'Wars of Others': National Cleavages and Attitudes towards External Conflicts

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ABSTRACT

Why do individuals sympathize with others' wars, an antecedent of the decision to become a foreign fighter? By collecting original public opinion data from Lebanon, in 2015, and Turkey in 2017, about the actors of conflict in Syria, we test the argument that an ethno-religious cleavage at home shapes the proclivity of individuals to support others' wars. Individuals may perceive a war abroad as endangering political and social balance of power at home – and hence own survival. Therefore, when transnational identities map onto a national cleavage, as in the Sunni–Shia cleavage in Lebanon, and Turk – Kurd cleavage in Turkey, individuals are more disposed to show sympathy for others' wars both to help their kin and to protect the balance of power at home. Our findings imply that efforts to end the trend toward citizens becoming foreign fighters must start at home by mending the relations between ethnic and religious groups.

"We were extremely disturbed by the desire of Kurds for independence. That's why we helped ISIS (in Syria). I joined the organization ... I'll fight with all the force I can muster. I'll not let even an inch of Arabic land to fall into Kurdish hands" Interview with an ISIS member from Mosul, Iraq (Rudaw 2015).

This ISIS fighter is not alone in his motivations or his ultimate decision to join an 'other's war.' Indeed, over twenty thousand foreign fighters have engaged in the conflict in Syria at a pace unprecedented to any other conflict, including Afghanistan in the 1980s and the Iraqi War in the 2000s (The Economist 2014). Sunni foreign fighters from all over the world who have rallied in support of ISIS and Al-Qaeda have urged Shiites from Iran, Lebanon, and other Shiite-populated countries to join Assad's forces, and Kurds from Turkey and Iraq to join YPG forces. This comes in an attempt to protect the balance of power and to protect their local and transnational identities, now threatened by Sunni dominance. As perplexing it is that so many would want to fight in somebody else's war, the high global support for the groups fighting in the Syrian Civil War is no less intriguing. This motivates the question in this paper: What drives individuals to support a conflict abroad and develop sympathy for foreign fighters?

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The relevant literature establishes the link between third party support and civil war dynamics (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Cunningham 2006; Regan 2000, 2002; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). Third party states can bolster the capabilities of rebels, and this reduces the gap in power between combatants (Regan 2000). Specifically, states intervene when ethnic kin reside in neighboring countries (Cederman et al., 2013; Saideman 2001). Yet third party state support is not the only means through which rebels can find human and material resources to continue fighting. Though we are aware of the relationship of third-party states to rebels and civil war outcomes, we know less about the presence and impact of support outside the state, namely by individuals. Foreign fighters, defined as unpaid individuals unaffiliated with official military organizations who are also non-citizens of the conflict they join, can be perceived as support to warring actors at the individual level (Heghammer 2010; Skidmore 2014). Foreign fighters bolster the military effectiveness of violent nonstate actors by increasing their ranks, prolong and radicalize conflict by disseminating innovative and adaptive tactics (Malet 2009), and contribute to the war effort by training new fighters, transferring knowledge (Mendelsohn 2011), and increasing the commitment level of the groups at war (Karagiannis 2013; Skidmore 2014). Thus, foreign fighting has important consequences for war dynamics. But how is foreign fighting perceived by outsiders, is it an act that drives sympathy as a heroic act or reprimand as a brutal intervention? Indeed, individual support in third party conflicts does not necessarily have to come in the form of behavior, e.g., actual fighting, some individuals may contribute indirectly, by providing the right atmosphere, e.g., attitudinal support that nurtures the behavior of foreign fighting.

Despite the rising trend in foreign fighting, lack of credible and generalizable data has stopped scholars from knowing more about the microlevel motivations of this phenomenon, or the circumstances that ripen incentives for foreign fighting (Duyvesteyn and Peeters 2015; Heghammer 2010, 2013; Malet 2009). Although our work does not directly contribute to the data and theory of foreign fighting, it enriches the literature by shedding light on the type of supportive/unsupportive atmosphere that may encourage/discourage foreign fighting. By examining the individuals' support of foreign fighting in Syria, this article can advance the field's understanding of why individuals are sympathetic to the idea of fighting in "wars far from home." Support for and sympathy with foreign fighters may or may not result in joining the actual fight, but even if they don't lead to the action of fighting itself, the existence and abundance of individuals favoring participating in others' war is likely to encourage and incentivize those who are predisposed to foreign fighting. By analyzing individuals' attitudes toward those who provide support in a foreign conflict, we come closer to understanding the environment that is conducive to foreign fighting. To do this, we examine attitudes both toward those engaging in high-stakes action (e.g., active operational support) and relatively

low-stakes action (e.g., providing financial aid and joining recruitment efforts).

