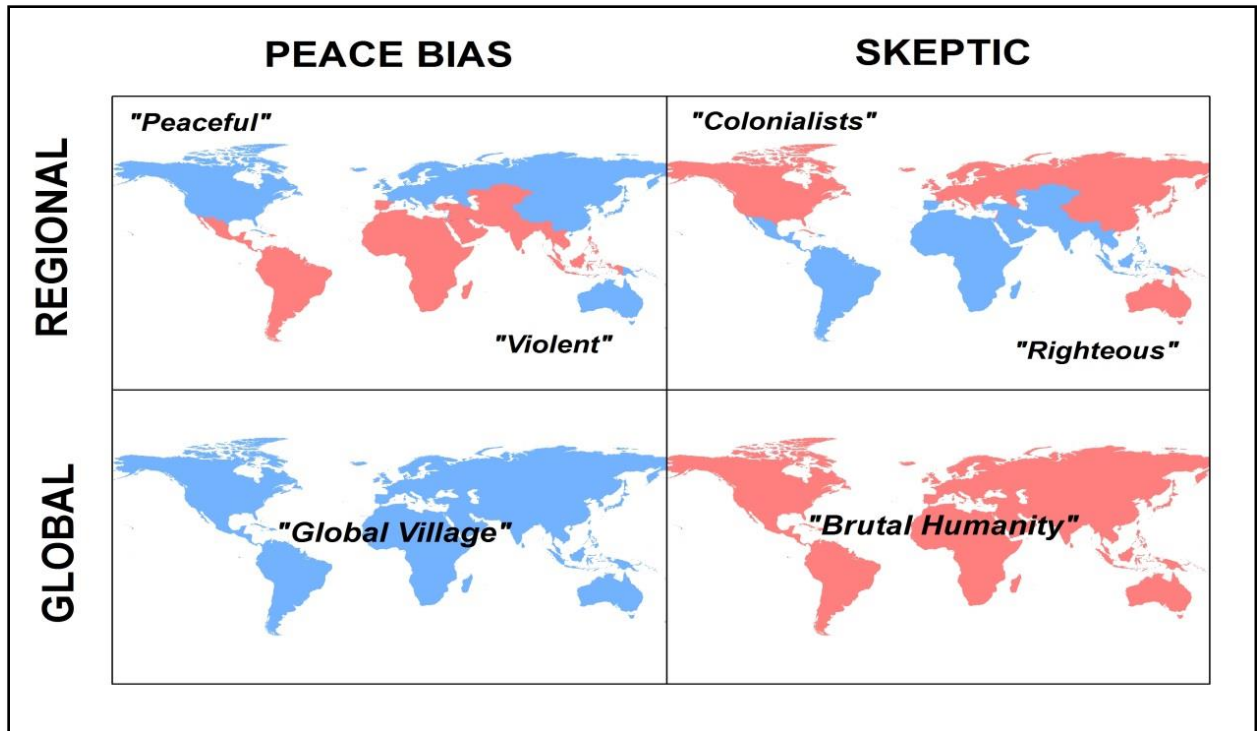


Figure 1. Different Types of Imaginary MGPVs

The first way to resolve the peace has been for the researcher to imagine a *regional* geography (located in the upper left corner of Figure 1), where it is assumed that certain far-away regions of the world may just be more prone to support violence than others; this way elevating the researcher's moral status since he or she apparently had the good fortune or judgment not to support violence. In much of this research, the normative implications are clear: support for non-state violence is a bad thing that should be condemned. Support for violence becomes a practice that is supposedly inherent to 'inferior' war-like people and cultures in the world's imagined regions of instability. Violence-support is frowned upon and framed as a cultural problem, limited for instance to regions that value honor and strong communal ties,<sup>30</sup> or that treat their women as inferior to men.<sup>31</sup> In this view, if violence is ever to be used legitimately, it is only in the hands of the state, rather than the perceived mischief of non-state rebels. In the regional geographical image arising from this, we in the global West have come to

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2012. "Fueling the Fire: Violent Rhetoric, Trait Aggression, and Support for Political Violence." *Working Paper*: 14. [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20-fueling\\_the\\_fire.pdf](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20-fueling_the_fire.pdf) (29 October 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Ferber, Abby L. Introduction to Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism, by Abby L. Ferber. London: Routledge, 2004; Tessler, Mark, and Ina Warriner. "Gender, Feminism, and Attitudes toward International Conflict: Exploring Relationships with Survey Data from the Middle East." *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): 250-281.

think of ourselves as principled moral agents opposed to any and most types of political violence, given our trust and reliance on stable and peaceful political institutions where violence is not needed. Political violence is viewed as morally corrupt and without justification, a practice which is supposedly confined to and enabled by moral corruptions and “angry”<sup>32</sup> supportive populations in the world’s imagined regions of instability, based on our perceptions of those regions’ seeming prevalence of political violence. Western governments and leadership have used exactly such simplified moral geographies as justification for a wide variety of violent interventions across the global North-South divide. But the world is not as clearly divided into peace- and violence-loving regions as the regional worldview claims it to be. The global West has been and is still rife with problems of political violence and homegrown strife.<sup>33</sup> Nor are we in the West as principally opposed to political violence as we like to think. Beyond our popular support for mobilization and wartime violence in interstate rivalries and interventions, we are both frequently and recently lending our moral support to subnational insurgencies, violent coups, and communal clashes ‘over there’ in the global South, picking sides and extending sympathies.<sup>34</sup>

The second way that people and scholars have attempted to resolve the dilemma from the peace-bias is by imagining a *global* geography (lower left corner of Figure 1) and saying that most people are instead peace-embracing, this way delegating the problem of violence to the few ‘bad apples’ who perpetrate the violence. There is the view that all humans and cultures are caring, cooperative, and have a desire for peace. For instance, some cross-cultural findings suggest that “the processes of moral development are largely the same across cultures” with similar moral opinions on certain core values such as the inhibition to hurt others.<sup>35</sup> Given the

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<sup>32</sup> Consider, for instance, the popular way of portraying news stories of Arab unrest with pictures of ‘angry’ young men in the streets. More nuanced accounts reveal how there is simply a different culture of street protest and how small scale demonstrations with only a few hundred people get blown out of proportion to represent an entire country when most people are not really as elavated about it. See Regier, Terry and Muhammad Ali Khalidi. 2009. "The Arab Street: Tracking a Political Metaphor." *The Middle East Journal* 63(1):11-29.

<sup>33</sup> The history of the United States, for instance, has been threatened with Black insurgency, radical student riots, militias, and many homegrown terrorist groups. In Europe, one has also only to recall the numerous recent and contemporary conflicts in Western Europe, such as Northern Ireland, Basque Spain, Italian and Greek anarchist violence, Germanic and British racist and neo-nazi movements, to name a few.

<sup>34</sup> Even the self-proclaimed moralists that make up the global West’s many peace movements have often supported local populations in using violent means of self-determination to expel imperial rulers or tyrannic despot.

<sup>35</sup> Wainryb, Cecilia, and Monisha Pasupathi. 2008. “Developing moral agency in the midst of violence: Children, political conflict, and values.” In: *Values and Violence: Intangible Aspects of Terrorism*, eds. Ibrahim A. Karawan, Wayne McCormack, and Stephen E. Reynolds. USA: Springer.

emphasis on human benevolence, this worldview is particularly popular among those researchers that desire and embrace those alternative futures portrayed in the ideas of cosmopolitanism, internationalism, universalism, and the global village. They have included the whole world into their circle of benevolence, inside of which everyone are seen as violence eschewing and morally opposed to its use, thus extending their self-view through a 'blanket' that covers and speaks for every corner of the world. In this global vision held by some scholars, there is no room for popular support of political violence; in those places where violence is recognized to be occurring they are explained by reference to marginal outcasts, deviants, radicals, and extremists. The general population is believed to hold no such support and rather opposes the violence. For instance, early studies on civil war and terrorism attempted to explain violence as the result of individual psychological illness:

If people rebelled it was now an individual problem, not a state problem: they must be deviant, sick, too violent. It was a practical problem for the police to stop and it became a job for psychiatrists to answer why men rebel.<sup>36</sup>

Especially since the attacks on 9/11, "Homeland Security policymakers have ignored interpretations of contemporary terrorism as a symptom of broad societal conflicts...and have chosen to view it as a narrower kind of human pathology."<sup>37</sup> With such a view, it is little wonder why studies on civil wars have overwhelmingly seemed to focus on and been limited to explaining only those individual combatants or groups that resort to, engage, and participate in the violence.<sup>38</sup> Such approaches ignore the rest of the population, who are treated as "unsuspecting" and "innocent" victims and bystanders who suffer from, react to, and comment on the use of violence after the fact.<sup>39</sup> The general population is seen as consisting of innocent victims who can be sympathized with and united with through solidarity activism and global imaginings. This view is often used by political leaders as justifications for military campaigns

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<sup>36</sup> Tin, Hjalte. 2005. *The Spaces of Civil War: From a global typology of civil war to a topography of violence in South Africa 1976, 1986, 1996*. PhD Dissertation: Århus University, 120. <http://www.ninaoghjalte.dk/downloads/forskning/8.pdf> (accessed on November 7, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Mitchell, James K. 2003. "The fox and the hedgehog: Myopia about homeland security in U.S. policies on terrorism." In: Lee Clarke (ed.) *Terrorism and Disaster: New Threats, New Ideas*. USA: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

<sup>38</sup> See for instance, Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2).

<sup>39</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 390. Also noted by, for instance, Smyth, Marie Breen. 2008. "Geographies of Conflict: Meanings and Effects of Political Violence." Paper presented at the *International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco*. [http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/2/5/2/6/1/pages252617/p252617-1.php](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/5/2/6/1/pages252617/p252617-1.php) (accessed on November 7, 2012).

that often lead to stubborn, futile, ineffective, and counter-productive approaches to fighting supposedly fringe-combatants while naively assuming that the population will welcome such efforts with open arms.

Common to both MGPVs presented above is that they have judged support for violence as being immoral and blamed it on ‘others’, thus keeping intact the researcher’s own self-image of being peaceful. Other types of MGPVs do not take this approach but rather view support for violence in a more favorable light. Thus, we can mention a third skeptical and regional view (upper right corner of Figure 1) held by large masses of more ‘radical’ scholars, who view *state-led* violence in one’s own society as the greatest evil, and therefore have a more favorable impression of sub-state violence of far-away people. This appears to be the primary response of many peace researchers, sociologists, and anthropologists; despite their own peaceful rhetoric, they sometimes sympathize with or even agree with people’s support for violence. Much of their efforts go into putting the blame on the powerful, the states, and ‘the colonialists.’ The weak and oppressed’ support for violent resistance have been quickly and without much investigation legitimized and explained away as a ‘knee-jerk’ reaction of how any human would ‘naturally’ respond when faced with injustice. Support is simply sided with and provided as justification for taking a particular side in a conflict. In the fourth and final imagined MGPV the acceptance of violence is not limited to a region but enlarged to a global view where *all* humans have the potential for violence and thus all forms of violence-support is viewed as partially understandable (lower right corner of Figure 1). Human nature is not judged but is rather described with skepticism as it is believed that the support for violence is an intrinsic and unavoidable part of what it means to be human. They assume that humans are by nature looking out for the interest of themselves or their group and willing to use or support violence for such purposes, which serves to bolster the idea that support for violence is a common potential and innate characteristic within all people. This idea goes back to at least 500 B.C. and Aristotle’s belief that humans were mere “animals” with political ambitions,<sup>40</sup> to the *Realist* school of international relations theory, and more recently to the economic greed-thesis on civil war.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Tin, Hjalte. 2005. *The Spaces of Civil War: From a global typology of civil war to a topography of violence in South Africa 1976, 1986, 1996*. PhD Dissertation: Århus University, 120. <http://www.ninaoghjalte.dk/downloads/forskning/8.pdf> (accessed on November 7, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> With the help from certain notable economists, political scientists have spent considerable time elaborating the greed-related causes of conflict, often explained by tangible economic gains and the belief that humans are rational and predictable calculating machines. The “certain notable economists” referred to here are of course Collier and Hoeffler whose influence on the civil war

Holding a skeptical belief in human nature has clear implications for who are to be conceived of as supporters; they can be any member of the ordinary population who make up society at large, workers, families, and so on. Neighbors turn on neighbors and violent self-interest prevails.

Each of the four types of MGPVs just discussed present deep problems to conflict research. The problem is not that there is anything inherently wrong with any of these geographies of political violence, but rather that we do not know if any of them are correct since most proposed MGPVs have been imaginary. Given that our simplified mental maps are potentially full of errors and mistakes, correcting for these mistakes and drawing more accurate MGPVs based on empirical observation rather than abstract imagination are therefore essential tasks if we are to understand why some people embrace the use of violence.

### **The Dual Meaning of MGPVs**

We have used this chapter to illuminate how scholars and people tend to geographically imagine things we do not know about. There is also another sense of MGPVs that is not imagined, in which case we are talking about the real geographies of people who morally support political violence. When trying to understand political violence in academia and everyday-life MGPVs generally only take the first form of imagining and judging others for their opinions. It is this other side of MGPVs that we so often forget when trying to understand political violence and its supporters. If we simultaneously consider both sides of MGPVs (both our own and others' opinions of political violence) then we realize that it is not enough to simply imagine and judge other people's opinions on political violence. Instead we must empirically and objectively study this topic of violence-support. Before we proceed to such an empirical study of support for political violence, therefore, both the author and the reader of this thesis must leave their previous imaginings and judgments by the door. With an open mind, our first task is to develop some testable hypotheses about people's motivations for supporting violence. The next chapter is therefore devoted to reviewing and developing a single coherent framework that combines the various theories that have been proposed for violence and its support.

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literature has been immense. See: Korf, Benedikt. 2011. "Resources, violence and the telluric geographies of small wars." *Progress in Human Geography* 35(6).



## **Chapter 2 – Why Is There Moral Support for Violence?**

The previous chapter described how MGPVs are commonly imagined and suggested that empirical research is needed to more firmly describe its geographies. Given this lack of empirical research, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are so many theories suggested to explain why people support violence. To move past simply imagining MGPVs, the present chapter reviews the theories that have been proposed to explain why people support violence in order to suggest some hypotheses to be tested in the empirical part of the thesis. The general framework of theories suggested below should only be seen as a rough sketched attempt to explain violence-support through a broad moral lens.

### **Two Pathways towards Support**

To explain why people give moral support to the use of violence, we must first understand how moral decisions are made. Moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt writes that debates over morality have generally been fought between two sides.<sup>42</sup> One view, dating back to ancient Greek philosophers and medieval Christian philosophers, argues that morality involves the cold-headed thinking of reason, rational thought, and logic. The other view, first championed by philosopher Hume and later by psychologist Freud, argues instead that morality is “driven by unconscious motives and feelings.”<sup>43</sup> Due to psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development in the 1960s, the most influential of these theories in modern times has been the former view which sees morality as driven by carefully thought out rational thinking. However, more recently, evidence and theories have mounted to provide a resurgence of the emotional view on morality. The new theory of morality proposed by Haidt sees morality as decided by intuitions: unconscious and immediate reactions decided by emotional ties and feelings.<sup>44</sup>

The framework of violence-support presented here is based on Haidt’s theory of morality. In his framework, the psychological driving force of all behavior originates from a store of

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<sup>42</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment.” *Psychological Review* 108:4, 816.

<sup>43</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment.” *Psychological Review* 108:4, 816.

<sup>44</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment.” *Psychological Review* 108:4.

intuitions which all people have, providing quick responses of the right thing when presented with a dilemma. Neurobiologists have described this emotional source as a "hot system" where a system of amygdala-based memory triggers our moral response quickly and unconsciously.<sup>45</sup> These intuitions are mostly created as we grow up in certain cultures and only sometimes change if our life changes drastically as adults. Since intuitions become stored as part of our ever expanding toolbox, people go through most of their lives with their moral opinions already prepared. Thus, when asked about their opinion, the respondent should already know what response they have had in the past, of who they are and where they stand on the issue. Functioning much like business 'policies', our intuitions and moral judgments become activated depending on whether there is an environment to "activate" them.<sup>46</sup> If the conducive environment and importance of an intuition is particularly strong it becomes clearly dominant over other motivations and is therefore activated automatically and "without cognitive work and decision-making."<sup>47</sup> In other words, most support for violence should be a result of immediate emotional reaction rather than a carefully thought-out reasoning. Given the claimed importance of such unconscious intuitions in everyday moral life, we now proceed to review the theories of violence-support that fit within the concept of such core causal motivations that are unconscious and emotional. There are two main pathways, one based on group-related affinities and ties, and another based on unconscious adherence to certain abstract ideals of justice.