How can we understand the individual support to foreign fighting? We use Social Identity Theory (SIT) which focuses on self-identification as a powerful tool in converging member actions to further the interests of a group. Thus, it comes as no surprise that transnational identities are activated by ethnonationalist politicking as easily as identities at the local level (Cederman, Buhaug, and Rod 2009; Davis and Moore 1997; Lake and Rothchild 1998; Saideman 2001). Indeed, there is ample evidence on how affinity with ethnic kin can be utilized to fuel civil wars in neighboring countries (Cederman et al. 2013; Woodwell 2004) But we find that attitudes toward actors in third-party conflict goes beyond favoritism toward one's broader group. They also shape out-group negativity. Specifically, perception of tangible interests and the existence of threats to such interests, whether real or perceived, and the competition among identity groups over those interests play a big role in determining attitudes toward the other. Malet (2010) emphasizes the role of "framing a threat discourse" to define civil conflict as a global concern. In other words, a civil conflict that includes sectarian divisions, such as the one fought in Syria, can be viewed as a battle between the followers of different religions or religious sects, such as the Sunni vs. Shia. But more than that, threats to transnational identity can easily find resonance at home.

We argue that conflicts make individuals more susceptible to others' wars', especially when a reciprocal identity cleavage exists at home. We seek answers at home because interests (e.g., the gains and losses of an identity group on foreign soil) spill over into the national context. In other words, empowering one's transnational identity while simultaneously weakening that of the ethnic "others" beyond one's borders is, at the same time, the strategic means to avoid or overturn political, symbolic or material dominance by ethnic "others" at home (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010, 94) What happens to one's transnational identity has costs and benefits to the national welfare, as identities can extend beyond borders. Therefore, we contend that though identification with those like oneself is empowering and induces individuals to act in accordance with the mutual interests of the group, it is also what is at stake in domestic politics, a rational decision calculus regarding the power balance, which also motivates foreign citizens to sympathize with and provide support for foreign fighters by participating in others' wars.

To investigate the circumstances in which individuals are more likely to support others' wars, we utilize an original survey data from Lebanon in 2016. We also do a cross comparison study by analyzing a survey data from Turkey in 2017 that serves as a robustness check for the causality. We examine the attitudes of citizens (in both countries) toward the various actors in a third-party conflict, namely the Syrian Civil War (SCW). We draw on data to

examine how local identities in Lebanon and Turkey translate into mobilization and support for Sunni insurgents, the Assad regime,[1] and Kurdish rebels in Syria. We contend that individuals form their attitudes toward conflicts abroad based on the fear that the empowerment of the out-group outside of the home country will reinforce the status, power, and privileges of the out-group inside the home country. Thus, rallying for the 'comrades' and against the 'enemies' is not only a battle fought abroad to help one's kin, it is also an indirect fight over one's status and rights at home. Therefore, individuals' attitudes toward the actors of a conflict abroad can only be understood by analyzing how political struggles in the domestic context intertwine with the political struggles of actors across the border. Indeed, out-group negativity (i.e., Sunni Lebanese opposing the Assad regime, Shiites opposing Sunni fighters in Syria, Maronites in Lebanon, as well as Turks in Turkey supporting the 'enemy of the enemy' and opposing 'the enemy of the friend' abroad despite the lack of clear transnational ties) shapes the lens though which threats to domestic cleavages are perceived which in return affects the attitudes toward third parties in conflict.

Our explanation thus hinges on the harmonious integration of the emotional appeal of identity-based mobilization with a rational-based calculus of interests triggered by perception of threats. The present study also constitutes one of the first endeavors based on empirical field research to explain the attitudes and behaviors toward a conflict abroad. The recency of the SCW and the data we have compiled in the two countries makes this study an important contributor to the field's understanding of attitudes toward foreign fighting. Our findings confirm that local identity is a substantive predictor of whether and the extent to which individuals are willing to support 'other's wars'. Moreover, we argue, even those who do not share a common identity may actually develop positive or negative attitudes toward a third party as it may indirectly impact the status quo of domestic politics. Those who perceive their local identities to be threatened are the ones who are more willing to incur the costs of fighting in order to bolster their in-group identity/status or weaken the out-group identity/status in national context.