### *Group Motives*

The first major source of human behavior is one where we are motivated by concerns for a group of other people.<sup>48</sup> Support for violence is often mobilized as a way of defending people we care about and are emotionally attached to. There are theories that get exactly at this point: one's dearest are placed inside one's in-group, while out-group members are placed "outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply."<sup>49</sup> Inside the spatial extents of our group affinities is where we concentrate most of our positive emotions and caring;

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<sup>45</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108:4, 823

<sup>46</sup> Staub, Ervin. 1990. "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory, and extreme destruction." *Journal of social issues* 46:1.

<sup>47</sup> Staub, Ervin. 1990. "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory, and extreme destruction." *Journal of social issues* 46:1, 50.

<sup>48</sup> Staub, Ervin. 1990. "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory, and extreme destruction." *Journal of social issues* 46:1, 49.

<sup>49</sup> Maoz, Ifat, Jacob Shamir, Gadi Wolfsfeld, and Shira Dvir. "Psychological correlates of public support for reconciliation: The israel-jordanian case." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 16:1, 38.



the out-group is defined by our lack of emotional care towards them. Thus, one does not need to be a violent psychopath to support violence, rather our norm against hurting other humans is simply switched out for a less stringent version that allows some people to be excluded from our moral universe.<sup>50</sup> The environment which activates such moral exclusion and violence against the out-group is one that generates a perceived credible threat to one's own group. Social psychological research consistently finds that perceived threat to one's group that leads to greater support for violence. Feelings of "collective threat" are associated with higher support for aggressive policies and less support for compromise; a pattern that "has been repeatedly found as strongly associated" by a wide variety of authors and studies from around the world.<sup>51</sup>

A necessary condition or cause for the strong group motives for supporting violence just mentioned is that there has to be some form of affinity or emotional bond with the recipient being supported. Such close group bonds tend to be more frequent in small tight-knit villages, townships, or city-neighborhoods where certain attitudes prevail. Small communities and rural areas disconnected from larger urban and government areas are believed to be more prone to violence-support since separation from the outside world allows subcultures and narrow group identities and opinions to develop and be passed down generations, as well as maintains them through peer-pressure. On the other hand, a certain minimum level of contact with others through tourism or the presence of government is needed to facilitate group identity defense and the belief that one is facing repression.<sup>52</sup> Another aspect of group bonds and loyalty is tied more to culture. It is often believed that communitarian as opposed to individualist cultural views will make one more defending of one's group. This suggestion can be traced back to sociologist Emily Durkheim's theory that "high frequencies of violence are expression of the intensity of passionate 'collective emotions'" as opposed to how individualism causes "emotional indifference"<sup>53</sup> But having such social bonds need not necessarily always lead to support for violent group-defense. Only when one's own group is glorified and seen as better than others do

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<sup>50</sup> Staub, Ervin. 1990. "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory, and extreme destruction." *Journal of social issues* 46:1, 51.

<sup>51</sup> McCauley, Clark, and Ifat Maoz. 2009. "Threat Perceptions and Feelings as Predictors of Jewish-Israeli Support for Compromise with Palestinians." *Journal of Peace Research* 46:4, 534; Fair, C. Christine, and Bryan Sheperd. 2006. "Who Supports Terrorism? Evidence from Fourteen Muslim Countries." *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 29.

<sup>52</sup> Beck, Jan Mansvelt. 1999. "The continuity of Basque political violence: A geographical perspective on the legitimisation of violence." *GeoJournal* 48, 120.

<sup>53</sup> Paraphrased in Eisner, Manuel. 2003. "Long-Term Historical Trends in Violent Crime." *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 30, 54.

they lead to support for violence.<sup>54</sup> A strong group sense of superiority creates a vertical hierarchy of higher and lower moral status, where those at the bottom of the moral hierarchy are seen as less human and can be morally justifiably targeted by violence in the eyes of the beholder.<sup>55</sup> These three conditions of living in a structurally small area, belonging to a collectivist culture, and glorifying one's own group are necessary for the presence of group-related motives of violence.

In the presence of such group bonding conditions, one way that group threat and out-group violence can be triggered is when many identity groups live in the same province and compete over limited resources. Even if not defined as different identity groups, competitions may also occur between populations who live off different means of subsistence, such as conflicts between nomadic and residential populations, and who therefore may develop local conflict of interest between them. If there is no group diversity or physical contact at the local level, group competitions and threats may be facilitated at a distance by comparing one's own group's wealth or access to power with that of other groups elsewhere in the same country. Such group differences within a country may cause feelings of injustice that one's group is at a disadvantage compared to others, and is the essence of relative deprivation theory.<sup>56</sup> In a recent cross-national study of ethnic civil wars using the latest geospatial methods and data, it was found that ethnic groups' sense of relative poverty compared to the wealth of other groups in the country increases the likelihood for their engagement in violence.<sup>57</sup> In other words, proximity between socially different groups, whether they be identity-, subsistence-, power-, or income-based, is likely to produce violent attitudes.

Group defense can also be triggered when people feel threatened by forces outside one's own country. The global process of modernization is one such cause that has displaced and uprooted ways of life and in turn sparked violent attitudes and opposition, this can even be seen

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<sup>54</sup> Leidner, Bernhard, Emanuele Castano, Erica Zaiser, and Roger Giner-Sorolla. 2010. "Ingroup glorification, moral disengagement, and justice in the context of collective violence." *Personality and social psychology bulletin* 36(8). See also Staub, Ervin. 1990. "Moral exclusion, personal goal theory, and extreme destruction." *Journal of social issues* 46:1.

<sup>55</sup> Brandt, Mark J., and Christine Reyna. 2011. "The Chain of Being: A Hierarchy of Morality." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6(5): 438; Motyl, Matt, Joshua Hart, and Tom Pyszczynski. 2010. "When animals attack: The effects of mortality salience, inhumanization of violence, and authoritarianism on support for war." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46: 200.

<sup>56</sup> Grofman, Bernard N., and Edward N. Muller. 1973. "The Strange Case of Relative Gratification and Potential for Political Violence: The V-Curve Hypothesis." *The American Political Science Review* 67:2.

<sup>57</sup> Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann And Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2011. "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison." *American Political Science Review* 105:3.

in places like the United States where white supremacist and anti-abortion movements are resisting what they see as threats to their traditional cultures.<sup>58</sup> Such anti-global feelings are perhaps especially strong when there is increased contact with foreign outsiders. Foreign tourists who go on vacation to primarily local areas can sometimes generate excessive pressures, negative impacts, and perceived hedonism, causing local hatred of foreigners, and even planned political terrorist attacks against those tourists.<sup>59</sup> Over the long-term, initial resistance against tourists may in turn spill over to a more general suspicion of anyone outside the local identity group: tourism may cause “a defensive articulation of...cultural identity...which requires protection from the damaging influences of tourism, in particular, *and outsiders more generally*.”<sup>60</sup> Such anti-global opinions are particularly relevant for reactionary fundamentalist Islamic violence which is widely thought to be a reaction against the imposition of a global modern culture onto local areas.<sup>61</sup>

The most extreme way that group loyalty and defense can be a motivation for supporting violence is when one's group is actually engaged in or experiencing violent conflict. “It is possible to find many stories of about individuals whose political identity was forged during the war.”<sup>62</sup> Societal cleavages intensify and group stereotypes become more common: “Emergency needs in wartime create an atmosphere where complex moral dilemmas are simplified and people are split as good or bad”<sup>63</sup> Violence causes less interaction between groups and causes group isolation, thus narrowing down the circle of moral inclusion, and at the same time “elicits ‘moral obligations’ to the [threatened] group...compelling enough to overcome self-interest.”<sup>64</sup> A particularly noteworthy part of such conflict-induced group motives is that since intuitions are usually made in the past, certain opinions may linger even after the context which created them

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<sup>58</sup> Nice, David C. 1988. "Abortion clinic bombings as political violence." *American journal of political science* 32:1, 183.

<sup>59</sup> Examples vary from tourist attacks in Bali nightclubs, and tourist resorts in Egypt. Some however, argue that rather than being grievance-inducing, tourism can lead to violence mostly for strategic reasons such as ease of targeting and calculated media impact. Any “alleged hedonism of tourist” are rather thought to be merely “exploited rhetorically as a justification for killing them.” Hitchcock, Michael, and I Nyoman Darma Putra. 2007. “Cultural perceptions of tourism and terrorism.” Presented at the American Sociology Association conference panel for Tourism, political economy and culture, April 12, 2007.

[https://www.meccon.nomadit.co.uk/pub/conference\\_epaper\\_download.php5?PaperID=1258](https://www.meccon.nomadit.co.uk/pub/conference_epaper_download.php5?PaperID=1258) (accessed on April 1, 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Routledge, Paul. 2001. “‘Selling the rain’, resisting the sale: Resistant identities and the conflict over tourism in Goa.” *Social and Cultural Geography* 2:2, 229 (emphasis mine).

<sup>61</sup> Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2003. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. USA: University of California Press.

<sup>62</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University, 80.

<sup>63</sup> Punamaki, quoted in Barenbaum, Joshua, Vladislav Ruchkin, and Mary Schaw-Stone. 2004. “The psychosocial aspects of children exposed to war: Practice and policy initiatives.” *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry* 45:1, 46.

<sup>64</sup> Ferguson, Neil, and Ed Cairns. 1996. “Political Violence and Moral Maturity in Northern Ireland.” *Political Psychology* 17(4): 722-723.

have changed or disappeared. Such lag-effects of the causes of violence-support has indeed been noted in some protracted conflicts.<sup>65</sup> In summary, group motives for violence-support require a sense of group identity and are activated when perceived threatened by domestic groups, foreign influences, or violent conflict.

### *Universal Motives*

Previously it was argued that emotions rather than reason are the main ways that we form our moral judgments. Yet, the intention was only to emphasize that most moral judgments of violence are automatic and unconscious rather than a result of a deliberate reasoning process. It often happens that once we have thought of certain principles and ideas through the use of logic and reason, these ideas can solidify and become just like any another intuition and when violated causes us to unconsciously and emotionally resort to preconceived moral judgments. Those reasoned principles that may cause support for violence in this way are those relating to principles of justice, respect, and proper government conduct. Prominent psychologist Abraham Maslow included such universal demands for justice as one of the elements in his theory of hierarchy of needs: the “desire to be recognized as a distinct, unique individual meriting attention and respect.”<sup>66</sup> These desires for justice can be compromised and threatened in a variety of real-world settings, such as when there is a perceived sense of injustice, marginalization, and humiliation.<sup>67</sup> Such violation of universal principles potentially causes people to react violently and wish for violent reprisal.

The first and most obvious violation of justice principles is when the government engages in outright humiliation and violation of its people’s sense of security through large-scale violent incidents and massacres. More atrocious events should lead to more violent attitudes. By comparing one's own violence to previous and much worse wrongdoings by the government one belittles the evil done by one's own violence, and displaces the responsibility onto the

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<sup>65</sup> Evans, Jocelyn, and Jonathan Tonge. 2012. “Menace without a mandate? Is there any sympathy for ‘dissident’ irish republicanism in northern Ireland?” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, 76; Beck, Jan Mansvelt. 1999. “The continuity of Basque political violence: A geographical perspective on the legitimisation of violence.” *GeoJournal* 48, 116.

<sup>66</sup> Davies, James Chowning. 1991. “Maslow and Theory of Political Development: Getting to Fundamentals.” *Political Psychology* 12:3, 399.

<sup>67</sup> Ginges, Jeremy, and Scott Atran. 2011. “Psychology out of the laboratory: The challenge of extremism.” *American Psychologist* 66:6, 510.

government by saying that they created this scenario and forced you to resort to such extreme means.<sup>68</sup>

Another pathway where reason can cause support for violence is related to general levels of discontent with the political system and how it is run. Such discontent becomes pronounced when a collective group of people do not feel they have adequate access, power, or representation in the way the country is run. One cross-national study found that social groups being excluded from or recently downgraded from government power increases their engagement in conflict.<sup>69</sup> In Israel and Palestine, it has been found that when combined with identity markers, feelings of deprivation and exclusion from government power are the main driving factors for anti-government attitudes: “political and social peripherality prepares the long term foundations for political violence.”<sup>70</sup> This type of political deprivation and exclusion the entire political system and its institutions is different from simply feeling discontent with whichever administration happens to be in power. The argument is that when there are fundamental and systematic injustices built into a set of institutions, this leads to alienation from the political system and creates an “attitude of negative affect for the political system... [which] provides obvious motivational incentive for participation in various kinds of antisystem behavior.”<sup>71</sup>

Less intense and systematic instances of injustice may also be seen as violations of our universal principles. Even in otherwise just systems, certain activities of the government may be seen as aiming to exploit specific groups of locals, especially when it comes to economic extraction of resources. Though traditionally these resources have been seen as only self-interested economic motivations for rebellion, such as ‘blood diamonds’, many recent studies have argued that when it comes to difficult to extract resources like oil, they can also constitute grievance-motivations when these resources are extracted but little of the wealth is given back to the local communities.<sup>72</sup> Senses of injustice over government behavior may arise not only over

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<sup>68</sup> Bandura, Albert. 1990. "Mechanisms of moral disengagement in terrorism." In W. Reich (ed.) *Origins of terrorism: Psychologies, theologies, states of mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62:1.

<sup>70</sup> Pedahzur, Ami. 2000. "A Proposed Model for Explaining Political Violence in Israel." *World Affairs* 163:1, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Muller, Edward, N, Thomas O. Jukam, Mitchell A. Seligson. 1982. "Diffuse political support and antisystem political behavior: a comparative analysis." *American Journal of political science* 26:2, 241.

<sup>72</sup> Ogundiya, Ilufeye Sarafa. 2011. "Beyond the 'Geography of Terrorism and Terror of Geography' Thesis:

things the government has done wrong, but rather things it has failed to do. Such perceptions of neglect, whether real or imagined, are often listed as causes of conflict. One frequently cited cause is where the government is blamed for not lifting people out of general poverty or urban slum life. Another one that pops up often in developmental studies is where the government employs certain 'development' projects like building hydroelectric dams for electricity, but where the government fails to prevent or mitigate many of its undesired side-effects such as displacing entire communities or pollution.<sup>73</sup> Another cause of neglect could be in areas heavily affected by natural disasters, where local grievances may develop blaming the government for a lack of preparedness, rescue, or rebuilding efforts, especially in poor countries and areas where the government has less capacity to respond.<sup>74</sup> All in all, universal motives for supporting violence include government massacres, unjust institutions, neglect, and exploitation.

### **Strategic Factors as Necessary Enablers of Support**

Up until now we have considered how contextual motives involving group defense and opposition to injustice may lead people to support violence. Simply because one has the direct motivations to do so does not necessarily mean that one will. To claim so would be to overlook the important role of self-restraint and strategic thinking. This type of thinking is part of what many economists and political scientists have focused on under the guise of the feasibility thesis.<sup>75</sup> Feasibility traditionally refers to the part of conflicts where those who wish (attitude) to rebel have to consider how real-life factors may impact or limit whether actually going through with rebellion (action) would be successful or how it may even be counter-productive.

Strategizing is related to a complex "cool system" which develops later on in childhood and using different parts of the brain "can block the impulses of the hot system".<sup>76</sup> Although many

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Corruption and the Development Tragedy in the Niger Delta Region." *Journal of Developing Societies* 27:1; Aspinnal, Edward. 2007. "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51:6. Ross, Michael L. 2008. "Blood Barrels: Why Oil Wealth Fuels Conflict." *Foreign Affairs* 87:3.

<sup>73</sup> See for instance, International Rivers. 2013. "Ethiopia's Gibe 3 Dam: Sowing Hunger and Conflict." Web Report. <http://www.stopgibe3.org/pdf/Ethiopias%20Gibe%203%20Dam%20-%20Sowing%20Hunger%20and%20Conflict.pdf> (accessed on May 29, 2013); Bezhan, Frud. 2013. "Insecurity Springs From Afghan Dam Projects." Radio Free Europe. <http://www.rferl.org/content/afghan-dam-projects/24936270.html> (accessed on May 29, 2013).

<sup>74</sup> Nel, Philip, and Marjolein Righarts. 2008. "Natural Disasters and the Risk of Violent Civil Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 52:1.

<sup>75</sup> Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler and Dominic Rohner. 2009. "Beyond greed and grievance: feasibility and civil war." *Oxford Economic Papers* 61:1.

<sup>76</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108:4, 823.

have criticized those focusing solely on the feasibility thesis, it is vital to that we do not rule it out altogether and instead use a pluralistic outlook which considers how various competing theories may be compatible with each other.<sup>77</sup> While the previous group- and universal-centered motivations for violence are considered to be two independent pathways towards support, the strategic factors mentioned in the feasibility thesis function by blocking those violent impulses. For people to form violent attitudes it is therefore required and necessary that these strategic factors be absent. While some might point out that feasibility has only been argued to enable *behaviors* rather than attitudes, it is shown below why strategic thinking might also impact which opinions we form.

The most frequently mentioned strategic cause to enable support for violence is whether success of rebellion is probable. System justification has found that people generally don't want to wish for a result that they know they can't have or achieve.<sup>78</sup> To do so might cause a constant state of unrest and dissatisfaction that would be psychologically untenable in the long run. A strategic consideration of the consequences of rebellion might also cause one to disapprove of violence which one thinks will be met with a backlash and negative consequences for oneself or one's community.<sup>79</sup> Economists and military strategists mention calculations of the perceived probability that the violence will bring about one's desired societal goals, and juxtaposing this with the potential punishment in the case of failure.<sup>80</sup> Probability of success may require a strong insurgent force. Insurgents who have access to weaponry and can tap into large populations with a similar group identity have much social and military resources at their disposal, especially if they are somewhat geographically concentrated and thus easy to mobilize.<sup>81</sup> Alternatively, the probability of success might be deemed high enough as long as the government is militarily weak and relatively easy to defeat. Environmental factors such as rough terrain may further alter the balance of power to the advantage of the insurgents by providing hiding and protection. No

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<sup>77</sup> As argued for instance by Rhea, Randolph Wallace. 2011. "Scientific inquiry and the causes of civil war : the feasibility thesis and beyond." Master thesis, Centre for Peace Studies, University of Tromsø.

<sup>78</sup> Jost, John T., Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Brian A. Nosek. 2004. "A Decade of System Justification Theory: Accumulated Evidence of Conscious and Unconscious Bolstering of the Status Quo." *Political Psychology* 25:6.

<sup>79</sup> Shapiro, Jacob N., and C. Christine Fair. 2009. "Understanding Support for Islamist Militancy in Pakistan." *International Security* 34:3, 83-84.

<sup>80</sup> Krueger, Alan B., and Jitka Maleckova. 2003. "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" Working Paper. <http://econ.tau.ac.il/papers/faculty/jep.pdf>. Berman, Eli, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter. 2008. "Can hearts and minds be bought? The economics of counterinsurgency in Iraq." NBER Working Paper No. 14606 (revised April 2011), 6.

<sup>81</sup> Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62:1.

matter what the real probability of success is, however, there will always be some form of interpretation and subjective perception of these realities. Research has shown that feelings of empowerment and beliefs in the efficiency of violence can be very influential predictors of violent attitudes.<sup>82</sup>

Absence of systematic and overwhelming government repression is another strategic requirement to support violence. Although repression and injustice are generally believed to lead to rebellion, many quantitative studies of civil wars have found that this only holds true if they are kept at moderate levels.<sup>83</sup> This is because high levels of policing and systematic persecution can minimize and prevent any attempt at opposition. Just-war theorist Michael Walzer has written that when faced with an overwhelming state, systematic “coercion and killing of civilians is likely to break the solidarity of the resistance, spreading terror through the country and eventually producing a dulled acquiescence.”<sup>84</sup> When there is no way to react against systematic and omnipresent violence, “its effect is ‘to increase compliance with authority.’”<sup>85</sup> This is especially so among individuals who, in the aftermath of having been directly victimized by violent repression, develop “lower preferences for active fighting.”<sup>86</sup>

Finally, it may be necessary for violence-support that one has a non-stable lifestyle with nothing to lose. It is commonly suggested that early on in life when dependencies are few and opportunities many one is more liberal and supportive of violence, but that as one matures and gets a more established routine in life one becomes more conservative to the status quo and avoid risky behavior and opinion. Young age has indeed been commonly found as a factor impacting support for various forms of violence, including North America, Europe and South America, Pakistan, the Arab and Israeli world, and for Muslims of many different cultural backgrounds.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Grofman, 535. Fording, Richard C. 1997. "The conditional effect of violence as a political tactic: Mass insurgency, welfare generosity, and electoral context in the American states." *American journal of political science* 41:1.

<sup>83</sup> Freytag, Andreas, Daniel Meierrieks, Angela Münch, and Friedrich Schneider. 2010. "Patterns of Force: System Strength, Terrorism and Civil War." *Economics of Security Working Paper* 28. [http://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw\\_01.c.354171.de/diw\\_econsec0028.pdf](http://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.354171.de/diw_econsec0028.pdf) (accessed on May 13, 2013).

<sup>84</sup> Walzer, Michael. 1984. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. USA: Penguin Books, 334.

<sup>85</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University, 143. Consider for instance how, when Israel upped their level of military presence and repression in the Palestinian territories, the Palestinian response was to detract support for violence and deem rebellion as “strategically not sensible.” Kelly, Tobias. 2008. “The attractions of accountancy: Living an ordinary life during the second Palestinian intifada.” *Ethnography* 9:3, 367.

<sup>86</sup> Barenbaum, Joshua, Vladislav Ruchkin, and Mary Schaw-Stone. 2004. “The psychosocial aspects of children exposed to war: Practice and policy initiatives.” *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry* 45:1, 305.

<sup>87</sup> Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2012. “Fueling the Fire: Violent Rhetoric, Trait Aggression, and Support for Political Violence.” *Working Paper* 15. [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20\\_fueling\\_the\\_fire.pdf](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20_fueling_the_fire.pdf) (29 October 2012); Albaghal, Tarek, and Allan McCutcheon. 2010. “Latent support for sub-national military groups in Pakistan”. *Papers Presented at the 64th Annual*



Getting older will not, however, automatically ensure a more stable lifestyle, and depends on other factors such as whether one gets a stable job, meets a partner, and the potential of having children. Similarly, the benefits which come with receiving an education may make people more sober-minded and conservative about changing the status quo. Education's sobering effects on violence-support should, however, depend on the context because the benefits of education are not the same everywhere. In studies that look at countries where universities have been overcrowded and the educated receive few job opportunities, such as parts of Europe or the Arab world, it is rather the educated who are *more* supportive of radical means and violence.<sup>88</sup>

Without controlling for the benefits that education is supposed to bring, it is perhaps understandable that many studies have not found any violence-inducing effects from education.<sup>89</sup> In sum, the various strategic factor theories suggest that the perceived probability of successful rebellion, absence of systematic persecution, and a lifestyle with nothing to lose will be likely to lead to or at least enable violence-support.

Now that we have described the various theories and hypotheses of violence-support we can proceed to devise a method to measure these as well as our dependent variable, and lay out a path to analyze their relationships.

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*Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), May 13-16, 2010, Chicago, Illinois.* <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/proceedings/y2010/Files/400156.pdf> (accessed on September 22, 2011); Maoz, Ifat, Jacob Shamir, Gadi Wolfsfeld, and Shira Dvir. "Psychological correlates of public support for reconciliation: The Israel-Jordanian case." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 16:1, 34.

<sup>88</sup> Hewitt, Christopher. 1990. "Terrorism and public opinion: A five country comparison." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2:2; Center for Strategic Studies. 2005 (February). "Revisiting the Arab Street: Research from Within." *University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan*. <http://www.jcss.org/SubDefault.aspx?PageId=37&PollId=140&PollType=3> (accessed on September 19, 2011), 74.

<sup>89</sup> Wike, Richard, and Nilanthi Samaranayake. 2006. "Where terrorism finds support in the Muslim world." *Pew Global Attitudes Project*. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/26/where-terrorism-finds-support-in-the-muslim-world> (accessed on September 21, 2011); Haddad, Simon and Hilal Khashan. 2002. "Islam and Terrorism: Lebanese Muslim Views on September 11." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.



## **Chapter 3 – A Method to Research Conflicts and Their Moral Geographies**

Up to now we have introduced the problematic lack of research on MGPVs, and reviewed and presented a framework of theories that might explain such moral geographies of support. With this out of the way, we can go ahead and describe the research strategy and case focus chosen to test the geographies and causes presented in the previous chapters. This includes a look at the methods and parameters used, operationalization of variables, and chosen data sources. The first task must be to clearly conceptualize the concept of violence-support we are trying to explain, and to describe how it is measured.

### **Defining and Measuring Support for Violence**

The study of civilian populations who support the use of violence is different from the study of militant groups. Clearly, both actors support the use of violence, but only the latter end up engaging in it. The approach argued here is that we must limit our focus to only those that support violence without actually engaging in it. In other words, we are talking about a difference in degree. While this means that many of the same causes that lead to actual violence should also lead to support, there are at least a few crucial points where the two actors differ. First, supporting violence is much less risky than engaging in it, and it should therefore be much more widespread, and to the degree that the two are caused by the same causes, the occurrence of support should be triggered at a much lower level of intensity than actual engagement. Second, since actual engagement in violence is a physical phenomenon that consists of various actions and interactions with other physical objects and people over time, it should require additional causes than what only support requires. For instance, violence should require certain elements of contact with other violence-supporters, accessibility to weaponry, sufficient organizing and planning skills, and conditions of hiding from government surveillance and intervention to enable successful group formation and attack execution. Oppositely, none of these should be relevant in the case of support. Violence is only a small subset of the much wider concept of support, and as such the causes of support should be fewer and less stringent.

While the previous points have emphasized support as being one step short of actual violence, there is still the remaining question of whether support is an attitude or an action. Those who have tried to quantify levels of support have often chosen between conceiving of

support as attitude, in terms of inner beliefs and preference, or support as action, in terms of providing rebels with information, food, or other assistance. This divide is not surprising, since literatures on other types of political support (e.g. support for political parties) have ended up with exactly the same two conceptualizations. Political scientists studying legitimacy have recognized that concepts like ‘support’ are abstract and cannot be measured directly. Gilley therefore noted that when measuring such intangible concepts two types of measurement variables may be sought: either variables that causally *give rise to* the concept, like beliefs, opinions, and preferences, or those that effectually *arise from* the concept, like certain supportive behaviors and voting patterns.<sup>90</sup> Legal and human rights scholars have taken a similar two-pronged approach in identifying people’s preferences for restoring justice after violence. Elster, for instance, argued that, first and similar to attitudinal support, justice could be dictated by “reason;” that is, by people’s loyalties to certain abstract values and ideals. Second and similar to behavioral support, he identified that people’s conceptions of justice could be observed by the “downstream consequences” of such conceptions in terms of how their inner values may give rise to certain behaviors and actions.<sup>91</sup>

These two concepts of attitude and action that are found across several literatures can be applied to the study of violence-support. Stathis N. Kalyvas who is famous for his book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* indeed acknowledged this dilemma of which of the two ways to ‘measure’ support for violence. After some deliberation he decided that, for practical reasons, support is best measured as actual observable behavior, such as participating in the logistical or informational activities of armed groups. The problem with the attitudinal perspective, he argues, is that they are unobservable and have to be indirectly inferred from behavior, or have to be interpreted with reference to “the people” who supposedly uniformly perceive a legitimacy crisis.<sup>92</sup> In his work, he has advanced the notion of behavioral support as shifting and ever-changing. One problem with his work, however, is that rather than suspecting that attitudes and behaviors may be different forms of support independent of each other, he assumed, but did not explore, that people’s core attitudinal sympathies remain unaltered and hidden under the

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<sup>90</sup> In the philosophy of science and methodology, abstract concepts are referred to as latent, causal variables as constitutive, and effectual variables as substitutive. Gilley, Bruce. 2006. "The meaning and measure of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries." *European Journal of Political Research* 45(3):499-525., page 504.

<sup>91</sup> Elster, Jon. 2004. *Closing the books: Transitional justice in historical perspective*. USA: Cambridge University Press., page 80

<sup>92</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University., page 92-93.

surface.<sup>93</sup> The present study takes on the problem of attitudes that Kalyvas left out/circumvented, and challenges his rather static portrayal of attitudes. As such, this study is not concerned with the downstream consequences and observed behaviors of violence-support as conceived by Kalyvas, but rather everything that precedes it: the abstract psychological justifications for support, as well as the “upstream [real-world] causes”<sup>94</sup> on which such abstract reasoning is based.

We have so far covered who is giving the support and what the given support actually is, but in order to give something there also has to be a third element of someone or something that is being given to. Who or what is the support meant for? In the simplest description as it is given in the title of this thesis we are looking at support for violence. But let us explore this ‘violence’ for a second. There are various ways that support can be given to violence. Some survey research have asked general hypothetical questions about the permissibility of political violence, while other research have asked about real contextual high-profile incidents of violence. In many other instances, support for violence can be given indirectly through supporting and defending the actor that is responsible for the violence.<sup>95</sup> With such a focus on actors, one can ask about support for aggregate blocs and movements in a conflict, i.e. insurgents or the government, or about support for one of the various specific groups that make up each movement.<sup>96</sup> To further complicate matters, even with a focus on a specific group, it is possible to ask about support for its institutional structure or only for the current top leadership.<sup>97</sup> Support can also be given to the more abstract and metaphysical aspects of an organization; their intensions, political goals, ideology, or the means employed. There are therefore many aspects of violence-support to focus on and fruitful avenues for research. For the purpose of this study, it is desired to focus on only hypothetical support for violence since this may provide the best reflection of conscious moral thinking on the part of the respondent. With violence-support conceptually defined for the purpose of this thesis as 1) more widespread and easier caused than actual violence-engagement, 2) as an attitude rather than action, and 3) as related to hypothetical rather than contextual use of

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<sup>93</sup> Although giving greater attention to attitudes, Elster, too, noted this potential disconnect between attitude and behavior: sometimes “conceptions of justice matter little for actual behavior. They may be mere ‘Sunday beliefs.’” Ibid., page 81

<sup>94</sup> Elster, Jon. 2004. *Closing the books: Transitional justice in historical perspective*. USA: Cambridge University Press., page 80

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., page 1-2.

<sup>96</sup> Blair, Graeme, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2011. “Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan.” Working Paper., page 15

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., page 501

violence, we may next proceed to outline the specific data source, case focus, and variable used to represent this concept of support.

### **Selecting the Case Focus and Dependent Variable**

Ideally, a study of this sort would attempt to find the causes that lead to violence-support in several types of conflict from various areas of the world, and/or to identify the unique differences between the different types. However, there is nothing inherently wrong with focusing on a limited set of cases, something that one is often forced to do due to data limitations. By having an in-depth focus on one region or type of violence one allows other researchers to compare cross-case differences and identify whether violence-support has different causes in different scenarios. For the purpose of this study, the data source used to measure support for violence came from the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project.<sup>98</sup> Pew Global annually conducts large-scale, publically available, cross-national surveys of political and public opinion of various sorts. Following the 9/11 attacks it has also included items that ask about such issues as terrorism, the use of violence, and opinion about violent groups, and due to the nature of the attacks most of these questions have only been asked of Muslim respondents in countries with significant Muslim populations. The one hypothetical question that was deemed most appropriate as a dependent variable for this thesis was specifically asking about religiously (Islamic) related violence:

*Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?*

To simplify the analysis, the variable containing the respondent answers to this question was dichotomized (made into a yes/no format) by counting the "often" and "sometimes" answers as positive support for violence, whereas the "rarely" and "never" answers were counted as non-support. Given the nature of the question, positive responses on the dependent variable should tap into a strong form of violence-support (since civilians are generally deemed less justifiable

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<sup>98</sup> For reasons mentioned below, it was only the 2007 dataset that was used. Pew Research Global Attitudes Project. 2007. "Spring 2007 Survey Data." *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewglobal.org/category/datasets/> (accessed on December 5, 2012).

targets) among Muslims who at the very least feel some form of religious affinity with Islam (since the reason given is to defend Islam).

Based on this data source and dependent variable, the case focus of this thesis is narrowed down to the type of conflict involving Islamic fundamentalist movements. Defining Islamic fundamentalism is no easy task, but is generally conceived of as a movement that desires to go back to the fundamentals of religion, based on more literal interpretations of religious texts as well as desiring a greater role for Islam in politics and society.<sup>99</sup> Islamic fundamentalism is not unique, however, as it is generally thought to be part of a global cross-faith resurgence of various religious fundamentalist movements responding to modern secularism.<sup>100</sup> Violence in the context of Islamic fundamentalism, like in many other fundamentalisms, have been caused by the alignment of a number of historical circumstances in which the achievement of its religious goals are simultaneously perceived close to fulfillment and under threat. Beginning with the growing popular discontents with the secular authoritarian regimes that followed colonial independence, hopes and desires for a religious alternative to government and a “new Islamic century” were ignited in 1979 with the Iranian Islamic Revolution and subsequent exports of violent means to insert Islam into politics.<sup>101</sup> Followed by a series of threats to the Islamic identity, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, fundamentalist movements became even more cohesive and saw themselves under attack by both outside and inside forces, giving rise to what is today seen as a general fundamentalist embrace of conspiracy theories.<sup>102</sup> However, fundamentalist tendencies come in various shades, and given the perceived threats against and strong cohesiveness of Islamic identity, one does not have to be a full-on fundamentalist to relate to the values and root values of one’s religion or to support the use of violent means when those aspects are being threatened. Because of these failures of secular alternatives and the perceived threats to religion in the Islamic world, violence-support should not be seen as a reflection of extreme fundamentalism but rather as a reflection of ordinary people responding to a perceived threat to their identity.

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<sup>99</sup> Taylor, M., and J. Horgan. “The Psychological and Behavioural Bases of Islamic Fundamentalism.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13:4, 39

<sup>100</sup> Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2003. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. USA: University of California Press.

<sup>101</sup> Rapoport, David C. 2002. “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism.” *Anthropoetics* 8:1, 62.

<sup>102</sup> Taylor, M., and J. Horgan. “The Psychological and Behavioural Bases of Islamic Fundamentalism.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13:4, 66.

Islam, of course, is no singular phenomenon. There are estimated to be over 1 billion Muslims in the world, following different practices, and living in a diverse range of regions and cultures.<sup>103</sup> An advantage of using the Pew survey is that the geographical coverage of our dependent variable is reflective of the diverse expressions of Islam, tapping the opinions of individuals from the following regions and countries: West Africa (Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria), to East Africa (Ethiopia, Tanzania), the Palestine Region (Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon), the Greater Middle East (Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Kuwait), South Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh), and South-East Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia). Instead of describing in detail the history of each country, Figure 2 provides a map and case-overview of each country. From the figure, we can see that the data covers a wide variety of country-contexts, covering such aspects as: Muslim-minority and -majority populations, democratic and authoritarian governments, countries that have experienced conflict and those that have not, countries whose conflicts have mainly been rooted in Islamic identities and those without any such Islamic conflicts (e.g. secular, left-wing, and separatist). We are therefore taking an approach to explaining violence-support in the Islamic world that acknowledges the diversity of the Islam as a religion and as a cultural influence across contexts.

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<sup>103</sup> Esposito, John L. 2008. *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. USA: Gallup Press.



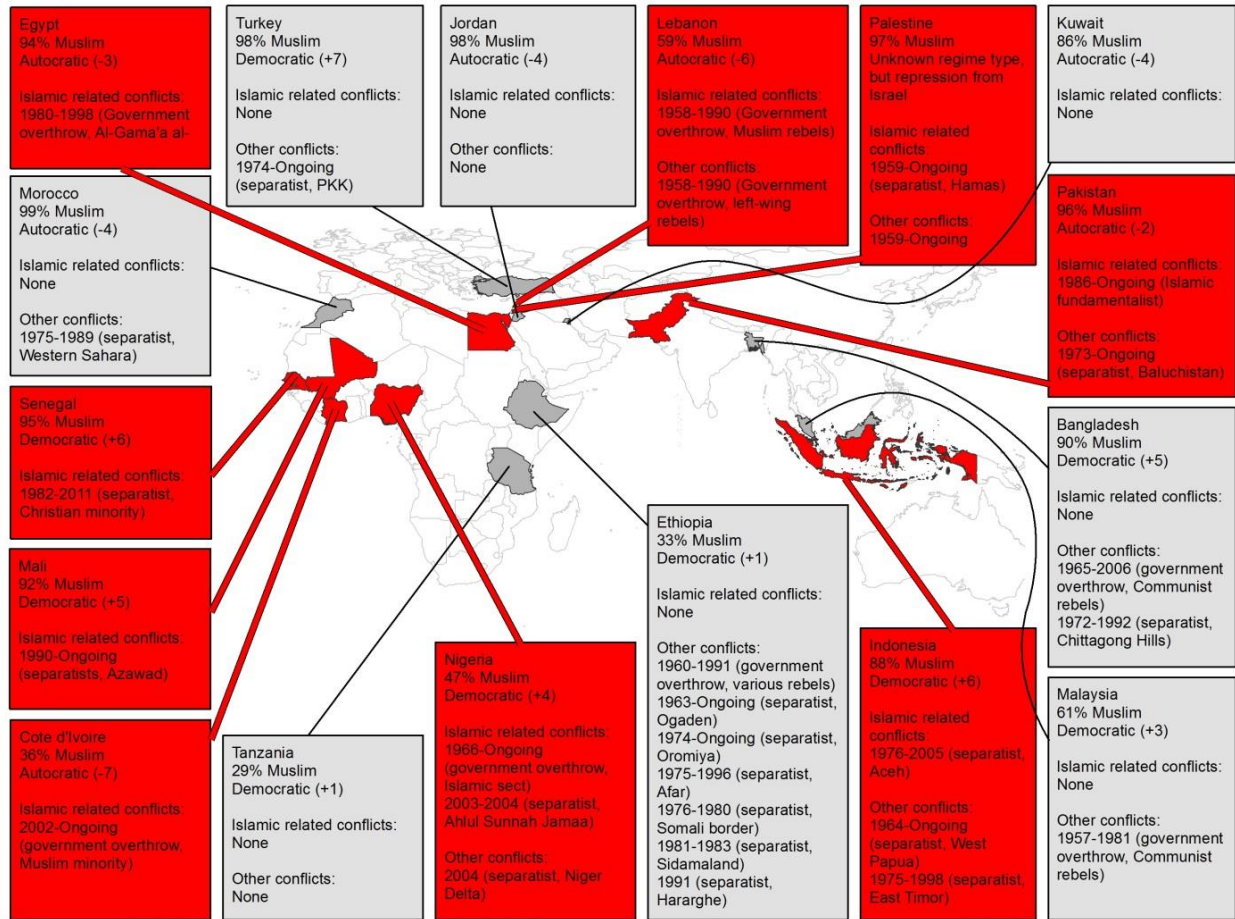


Figure 2. Map of Case-Study Area and Contextual Information.

Note: Those countries that have experienced Islamic related domestic conflicts are highlighted in red. Muslim population data: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_by\\_country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country) (accessed on May 25, 2013). Type of government data: Vreeland's modified version of the Polity IV dataset. Vreeland, James Raymond. 2008. "The Effect of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52 (3). Conflict data: Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2012. "UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia." Uppsala University. [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database) (accessed on May 25, 2013).

In order to analyze the wide range of countries shown in Figure 2, a temporal focus for the data had to be set to the year 2007, as that was the only year where so many countries were asked about their support for violence. The average sample size for each country was 720 respondents with a standard deviation of +/- 380 respondents, meaning that most countries have a sufficient sample size. The sample sizes of all countries were therefore deemed high enough and similar enough that they would not have to be excluded from the dataset for fear of unequal or small-sample bias.<sup>104</sup> Due to the wide range of countries with large samples the total dataset consisted of roughly 12,400 individual respondents (cases/rows). To take advantage of this

<sup>104</sup> The most doubtful country that was included in the dataset was Cote d'Ivoire with its meager 92 respondents; however, 92 is still larger than the minimum sample size of 30 generally recommended for statistical analysis.

diverse range of contexts of the individuals in our dataset, both the individuals and their contexts had to be assigned to some common geographic unit of analysis. One of the strengths of the Pew survey data was that it contained multiple variables identifying not only the country but also the local province and sometimes even the city to which each individual belonged. The year 2007 focused on in this thesis was the one that was most consistent in reporting these geographic identifiers. A process was then undergone to manually match the geographic names in the Pew data<sup>105</sup> to the geographic names in the Global Administrative Areas (GADM) spatial database of province boundaries.<sup>106</sup> Using the ESRI ArcMap software (v.10.0, ArcInfo License, Build 2414) as my choice of GIS throughout the thesis, the manual geographic name-matching made it possible to successfully geo-locate and be able to spatially pinpoint each individual in space. In the end, all individuals were successfully geo-located to their respective province, with only a few insignificant exceptions.<sup>107</sup>

### **Building a Dataset of Explanatory Causes**

With the dependent variable, case-focus, and geographic reference unit assigned, it was time to construct the dataset of explanatory variables that would be used to shed light on how and why people support violence. In creating these explanatory data, the general idea was to create one large dataset of variables, spanning three geographic levels of analysis (Figure 3).<sup>108</sup> First, gathering data at the lowest level of individual respondents was relatively straightforward; many explanatory variables could be taken directly from the respondents' answers to questions

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<sup>105</sup> The Pew variable containing the desired geographic identifier was sometimes different for each country. Q130 was used for Lebanon, Egypt, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, and Kuwait; and Q137 was used for Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Morocco. For Nigeria and Pakistan the province-level identifiers were at too high of a level of aggregation, making their province-sizes incomparable with those of the other countries. Instead, the identifier for respondent *city* for those countries was assigned geographic coordinates based on various online gazetteer sites, and once geo-located to a point could be aggregated to a lower provincial level in the GADM data that was more comparable to the province sizes for the other countries.

<sup>106</sup> Hijmans, Robert (current developer). 2012. "GADM database of Global Administrative Areas, v.2." Global Administrative Areas. <http://www.gadm.org/version2> (accessed on August 16, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> For the Pew geographic identifiers for which no logically equivalent city or GADM province could be found, the respective individuals had to be excluded from the data, affecting 144 individuals (only about 1 percent of the total sample size). These were all from Pakistan, across 12 locations: Trinda Sawan Khan, Tang Haider Zai, Sigh, Shairay Banda, Sakho Ke, Perozpur, Pattal Kot Addu Ghr Mustaqil, Naroumal Hatti, Jamotwala, Chhajera, Chak 007/Jb Panjwar Kohala, and Ahmad Galai. Given the few individuals affected, it is unlikely that this exclusion had any large effects on the results.

<sup>108</sup> The individual-level dataset was kept in its original SPSS '.sav' format. The subnational and national contextual datasets were initially created using Microsoft Excel 2010, and later combined with the individual SPSS data using 'Data – Merge Files – Add Variables' as the SPSS context menu choice, with the 'key' option set to the geographic reference unit variable to enable linking each province and country to the correct individuals. For the specific SPSS statistical software version and computer operating system used, see the section entitled "Modes of Analysis" later in this chapter.

from the same survey data as the dependent variable.<sup>109</sup> Second, at the next level up the purpose was to gather variables at the local provincial level so that a particular province's value could be given to all individuals who were connected to that province. These province-level variables were either created by overlaying them with pre-existing spatial data, by matching non-spatial datasets containing province-level names to their respective spatial province, or by manually coding province variables from scratch based on online information. Third, at the highest third level the aim was to harvest variables related to each national country that could be assigned the same value for all individuals within that country. Because country-level datasets are the most common of data sources it was possible to find many secondary datasets whose country names could be easily matched with the spatial country files. Within this data-framework, the specific variables, data, and methods used to operationalize the causal theories discussed in chapter 2 are described in the next section.

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<sup>109</sup> Pew Research Global Attitudes Project. 2007. "Spring 2007 Survey Data." *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewglobal.org/category/datasets/> (accessed on December 5, 2012).

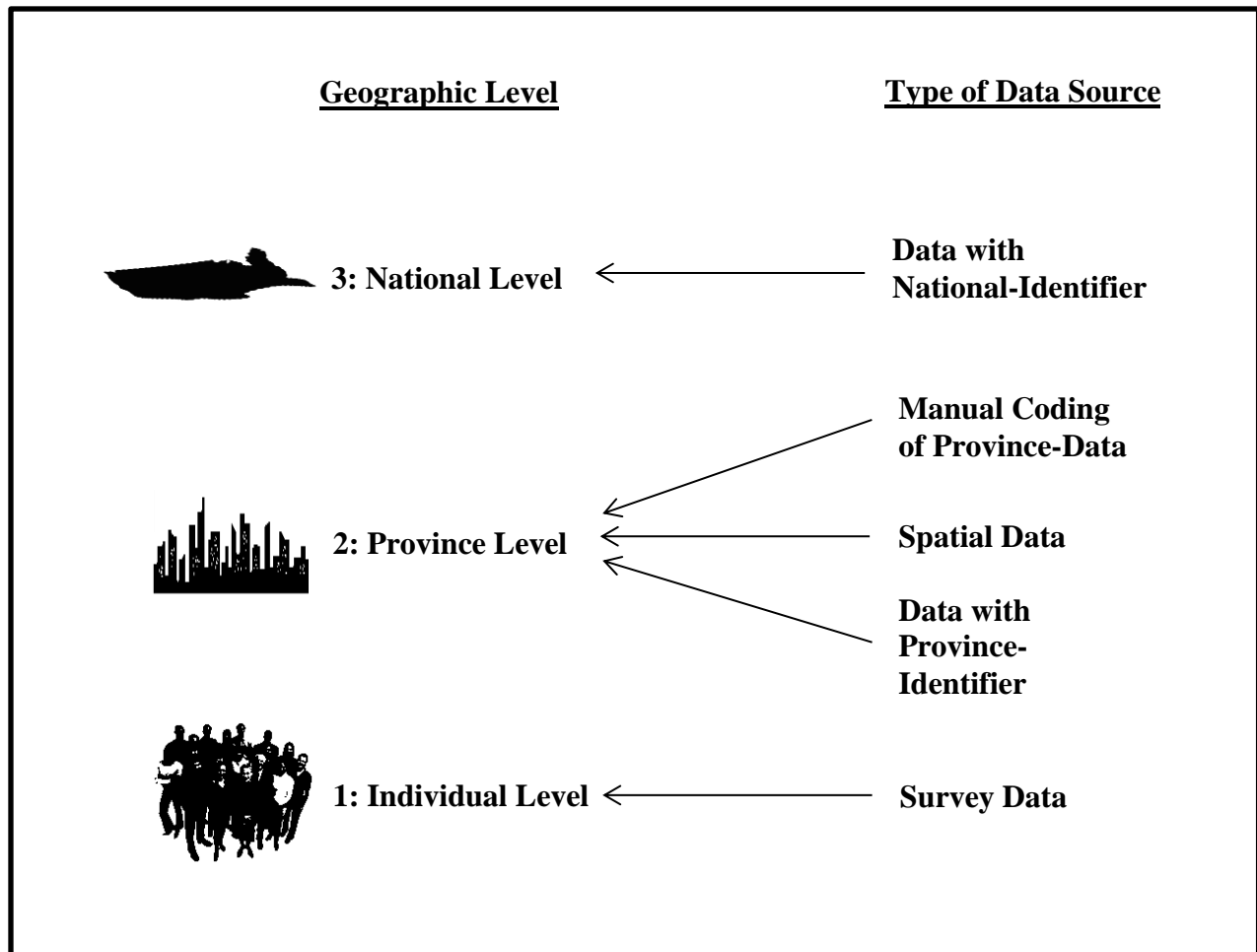


Figure 3. Dataset Structure and Types of Data Sources Used.

### The Explanatory Variables

*Group Motives.* With a focus on group motives, we start by measuring various aspects of the necessary causal construct of strong affinity with a group. To test for small and tight-knit communities, I look at a province's logged population per square kilometer aggregated and calculated from CIESIN's gridded population data,<sup>110</sup> the length of roads and railroads per province square meter based on Natural Earth's online data,<sup>111</sup> the percentage of province area covered by rough terrain, as well as by urban space, both taken from the Anthropogenic Biomes

<sup>110</sup> Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University; and Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT). 2005. Gridded Population of the World Version 3 (GPWv3): Population Grids. Palisades, NY: Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), Columbia University. <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/gpw> (accessed on October 19, 2012).  
<sup>111</sup> Natural Earth. "Roads/Railroads." Natural Earth, Downloads, 10m Cultural Vectors. <http://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/> (accessed on September 2, 2012).

data.<sup>112</sup> To measure the cultural adherence to group defense I use the inverted version of Hofstede's individualism dimension of a country's cultural tendencies.<sup>113</sup> For group glorification I will look at a survey item asking whether one's own cultural group is viewed as 'superior' to others, as well as one asking whether one can trust most members of society.<sup>114</sup>

Next, we measure threat perceptions and competition between domestic population groups. One measure looked at the logged number of politicized groups in each province by using the georeferenced GeoEPR dataset. Another used the variable of each group's size as a share of national population from the same data and calculated the standard deviation, i.e. diversity, of these group sizes at the province level.<sup>115</sup> A third measure aggregated the Anthropogenic Biomes grid data to obtain proportions of province area used for various forms of subsistence, and based on this calculate the inversed standard deviation, i.e. level of equal presence, between various forms of residential lifestyle (rangeland, foresting, villages, urban, and so on). A similar fourth measure based on the same data calculated level of equal presence between residential landuse and nomadic landuse.<sup>116</sup> A fifth measure calculated the standard deviation of the grid-cell GDP data for each province, and thus captured the local degree of income inequality where the really poor and the really rich live close together.<sup>117</sup> Similar measures were constructed at the individual level, where a four-point subjective description of the respondent's level of income was compared with the same four-point assessment of the country's economic situation.<sup>118</sup> This allowed the construction of a measure indicating the degree to which a respondent felt he or she had a worse income than the national economic situation,

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<sup>112</sup> Ellis, E.C., and N. Ramankutty. 2008. "Anthropogenic Biomes of the World, Version 1." Palisades, NY: NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC). <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/anthromes-anthropogenic-biomes-world-v1> (accessed on August 2, 2012).

<sup>113</sup> The Hofstede Centre. 2012. "The Hofstede Cultural Dimensions." National Culture, Countries. <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html> (accessed on September 3, 2012).

<sup>114</sup> Group glorification: Q24d. "Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree with it. Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others." People distrust: Q1-99d. "Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree with the following statement. Most people in this society are trustworthy."

<sup>115</sup> Wucherpfennig, J., N. B. Weidmann, L. Girardin, L.-E. Cederman, and A. Wimmer. 2011. "Politically relevant ethnic groups across space and time: Introducing the GeoEPR dataset." Conflict Management and Peace Science, Forthcoming.

<sup>116</sup> Ellis, E.C., and N. Ramankutty. 2008. "Anthropogenic Biomes of the World, Version 1." Palisades, NY: NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC). <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/anthromes-anthropogenic-biomes-world-v1> (accessed on August 2, 2012).

<sup>117</sup> World Bank. 2012. "The World's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Dataset." <http://www.gripweb.org/gripweb/?q=countries-risk-information/datasets/worlds-gross-domestic-product-gdp-dataset> (accessed on January 5, 2013).

<sup>118</sup> Personal income: Q6a. "As I read each of the following, please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this aspect of your life--your household income." National income: Q11. "Now thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in our country-- is it very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad?"

thus capturing the concept of relative deprivation. Data from Bigano et. al. was used to measure province-levels intake of domestic tourism and thus possible tension between different social groups.<sup>119</sup>

To measure the causal construct of anti-global motivations for violence we can use of the survey items asking precisely about whether the respondent thinks his or her culture is under threat. Another similar survey item measures respondents' opinion on whether they think their culture needs to be protected specifically against foreign influence.<sup>120</sup> Other measures include a proxy for anti-global attitudes by looking at terrorism between 1989 and 2007 aimed at global, Western, or international symbols (diplomatic, NGO's, etc); one for the logged count of events, and another for the log of total people wounded and killed. These data were taken from the Global Terrorism Dataset and geo-located using an automated Python script.<sup>121</sup> Finally, to capture the potential for local-global contact and tension data on international tourism for each province was taken from the same tourism data referred to above.<sup>122</sup>

To measure group cohesion resulting from conflict threats, I used the UCDP Battledeaths Dataset and looked at the logged numbers of conflict deaths as well as armed groups, both at the national and the province level.<sup>123</sup> These numbers were summed from the year 1989 to the year of the survey, 2007, and additional measures divided these numbers into conflicts happening only in the past 3 years, and those happening in the farther past. A dummy variable was also used to indicate any conflict of any intensity or time-period.

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<sup>119</sup> Bigano, Andrea, Jacqueline M. Hamilton, Maren Lau, Richard S.J. Tol and Yuan Zhou. 2005. "A Global Database of Domestic and International Tourist Numbers at National and Subnational Level." Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei Working Paper. <http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/129/1/A%20Global%20Database%20of%20Domestic%20and.pdf> (accessed on December 6, 2012). For a discussion of the applicability of this tourism data and details on how it was geo-located, see the Appendix.

<sup>120</sup> Culture threat: Q20. "Which of these comes closer to your view? Our traditional way of life is getting lost, OR our traditional way of life remains strong." Foreign influence: Q24e. "Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree with it. Our way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence."

<sup>121</sup> National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). 2012. "Global Terrorism Database." <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd> (accessed on July 22, 2012). For details of how these attacks were selected and geo-located, see Bahgat, Karim, and Richard M. Medina. 2013. "An Overview of Geographical Perspectives and Approaches in Terrorism Research." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7:1.

<sup>122</sup> Bigano, Andrea, Jacqueline M. Hamilton, Maren Lau, Richard S.J. Tol and Yuan Zhou. 2005. "A Global Database of Domestic and International Tourist Numbers at National and Subnational Level." Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei Working Paper. <http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/129/1/A%20Global%20Database%20of%20Domestic%20and.pdf> (accessed on December 6, 2012).

<sup>123</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2012. "UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2012." Uppsala University. [www.ucdp.uu.se](http://www.ucdp.uu.se) (accessed on August 13, 2012). The conflict information from this national-level data was done by linking their conflict ids to those listed in the geo-located conflict circles of the Prio Conflict Site dataset, v.3. Dittrich Hallberg, Johan. 2012. "PRIO Conflict Site 1989–2008: A Geo-Referenced Dataset on Armed Conflict." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29.

*Universal Motives.* First, to measure government atrocities, I looked at the UCDP online conflict encyclopedia and manually coded the government incidents of one-way violence against civilians to the province and year in which they occurred.<sup>124</sup> A count variable of events was then made for only recent atrocities in the past 3 years, and another one for older atrocities. Alternative dummy variables were also made for each time-period, as well as for the entire period. A third set of variables summed these dummy variables for the entire period, so as to capture those provinces where massacres had consistently been happening over time. At the national level, the total deaths arising from such massacres were also recorded as a variable, one for the recent 3 years, one for older, and one for the entire period.

Politically unjust systems were measured in various ways. First, we may tap directly into the individual's perception that there is systematic corruption in the political system. The military is another aspect of a political system that changes little over time, and so opinions about the whether the military is good or bad may reflect perceived injustices and abuses about that part of the system. Perceptions of whether there is no free speech, no free elections, and no free press are other important aspects of an unjust system.<sup>125</sup> Second, we may look at data at the province-level, where the GeoEPR data allows us to spatially locate the presence of any social group excluded from political access to government. Another aspect to look at using the same data is, based on findings in newer research, whether the group has been downgraded from a previous position of power and thus feels a heightened sense of injustice.<sup>126</sup> Finally, we may look at the national level, where coders have subjectively coded whether the general population perceives high levels of corruption. Using the same data index, it is also crucial to examine the actual political practice of a government, using data on the degree to which there is an electoral process.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2012. "UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia." Uppsala University. [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database) (accessed on February 5, 2013). For a critical view on the weaknesses of these data, see the Appendix.

<sup>125</sup> Corruption: Q14c. "Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all. Corrupt political leaders." Military: Q23c. "Is the influence of the military very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad for our country?" Free speech: Q52a. "I am going to read you the same list. Does you can openly say what you think and can criticize the state describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?" Free elections: Q52b. Same except "honest elections are held regularly with a choice of at least two political parties." Free press: Q52e. Same except "the media can report the news without state censorship."

<sup>126</sup> Wucherpfennig, J., N. B. Weidmann, L. Girardin, L.-E. Cederman, and A. Wimmer. 2011. "Politically relevant ethnic groups across space and time: Introducing the GeoEPR dataset." Conflict Management and Peace Science, Forthcoming.

<sup>127</sup> These variables were included in the Global Peace Index dataset, a collection of several outside sources. Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013).

To measure perceived exploitation we can test for the presence of oil resources located on land (as opposed to off-shore oil) based on the petroleum dataset created by Lujala, Rød, and Thieme.<sup>128</sup> Overlapping these with each province, we can say how many percent of the area they take up and therefore indicate the potential importance, impact, and exploitation oil may result in for that province.

Finally, we measure societal misery through levels of province-level GDP,<sup>129</sup> and the national percentage of urban population that live under slum-like conditions based on UN data.<sup>130</sup> An additional approach to measuring misery is to measure some type of proxy for the government's ability to alleviate grievances even if it wanted. For instance, with a bigger population come increased strains and demands on a central government to provide services sufficiently and efficiently. Thus, we could look at the sheer size of a province's population per km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>131</sup> Second, to measure the potential side-effects of rushed developmental programs we look at the count of hydroelectric dams in each province.<sup>132</sup> Third, natural disaster-related grievances can be measured with the CIESIN data of multi-disaster vulnerability where scores are given to grid-cell areas based on past experiences of any type of natural disaster. These scores can then be aggregated to the province-level, with one measure representing the average score for disasters, and another measuring the maximum disaster score based on the possibility that really extreme incidents anywhere inside a province may be enough to rally aggrieved populations.<sup>133</sup>

*Strategic factors.* To measure the necessary factors of lacking stable life-options, we look to several sources. Respondent's age at last birthday from the survey data is logged to emphasize the smaller numbers and therefore radical youth, and in another version also reversed (100-age) to capture the possibility that the violence-proneness doesn't taper off until after one

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<sup>128</sup> Lujala, Päivi; Jan Ketil Rød & Nadia Thieme. 2007. "Fighting over Oil: Introducing A New Dataset." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24:3.

<sup>129</sup> World Bank. 2012. "The World's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Dataset." <http://www.gripweb.org/gripweb/?q=countries-risk-information/datasets/worlds-gross-domestic-product-gdp-dataset> (accessed on January 5, 2013).

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme. 2012. "Table 1 : Population of slum areas at mid-year, by region and country 2001." Urban data, statistics. <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/guo/statistics.asp> (accessed on December 16, 2012).

<sup>131</sup> Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University; and Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT). 2005.

Gridded Population of the World Version 3 (GPWv3): Population Grids. Palisades, NY: Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), Columbia University. <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/gpw> (accessed on October 19, 2012).

<sup>132</sup> Natural Earth. "Dams." Natural Earth, Downloads, 10m Cultural Vectors. <http://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/> (accessed on September 2, 2012).

<sup>133</sup> Center for Hazards and Risk Research (CHRR)/Columbia University, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN)/Columbia University, and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. 2005. "Global Multihazard Frequency and Distribution." Palisades, NY: NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC). <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/ndh-multihazard-frequency-distribution> (accessed on February 24, 2013).



reaches ages 40 to 50. A dummy variable for having any type of job and having a partner are readily provided in the survey data, as well as the logged number of children. Regarding degree of education, there were many different variables and coding schemes for each country, but these were all combined into one variable capturing four levels of education: no education, completed primary, completed secondary, and completed university or higher. A dummy variable is also included for whether one is a potentially radical university student. For the contextual benefits of education, interaction effects are made with national level of unemployment.<sup>134</sup>

To measure perceived probability of successful rebellion in the form of insurgent strength, we use several approaches. One is to overlap the GeoEPR data onto each province and for each coding the geographically concentrated group that has the largest population size relative to the country total.<sup>135</sup> Another is to code each province's proportion of rough terrain.<sup>136</sup> Insurgents' access to weaponry is coded based on the availability of light arms in the country.<sup>137</sup> To consider government weakness, we include measures for number of heavy weapons, sophistication of military technology, and the number of armed personal per 1000 citizens.<sup>138</sup> To test for a belief that the government is likely to give in to the demands of the resistance we measure both perceived and actual degree of a free press.<sup>139</sup> For a more general belief in the efficiency of violence, we look at respondents' own feelings of empowerment, and two indexes measuring the degree of national public participation and empowerment among the entire population.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> The national level of unemployment is taken from Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013).

<sup>135</sup> Wucherpfennig, J., N. B. Weidmann, L. Girardin, L.-E. Cederman, and A. Wimmer. 2011. "Politically relevant ethnic groups across space and time: Introducing the GeoEPR dataset." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Forthcoming.

<sup>136</sup> Ellis, E.C., and N. Ramankutty. 2008. "Anthropogenic Biomes of the World, Version 1." Palisades, NY: NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC). <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/anthromes-anthropogenic-biomes-world-v1> (accessed on August 2, 2012).

<sup>137</sup> Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013).

<sup>138</sup> All taken from Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013).

<sup>139</sup> Perceived free press: Pew data, Q52e. "I am going to read you the same list. Does the media can report the news without state censorship describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?" Actual national-level free press: Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013).

<sup>140</sup> Individual feeling of empowerment: Pew survey data, Q1-99b. "Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree with the following statement. Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control." National public participation: Vision of Humanity. 2012. "Global Peace Index 2007." <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/> (accessed on January 12, 2013). National empowerment index: Cingranelli, David L., and David L. Richards. 2010. "The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset." <http://www.humanrightsdata.org> (accessed on January 9, 2013).

To test for the necessary absence of systematic and continuous persecution, as opposed to the previous topic of one-time massacres, the best option was to look at those datasets that have been created by experts to subjectively assign codes for different aspects of state governance and human rights. The CIRI data was one such that disaggregated types of repression, allowing us to use their specific variable for how well a country provided or threatened the physical security of its citizens.<sup>141</sup> The other measure came from the Political Terror Scale, and is a measure of a country's systematic level of human rights abuse based on average scores given to represent incidents found in Amnesty International and U.S. State Department reports.<sup>142</sup>

### *Preparing Data for Analysis*

Before we can analyze the dataset described above, there are first some preparations that have to be made. The first way to prepare the data for analysis is to deal with missing data. In most survey and quantitative analyses, non-valid or missing responses such as “don't know” or “refused” usually present methodological problems since they cannot contribute to an understanding of patterns in the data and therefore cannot be considered.<sup>143</sup> One common way to handle such missing data is to simply let the software exclude the missing data ‘pairwise’, i.e. to exclude cases with missing data only for the specific variables that are being tested at each iteration or step of the chosen analysis method. This enables large portions of the data to be retained and is especially beneficial when several variables with missing data are used in an analysis. Another increasingly popular method is to use multiple imputations to predict and infer what the missing values might be based on relationships with all the other variables in the data. The promise of multiple imputation is that the replacement of missing values is done several times, usually recommended at 10 or more ‘versions’ of the entire dataset with different predictions, after which the statistical analysis is designed to recognize the multiple imputations and give an ‘average’ result of the 10 data versions.<sup>144</sup> Because the original dataset in this thesis was already quite large such an approach would result in over 100,000 cases to be analyzed. It was discovered that inputting 100,000 cases into the analysis method outlined below simply

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<sup>141</sup> Cingranelli, David L., and David L. Richards. 2010. “The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset.” <http://www.humanrightsdata.org> (accessed on January 9, 2013).

<sup>142</sup> Gibney, M., L. Cornett, & R. Wood. 2008. “Political Terror Scale 1976-2006.” Political Terror Scale Web Site. <http://www.politicalterror scale.org/> (accessed on January 5, 2013).

<sup>143</sup> Royston, Patrick. 2004. “Multiple imputation of missing values.” *The Stata Journal* 4:3.

<sup>144</sup> Royston, Patrick. 2004. “Multiple imputation of missing values.” *The Stata Journal* 4:3.

would take too long time. For practical reasons, therefore, I settled on keeping all the missing values and letting the software exclude the variables ‘pairwise’. For country-level contextual variables, however, an absence of one variable can greatly affect hundreds of individual respondents. An additional process of manually imputing best guesses for these country-level variables was therefore used.<sup>145</sup> By imputing missing values for national-level variables and excluding the remaining missing values pair-wise, the dataset can be considered relatively free of missing value bias.

Another issue that must be dealt with is comparability of results. In the original form of the constructed dataset, each variable was measured in and representing different scales, with some variables having very large values, and others very small values. When comparing these different scales it can be difficult to interpret which has the larger effect when interpreting the regression outputs. Although there are many methods for rescaling and standardizing variables for comparison purposes, this thesis employs the method suggested by Gelman of dividing all non-binary variables by two standard deviations. The benefit of doing so is that it allows better comparison of the effects of ordinary and binary predictor variables.<sup>146</sup> Following this rescaling, SPSS’s automatic data preparation wizard was used to rescale all the variables on a common max-min scale ranging from 10 for the highest value, and 1 for the lowest value. An individual’s value on a given variable can therefore be considered the degree to which their score is high or low compared to all the other individuals in the dataset. Now that a way has been decided for dealing with missing values and individuals can be readily compared, we can proceed to determine which specific analysis method to use.

## **Analyzing the Data**

### *Multilevel Regression Analysis*

The main method decided on to analyze the data in this thesis was through multi-level regression, an increasingly popular method in the social sciences. Meant as an improvement over ordinary regression methods, multi-level regression analysis is a method to deal with non-randomness in data that is hierarchically, i.e. spatially, clustered. When a dataset includes variables measured at a higher geographic level than the geographic level of the individual cases,

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<sup>145</sup> A country’s missing values on a variable were assigned the values of culturally or otherwise similar countries.

<sup>146</sup> Gelman, Andrew. 2008. “Scaling regression inputs by dividing by two standard deviations.” *Statistics in Medicine* 27.

one can say that the cases are ‘nested’. A problem that arises when a set of cases are nested within a variable measured at a higher level is that all the cases in the set take on the same value. This can be a problem when analyzing the data in ordinary regression analysis, because the values of higher-level variables are not independent of each other, thus violating one of the core assumptions in ordinary regression analysis.<sup>147</sup> Multilevel modeling accounts for this clustering and generates the more ‘correct’ coefficient estimates that are not biased by the hierarchical clustering. The method also allows for including explanatory variables as ‘random’, meaning that their effect is allowed to vary between the various geographic units. However, such efforts require much more time for the computer to calculate, and was deemed impractical for the large dataset used here. Besides, the main goal of the data exploration in this thesis was to find which causes can be said to be universal and apply across different contexts. A more useful aspect of multilevel modeling is its ability to report ‘random’ intercept values to describe at which geographic level the model was worst at predicting the outcome.<sup>148</sup> In sum, not only does multi-level analysis report unbiased effect coefficients, it also detects spatial ‘blindspots’ in the model. Multi-level regression is therefore appropriate for the data used in this thesis, where individuals are nested within provinces, and provinces nested within countries. The specific type of multi-level model that is appropriate for our binary outcome variable (support/no support) is called a ‘logistic’ multi-level model.<sup>149</sup> The popular SPSS statistical software was chosen as the platform through which to set up our multi-level models.<sup>150</sup>

Originally, the plan was to combine the various theoretical causes into indexes representing their type of grouped-cause concept. However, since many of the variables making up each theoretical construct had little correlation with each other (using Chronbach’s Alpha as a measure of reliability), and because most had only one or two significant effects when entered into the mixed regression model together, the idea of creating indexes was dropped as it was decided that the variables and conceptual components of each theoretical construct were not

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<sup>147</sup> Peugh, James L. 2010. “A practical guide to multilevel modeling.” *Journal of school psychology* 48:1.

<sup>148</sup> Peugh, James L. 2010. “A practical guide to multilevel modeling.” *Journal of school psychology* 48:1.

<sup>149</sup> Carriere, Isabelle, and Jean Bouyer. 2002. “Choosing marginal or random-effects models for longitudinal binary responses: application to self-reported disability among older persons.” *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2:15.

<sup>150</sup> The model interface was accessed by clicking on ‘Analysis’, ‘Mixed Models’, and ‘Generalized Linear’. The following settings were used for all models: the target was set to the variable measuring support for violence; relationship link was set to binary logistic regression; Maximum iterations was set to 100; post-estimation confidence interval was set to 90%; degrees of freedom were fixed for all tests; and the tests for fixed effects assumed all model assumptions to be correct. Software version used was SPSS 19.0.0.2, installed on a personal computer with a 64-bit Microsoft Windows 7 Home Premium operative system (Service Pack 1).

necessarily representative of the theoretical idea as expected. Instead, a more exploratory approach was taken by including all the variables into the same and letting the data decide which variables were significant in the presence of all other theoretical constructs. With this method in mind, the analysis looks each sub-block of theory as presented in chapter 2 and explores them by one by one by running them through the multi-level regression model.

Beyond the method used, it is also important to present the findings in an easy to understand way. For logistic regressions the output effects are usually given in ‘log likelihoods’: indicators of how much more likely we are to see our preferred binary outcome than to not see it for each increase in the predictor variable. This indicator is given in terms of a 1 meaning equal likelihood to see either of the binary outcomes; higher than 1 meaning in favor of the higher outcome; and lower than 1 in favor of the other outcome. But such relative likelihood is not always straightforward to understand or interpret. Knowing that a predictor makes a certain outcome five times as likely as how likely it was before says little about whether that is a big or small *absolute* change and is uninformative when it comes to saying how big it is compared to other variables. Rather, by taking advantage of the equal likelihood of 50/50 percent chance implied by a log-likelihood of 1, I was able to convert the various numbers to represent absolute probability of outcome in an excel sheet. This change in likelihood, then, becomes ideal for presentation purposes since it always starts at 50/50, and deviates from it downwards to 0 or upwards to 100 percent in a log linear fashion. We know that all our variables range from a low of 1 to a high of 10. Because logistic regression outputs indicate the likelihood change for an increase of 1 when the variable is already at 1, it becomes easy to multiply this by 10 and thus get the likelihood when the variable is at its highest value—as well as all the values down to the lowest value.<sup>151</sup> Presenting these graphically then becomes a more preferable presentation strategy than to present multiple technical tables and numbers requiring focused interpretation each time.

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<sup>151</sup> It should be noted however that these percentage increases in likelihood only apply when all other variables are set to zero (if such a thing was even possible). In reality there will always be a mix of variables with high, medium, and low values and therefore the likelihoods of support for an increase in the explanatory variable will never be as high as suggested by the logistical regression outputs. Nevertheless, the likelihoods give a sense of each variable’s relative importance for explaining the outcome.



## Chapter 4 – Results and Findings

We have now come to the point where it is time to put to work all the problems, theories, and methods discussed. The thesis started out with chapter 1, introducing the concept that ordinary people and researchers alike carry with them certain mental maps and judgements of people's moral opinions on violence. It charted at least four variants of these moral geographies of political violence that are currently common in the global West. The question of course, is which of these variants is most reflective the actual reality of people's opinions. Armed with the methodological approach outlined in chapter 2, we can now see what our data tells us about the driving forces that determine and explain these MGPVs. Chapter 3 prepared us by presenting some theoretical hypotheses and expectations, but it remains to be seen in the present chapter whether these hypotheses hold true to the data.

### An Initial Look at the Spaces of Violence-Support

To begin explaining support for violence we can turn to summary-numbers of how widespread support is. Counter-insurgent strategists generally state as a rule-of-thumb that only about 5 percent of a population ever actually participate in violence.<sup>152</sup> This of course says nothing about the much broader opinions in *support* of violence, a number that should be at least somewhat larger. Several independent survey studies have reported levels of support for different countries in the range of 10 to 20 percent.<sup>153</sup> This section attempts to provide its own answer to the question by looking at what the PEW survey data has to say about the frequency of support for violence.

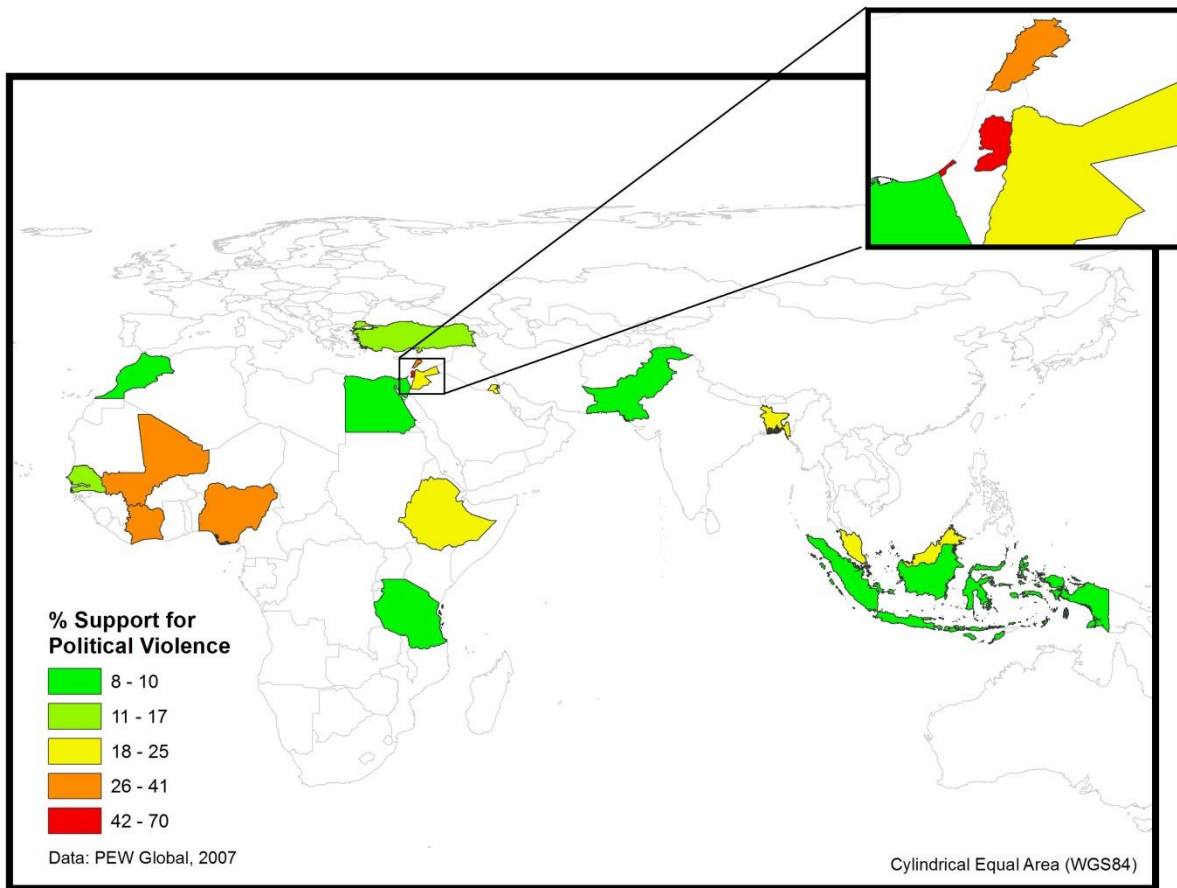
These anecdotes hint that there may be some 10 to 20 percent of people in every society that will always be supportive of violent politics. On first glance, this fits the PEW data very well; no country has less support than 9 percent, and the average has about 24 percent of their

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<sup>152</sup> KilCullen David. 2009. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 340.

<sup>153</sup> For the contemporary United States we see between 6 and 10 percent, for Britain 11 percent, and for New York and Costa Rica in the 1980s 10-20 percent. (Stempel, Hargrove, and Stempel III 2007). Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2012. "Fueling the Fire: Violent Rhetoric, Trait Aggression, and Support for Political Violence." *Working Paper*: 18. [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20-fueling\\_the\\_fire.pdf](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/kalmoe/files/kalmoe%20-fueling_the_fire.pdf) (29 October 2012). Extremis Project. 2012. "Under the microscope: Public attitudes toward the English Defence League (EDL)." Extremis Project Online. <http://extremisproject.org/2012/10/the-english-defence-league-edl-what-do-people-think/> (accessed on April 17, 2013). Muller, Edward, N, Thomas O. Jukam, Mitchell A. Seligson. 1982. "Diffuse political support and antisystem political behavior: a comparative analysis." *American Journal of political science* 26:2.

population in support of violence. However, a closer look shows that the potential for violence-support does not seem to be limited to some fringe minority. Many of the countries go as high as having 40 percent support, and the highest has as much as 70 percent of the entire population advocating the use of political violence. These high levels indicate that support for violence is something that any person in a society can be capable of doing, but that its widespreadness depends on certain processes that are unique to the context of each country. A look at how these supporting countries vary across geographical space in Figure 4 gives us a similar impression. There appears to be a strong regional pattern to these cultures of support. Rather than being a general Middle Eastern problem, as one might expect from popular perception, the hotspots are more-so centered in Western Africa and in the near surroundings of Palestine. From this initial look at the data we can say that moral geographies appear to be a problem confined to certain regions and contexts.



*Figure 4. Map of National Support for Political Violence*



Although looking at national-level distributions is a useful way to approach our topic, the true power of a GIS-driven geographic approach does not stop at the national level. Zooming in further allows us to reveal new patterns hidden from view, making us question and overturn our initial conclusion. Based on the province level-identification of each respondent we are able to locate levels of support at the subnational level of provinces (the full details of this process were discussed in the chapter on research methods). In this new more detailed view, shown in Figure 5, the regional hotspot of Western Africa and Palestine remains to a certain degree but becomes more balanced with many additional local contexts where violence is highly supported. Support has suddenly become much more common. There are now local hotspots of at least 20 percent support in every single country; hotspots of 50 percent (half the local population) are quite common appearing in almost all of the regions; and a smaller handful of provinces are marked by a near full 80-100 percent support. Rather than support being a confined regional or cultural problem as previously concluded, our look at subnational patterns suggests that the answer is both partly universal and partly regional.

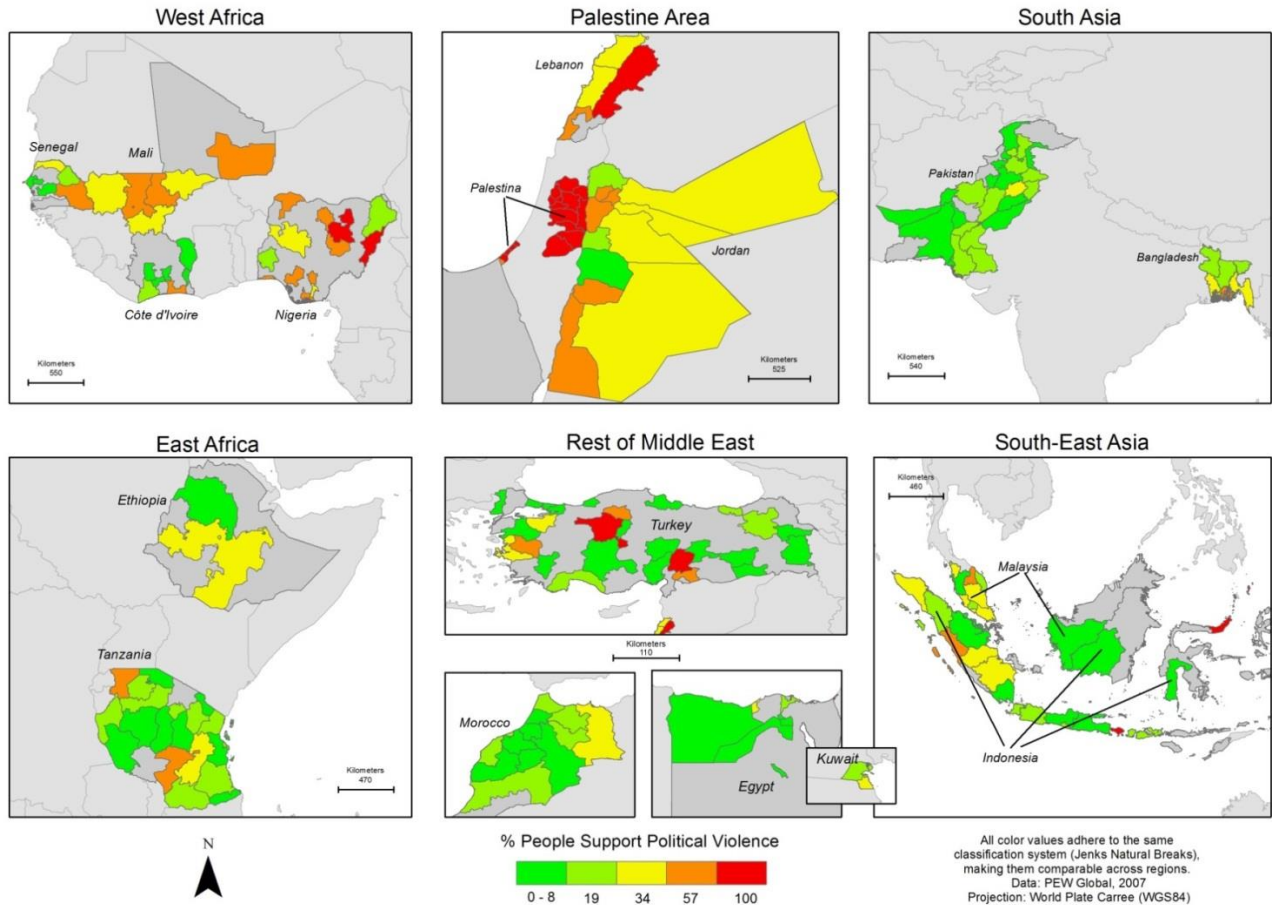


Figure 5. Maps of Sub-National Support for Political

A third, more formal way to examine whether support is a universal or regional phenomenon is to specify a multilevel model without any predictor variables. Such an ‘empty’ model will simply describe the degree of variation in support at each level of analysis (individual, subnational, national), and is represented by the coefficient given for the intercept of each. The results displayed in Table 1 give further evidence that support is not merely a regional problem, but is more-so a universal problem for many people in many places. Since the fixed intercept of 1.32 is bigger than .813 or .886, we can say that most of the variation in violence-support exists due to differences between individuals, regardless of where they are located. However, this does not mean that support is truly dispersed all over; the other contextual intercepts explains support nearly half as well as differences between individuals. Interestingly, support is more clustered at the country/regional level (.886) than at the subnational level (.813),

which is also the impression from both map figures. With all the intercepts being statistically significant (they have sig. values less than .1), we can be at least 90 percent confident that this conclusion is not simply a result of randomness in the data. Thus, we can say that the real MGPVs lay somewhere in between the two stereotypes of regional and global, and support/non-support. These initial findings suggest that for the next part of the analysis we should expect most of the variation in support for violence to be explained by individual-level variables, though some causal effects should also be observed for contextual province- and national-level variables.

*Table 1. Empty Multilevel Model Showing Spatial Variation in Support*

	Coefficient	Sig.
Fixed intercept		
Variation between <i>individuals</i>	1.320	.000
Random intercepts		
Variation between <i>provinces</i>	.813	.000
Variation between <i>countries</i>	.886	.010

### **Testing the Various Categories of Causal Theories**

Following up from the theoretical arguments in chapter 2, the measurements in chapter 3, and the geographic patterns in the previous section, we are now ready to see what the data can tell us about the causes of violence-support. Note, however, as noted in chapter 2, that the probability percentages in the results graphs only indicate each variable's effect on the likelihood of violence-support *when all the other variables in the model are set to zero*.

#### *Findings for Group Motives*

First, we start with the causal theories in the group motives category.

*Communal bonds.* After several tests of possible combinations of communal-bonds related variables, only a few of the measures turned out significant. In general, there is little support for the idea that small communities have a higher sense of group loyalty or support for violence, as the measures for population and transportation accessibility had no effect. Rather, support for violence was related to both big and small places: while rough terrain made it highly likely to support violence (though only barely significant), so did highly urban areas. Yet, the main hypothesis is confirmed, that likelihood for supporting violence was highly related to national culture of collectivism as well as only slightly with respondent distrust of out-group members. The new finding here being that group cohesion and exclusion is an important group-based requirement but that this risk factor is mostly culturally determined and occurs in both extremes of very secluded provinces and highly urbanized ones. This violence-effect happens through a group exclusion mechanism that is, contrary to glorification theory, only mildly affected by individual ideas on group superiority.

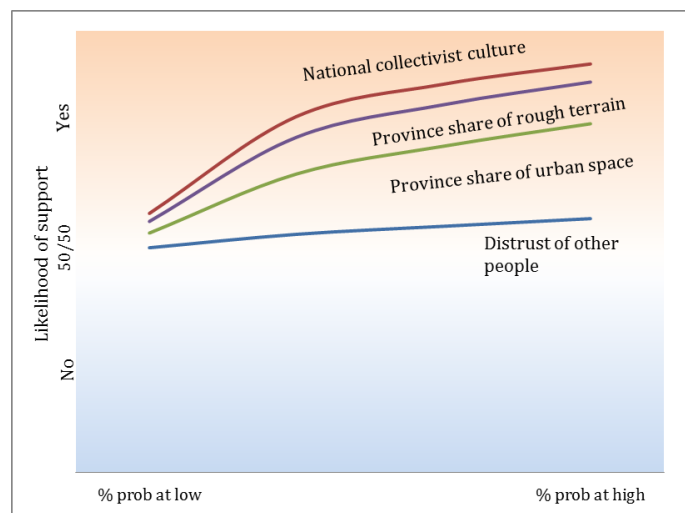


Figure 6. Results Graph for Communal Bonds Theories

*Local competition.* The results lend support to the theories relating to group competition, but only for some of the proposed mechanisms. The only two predictors that reached significance indicate that competition can lead to violence, but also that it is sometimes possible to remain peaceful. First, living in a province where residential and nomadic lifestyles coincide is related to supporting violence. This was especially so if the same province had a high level of wealth, and therefore more spoils to fight over, leading to a 75 percent likelihood of

support. Second, in provinces shared by groups of widely differing population sizes compared to the national mean, i.e. groups of differing power bases, the likelihood of support actually went down to about 30 percent. Similar to other research findings, it could be that in such diverse contexts people develop mechanisms to get along in order to avoid full-scale conflict and chaos. Domestic tourism was close to being significant on several occasions, but never quite got there. None of the individual-level measures for perceptions of relative group economic differences ever reached anywhere close to significance. All in all, people can learn to live with group differences, but emotions might stir when such competition takes place over abundant wealth resources. People are not any more prone to contemplate the use of violence if such threats are simply imagined or perceived from another region of the country.

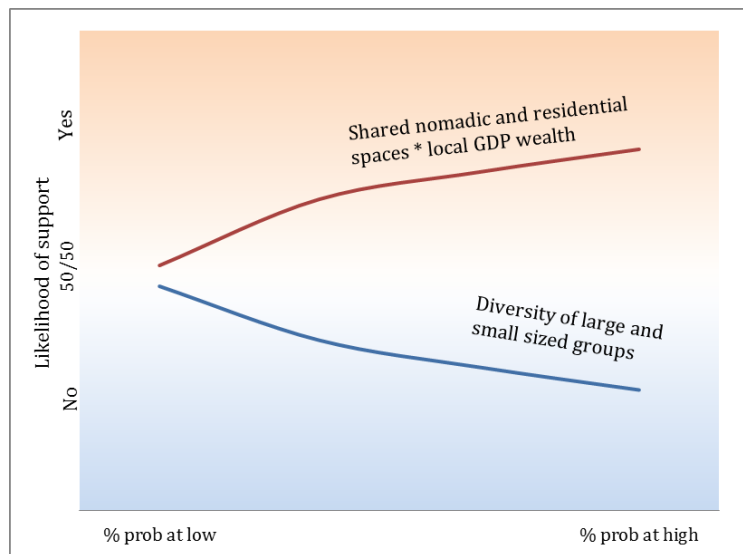


Figure 7. Results Graph for Local Competition Theories

*Anti-global resistance.* There are three strong findings from the results of these measures. First, local instances of anti-global terrorism seems to be a reflection or perhaps have a causal influence for how much local people would support such violence, with support being a high of 78 percent likely where terrorism is at its highest. Second, opposite to expectations, local levels of international tourism does not create tension and violence but seems rather to ease tensions and create understanding which manifests itself in the most visited areas being only 17 percent likely of supporting violence. This is compatible with parts of the tourism literature, suggesting that local relations to tourism can vary greatly and can also be positive depending on the nature of the tourists impacts and behaviors. Third, perceiving one's culture as under threat

from foreign influence contributes slightly towards the likelihood of supporting violence. In a clear cut conclusion, part of people’s support for Islamic violence can indeed be explained by an opposition to global modernity, and such anti-modern support for violence is strongest where there has been less actual interaction with and understanding of foreign people and where anti-global terrorism already has a strong hold.

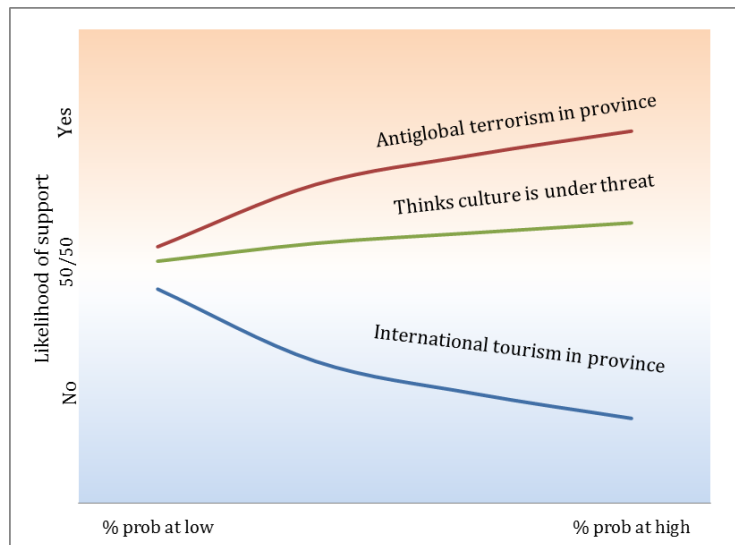


Figure 8. Results Graph for Anti-Global Theories

*United by conflict.* The results lend support to the united by conflict theories, though only a few of the conflict variables were able to recreate or account for this pattern. After controlling for the mere presence of conflict in a province, those that were highly intense with many deaths and happened in the far past make it about 80 percent likely to support violence. But conflict can also have a sobering effect on group cohesion. By controlling for the older intense conflicts, looking at any other local conflict of high intensity (old or new) the likelihood becomes rather very small going down to 27 percent. This could indicate that while the violence-inducing group effects of conflict are evident, they appear to take at least a few years to materialize.

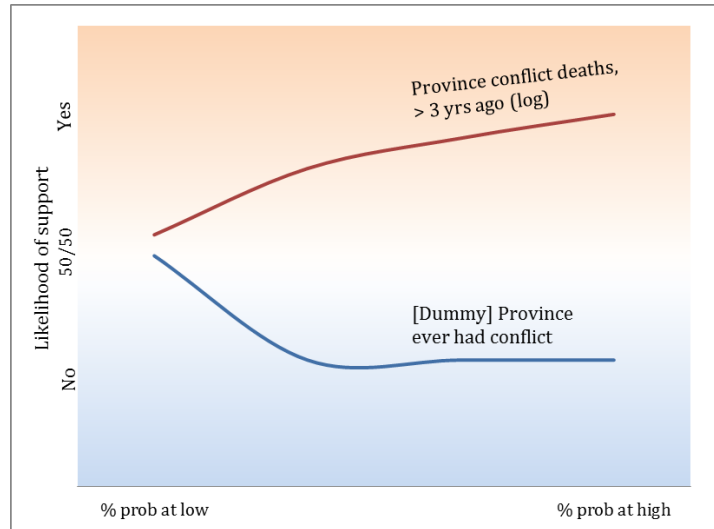


Figure 9. Results Graph for United by Conflict Theories

### Findings for Universal Motives

Next, we review the categories of theories relating to universal motives.

*Government massacres.* After several rounds of testing government massacre-related variables, there was surprisingly no effect of local massacre, nor of total national deaths from such massacres. The only effect that was close to being significant was the local and consistent presence of massacre in a country where massacres had been very severe. Surprisingly, such high levels of massacres lead to a decrease in violent attitudes rather than increasing them, though this pacifying effect is very small with the likelihood of support still being at 44 percent (and was only barely significant with  $p=.12$ ).

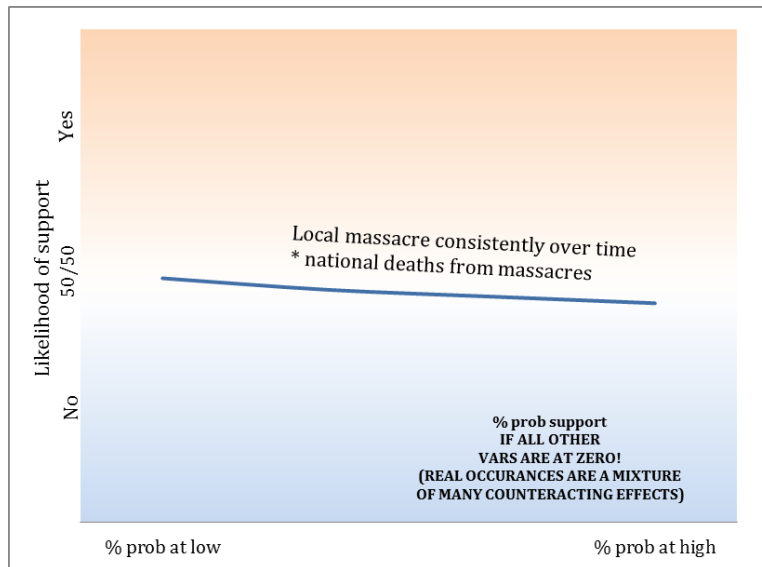


Figure 10. Results Graph for Government Massacres Theories

*Unjust political system.* The findings for unjust political system theories highlight that injustice is a highly perceived phenomenon and only leads to violence when it is deemed that something can be done about it. Aggregating senses of corruption to the national level is not a useful endeavor as this measure did not reach any statistical significance and is rather highly varied between individuals. Only the varying individual perceptions of corruption lead to a sense of injustice and subsequent support for violence. This means that perceptions of injustice are to some degree disconnected from the actual conduct of governments, as was further corroborated by the non-significance of actual electoral access to government. Surprisingly, individuals perceiving a lack of free speech and elections oppositely have lower support for violence, which is also true for perceiving that the military is unjust, perhaps because these are either difficult to change or represent powerful symbols of government force. Another surprising finding is that large-sized groups excluded from power in a province also decreases likelihood of violent attitudes, perhaps indicating a sense of powerlessness to do anything about it. While previous studies have found exclusion to lead to group engagement in conflict, it could be that such resistance is mostly the resort of a few aggrieved individuals rather than stemming from a widespread desire for violent resistance.



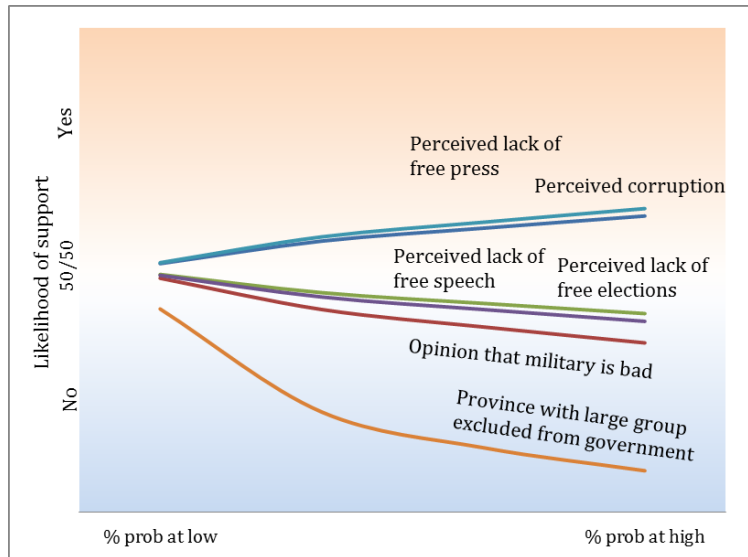


Figure 11. Results Graph for Unjust Political System Theories

*Exploitation.* Testing for petroleum exploitation and interacting it with local poverty and separatist efforts, there appears to be no significant violence-inducing effects from exploitation in our data. There could be many other resources or aspects that might lead to exploitation that we did not get to test here and it might matter the specific choices and policies a government follows to decide whether such resources will result in grievance.

*Neglect.* The results indicate a strong role of neglect in explaining violence-support. Although population density and dams had no effect, several others did. Percentage of underweight children as a proxy for local poverty was found to increase grievance and support for violence, as expected. Note that this does not mean that individuals who are poor support violence but rather that any individual from a poor area become likely to be aggrieved by the misery they see around them. Surprisingly, the two other near-significant measures of national percent slum population and local maximum hazard score served to pacify violent attitudes rather than ignite them. Perhaps this is since both slum populations and people frequently exposed to dangerous hazards are more concerned with local matters and day-to-day survival than with matters of politics or justice and that they to some degree may be reliant on and receive benefits from the state so as to soften their attitudes.

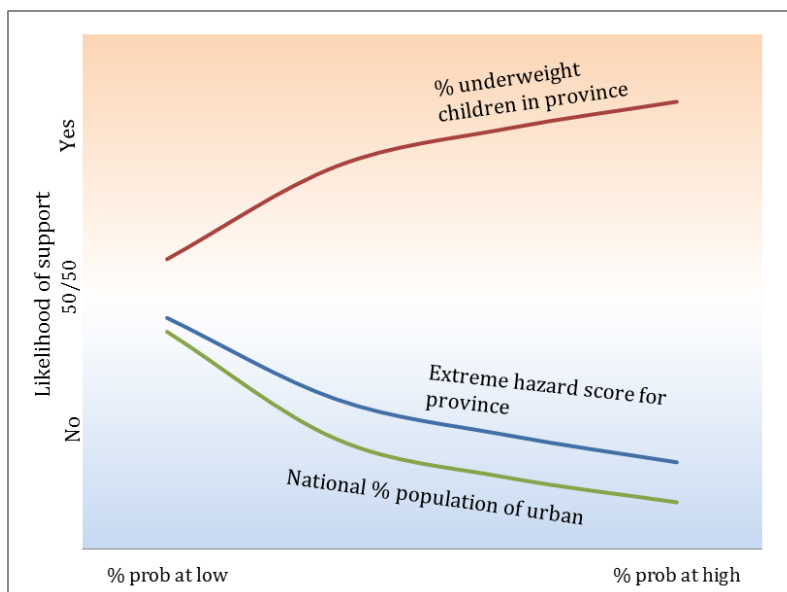


Figure 12. Results Graph for Government Neglect Theories

### Findings for Strategic Factors

Finally we look at the various strategy-related theories.

*Nothing to lose.* The hypotheses for the nothing to lose theories are supported, but in a somewhat modified way. The various measures for age had a hard time becoming significant, but once controlling for interactions with education and unemployment the regular age variable turned out as expected; with old age significantly leading to less support for violence, with only a likelihood of 28 percent at its highest value. This may be a lesson for previous studies finding no influence of age on violence-support.<sup>154</sup> Having a university degree in a country of high unemployment at its highest value made the likelihood for supporting violence about 60 percent, as expected and with a large impact. What was not expected was that educational progress on the lower levels was also significant, and was oppositely decreasing violence-support when occurring in the same high unemployment countries. With a large effect ending up at a low of 12 percent likelihood, one interpretation is that the lower educated benefit a lot more in high unemployment countries than the educated, and as a result feel less need for violence. Finally, neither individual unemployment, having children, being single, or any of their interactions had any significant impact, suggesting that the secure life hypothesis is not so much

<sup>154</sup> Shapiro and Fair (2009: 96); Wike and Samaranayake 2006); Helkama, Klaus, Simo Salminen, and Antti Uutela. 1987. "A World at peace as personal value in Finland: Its relationship to demographic characteristics, political identification and type of moral reasoning." *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10(2/3): 120.

about a sense of family life and actual income. Rather, the sobering effects of a secure life are about intellectual maturing and potential for opportunities.

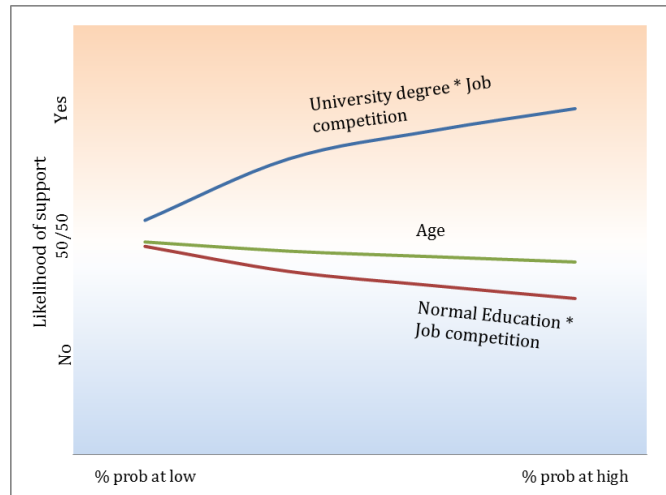


Figure 13. Results Graph for Nothing to Lose Theories

*Probable success.* The results for the variables measuring strategic considerations of the probability of success suggest that violence-inducing effects of such considerations are mostly derived from government weakness rather than the strength of the insurgents. Mostly, it appears that a government having few heavy weapons invites us to strategically deem rebellion as having probable success and worthy of support, with 99 percent likelihood. Surprisingly, however, governments with poor and outdated military technology are significantly related to making support for violence decrease down to only a 12 percent likelihood. This could mean that high degrees of sophisticated technology could be seen as a humiliation to people and thus incite violence through an emotional mechanism. A government's military might is only considered an obstacle to violence-support when inside a poorly developed country with old technology. This possibility is further corroborated by the fact that lacking heavy weapons was only significant in the presence of the rough terrain variable (which by itself was not significant), i.e. weak armies only lead to violence when rough terrain is set to zero. Other findings are that senses of empowerment or belief in change among individuals or populations play no role in strategic calculation.

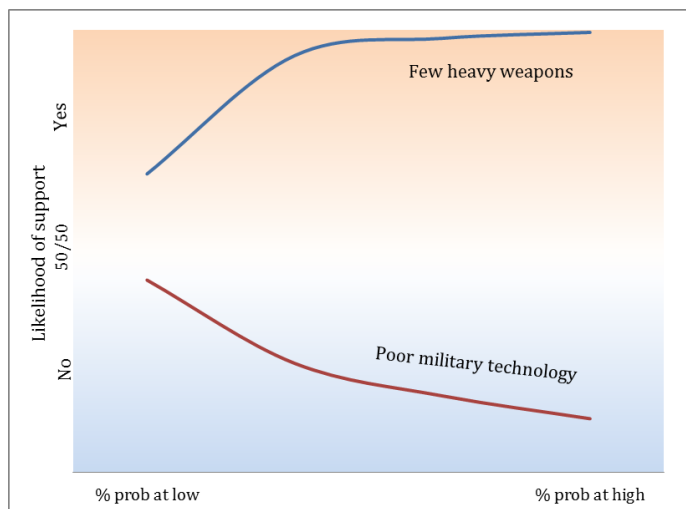


Figure 14. Results Graph for Probable Success Theories.

*Absence of systematic persecution.* When fed into the regression model, none of variables to measure systematic repression were significant at explaining support for violence.

Now that all the theories have been tested and their findings reported, we can proceed to summarize what has been found in this chapter. Although some specific theories were only partially correct or not significant at all, most theories and categories of causes in some way helped explain violence-support. What do these findings mean for the understanding violence-support and how can they help us discover the real MGPVs? That question is answered in the final concluding chapter.

## Summary and Conclusion

Summarizing all of the significant findings and theories is beyond the purpose of this thesis, as it is only meant as a first approach. The one consistent finding that should be noted is that there is some truth to all the various categories of theories of violence-support. No one theory or group of theories appeared to have a monopoly on explaining support for violence. Similarly, the geographic investigations of the places of violence-support indicate that the real MGPVs are a blend of all four imagined MGPVs discussed in chapter 1 (Figure 1). Support for violence is a universal phenomenon that any individual, subnational province, or country is capable of embracing. That violence-support is universal is reflected in how there were indeed several variables that consistently caused violence-support despite the various different contexts between the countries and provinces studied. At the same time, it is also true that violence-support is more common for some individuals and in some areas than in others as was seen in how the unexplained variation in violence-support was explained not only by differences between individuals, but also by differences between provinces and countries. All in all, then, the results from the empirical analysis help us understand why people support political violence which in turn helps us shatter one-sided imaginary MGPVs that are at odds with reality. Instead we can realize that violence-support is neither entirely supported, nor entirely opposed and that neither is it only located 'over there' or 'over here'. Nor should violence-support be judged since it clearly can happen to any of us, depending on at least some of the empirical findings identified in chapter 4.

In hindsight, this thesis could have benefited from doing a couple of things differently. One limitation is the type of dependent variable used to measure violence-support. Psychologists studying moral development in conflicts have critiqued how previous research on moral development has been measured based on global, hypothetical, and abstract moral scenarios that bear "little resemblance" to the "multitude of moral realities" that are practically relevant to the everyday lives of children growing up in conflict-affected societies.<sup>155</sup> Such hypothetical scenarios may bias the results towards causes that emphasize reasoning and principles of justice, so that "rationalist research methods may therefore create an unusual and nonrepresentative kind

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<sup>155</sup> Wainryb, Cecilia, and Monisha Pasupathi. 2008. "Developing moral agency in the midst of violence: Children, political conflict, and values." In: *Values and Violence: Intangible Aspects of Terrorism*, eds. Ibrahim A. Karawan, Wayne McCormack, and Stephen E. Reynolds. USA: Springer, 174-175.

of moral judgment."<sup>156</sup> But in real-life situations out of the laboratory, "moral reasoning is not left free to search for truth but is likely to be hired out like a lawyer by various motives, employed only to seek confirmation of preordained conclusions."<sup>157</sup> Another possible improvement is to not only look at variables related to domestic conflicts, as was done in this thesis, but also variables related to inter-state conflicts between countries of different religions which could have helped explain why some people perceive a threat to Islam and subsequent support for defending Islam through violent means. One final conceptual issue that should be dealt with in future research and that has not been confronted here, is that in certain instances it can be very difficult knowing where to draw the line between those who only support violence and those who actively participate and perpetrate the violence. For instance, during civil wars the line is rather blurred, since many people may become one-time offenders in mass riots or in feuds with neighbors, without being a soldier per se. Do such single incidents make you turn from supporter into perpetrator? Or is there some kind of threshold that distinguishes perpetrators from supporters? There was no way to measure from the data in this thesis whether a respondent had ever engaged in violence. If this were the case, different causes may have applied to them and that way 'contaminated' the findings.

Despite the limitations just mentioned, it is believed that the geographically disaggregated approach to the topic of violence-support in this thesis serves as a useful approach to this under-researched topic. The specific method used has been explained in detail and can be replicated in future studies, taking advantage of the locational variables often included in public opinion data by geo-locating violence-support to local-level contextual factors via a GIS. The thesis is also hoped to serve as a reminder of how we perceive and judge others for supporting violence when at the same time we too perhaps would have supported violence if our circumstances were different. This is no justification for the use of political violence, but rather a call to leave our imaginings and moral judgments behind and instead study directly ordinary civilians and the factors that sometimes cause them to form favorable opinions of violence. If civilian support for violence is one of the defining characteristics of modern warfare—as suggested in the introduction—then the link between warfare and civilian support is likely to stay

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<sup>156</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108:4, 822.

<sup>157</sup> Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108:4, 822.

for some time to come. In the opinion of this author, the continued importance of civilians during conflict makes the topic of violence-support a crucial topic for the future of conflict studies.





## **Appendix: Method for Coding Difficult to Use Variables**

The following appendix goes on to describe in more detail how some of the more difficult to code variables were constructed and utilized.

*Details about tourism data.* The values from the tourism dataset were manually copied and pasted to the main dataset. Where there were spelling differences or name-changes I had to use my best judgment and find the most similar names or research alternative names. In some cases the tourism data listed geographic regions at a lower level than used in the main dataset (Cote d'Ivoire), in which case I summed their values to the upper region. Some regions from the tourism data were at a higher level (Pakistan, Palestine, capital of Malaysia) or had dissolved since 1995 (Ethiopia) over several of the now-existing regions, in which case all of the current regions were given or added the values of the old region (admittedly, an alternative way would be to divide the original region's value by the number of regions it would be "spread out" to, but I chose to go with the higher inflated number to reflect the possibility that the 1995 visitors were concentrated in any one area). A potential problem for this variable is that there is an especially pronounced time-lag between cause and effect since the data are supposed to represent the year 1995, over a decade prior to when our support variable was measured. Additionally, tourism is probably a phenomenon that shifts and changes quite fast over time based on fashion and fad. Yet, we should be able to gain something from the variable, because at least we can say that at one point in time within the respondents' lifetimes a province has had much tourism, and because some of the more popular provinces are likely to keep a relatively constant flow of tourist visitors due to how much of tourism is based on aspects that remain constant over time such as natural landscape or cultural monuments. Data source: Bigano, Andrea, Jacqueline M. Hamilton, Maren Lau, Richard S.J. Tol and Yuan Zhou. 2005. "A Global Database of Domestic and International Tourist Numbers at National and Subnational Level." Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei Working Paper.

<http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/129/1/A%20Global%20Database%20of%20Domestic%20and.pdf> (accessed on December 6, 2012).

*Details about repression massacre data.* The manually code repression massacre data have several limitations that should be recognized. First, they are based on textual summary accounts that only specified locations for the main areas affected or single examples of locations,

rather than an exhaustive listing of all places and events. In some instances only broad regions like “western parts” were given, in which case I did not code anything since I would have to guess the provinces and possibly include provinces that were not actually affected.<sup>158</sup> Thus, the emphasis is on *certainty*, which comes at the expense of undercounting. Still, the variable is supposed to only represent the most extreme examples of repression, and this is exactly what a subjective narrative emphasizing main locations and examples does. A second limitation is that they do not give sufficient indication of the degree to which each area was affected enough to allow for quantification; for this reason I made the variable a dichotomous one that only says 1 for areas that were affected and does not distinguish between weakly or strongly affected ones. Nevertheless, given the imaginative powers of the human mind I believe that even the weakest sign of violent repression can be interpreted on a similar grand scale as more large-scale repression, and as such both small and big repression in a sense have an equal effect on grievance, justifying the 0/1 dichotomous approach. A third limitation is that I did not specify against whom the repression was directed. Repression should only lead to support for violence in defense of Islam if it was Islamic forces that were the victims of the repression. Yet, I contend that if there are already grievances against an unjust government then repression against anyone will probably be interpreted as further proof of their injustice, even if it wasn’t targeted directly at Muslim communities. Data source: Author; based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program. 2012. “UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia.” Uppsala University. [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database) (accessed on February 5, 2013).

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<sup>158</sup> In the case of Palestine I chose to deviate from this rule since much of the repression was described as part of broader regions whose constituent provinces are known and since repression there is notorious for being widespread and all-encompassing. Furthermore, its provinces are generally very small, and the broader regions mentioned in the UCDP are about the same size as the average province of other countries in this study.