Explaining Mobilization and Support in Armed Conflict

Social identity (i.e., the bridge that connects an individual to a group to which s/he feels a sense of belonging) provides a framework within which individuals

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[1]The Assad family is Alawite, a minority religious group within Syria, which constitutes around 10% of the Syrian Population. Even though some claim that Alawites are not a subsect within Shia, others argue the sect is an offshoot of Shia. Regardless, Alawites are following the Shiite interpretation in the topic of the great schism of Islam, which is "who should have succeeded Prophet Muhammad" (Manfreda 2019). In this debate, like Shiites, Alawites also side with Ali, who is Muhammad's son-in-law, and take a step forward in attributing some divine features to him (Spencer 2016). Hence, it is not inappropriate to side Alawites next to Shiites against Sunnis within the sectarian cleavage among Muslims.

perceive and interpret politics (Tajfel 1981, 1982). SIT emphasizes the cognitive process whereby group membership merges with the self and even replaces it. Anyone who belongs to the group is perceived as an in-group member, and anyone who is not an in-group member is an outsider. Thus, as part of this self-classification, in-group members act in cohesion as a result of an overpowering psychological attachment to the group (Conover 1984) and distance themselves from out-group members. Furthermore, when identity is rendered salient, e.g., through political, social and economic exclusion (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010), or through perceived threats to group interests, this leads to further cohesion within a group and acts as a reason to bind people in their actions (Oakes 2002; Turner et al., 1987).

Though, the literature is rich with examples of civil wars fought over identities, inter- national boundaries do not stop individual interests within the nation from crossing over to encompass the needs and conditions of the kin across borders (Saideman 2001; Tokdemir 2020). In other words, the contours of group membership, need not necessarily lie within national boundaries. This has repercussions on how individuals perceive and react to events outside their nations. Once political entrepreneurs activate an in-group vs. out-group dichotomy, identity can extend across borders. Individuals may develop a positive or negative view of actors across borders based on which side of the dichotomy they lie. SIT thus leads us to expect that self-identification taps not only into group identities within a nation, but also into transnational identities in the world. This in return shapes the attitudes and support toward conflicts that take place not only within, but also across, borders.

The emotional appeal of group identification however need not act alone in driving behavior. It is true that identification with a group creates feelings of loyalty driving an affective and overwhelming urge to be allied with group interests but belonging to a group also acts upon fears of extinction (Saideman 2001). A video message from the Islamic State's Albanian unit on YouTube is a great example of how leaders activate a broader membership by reminding a target audience of a threat to group interests, stress that they are part of a group, and that a duty is associated with that membership: *"I call on you Muslims, […] Muslims are one body and if a limb is sick the whole body feels the pain. We will avenge all the brothers that were killed, sisters that were violated, and children that were slain* (Indeksonline 2014).*"* SIT contends that threats to identity are important triggers that cement members together in a web of common interests and survival. In other words, one's survival merges with that of the group and threats to the group become threats to one's self. Thus, members are pushed to act and think in certain ways due to a shared understanding of gains and losses (Sherif 1967). In other words, cohesion within the group depends on the extent to which members share a common fate and tangible interests. In this sense threats to member benefits and privileges cohere members around common interests that are at risk. Perceived

risks to group membership in the form of realistic (challenges to power and wealth) (Blalock 1967; Bobo 1983; Bobo and Tuan 2006; LeVine and Campbell 1972; Sherif and Sherif 1969) or symbolic (challenges to respect and self-esteem) (Dustmann and Preston 2004; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; O'Rourke and Sinnot 2006; Sides and Citrin 2007) threats can strengthen the in-group identification by elevating the importance of positive in-group characteristics while driving members toward attitudes that reinforce out-group bias and discrimination (Lipset and Raab 1973). Hence, the competition to obtain scarce resources eventually leads to social and political conflict.

The Case Selection: Lebanon and Syrian Civil War

Lebanon has gone through a civil war for fifteen years in which the Sunnis, Shiites, and Maronites have fought against one another and thereby bolstered the clear-cut boundaries around these three identities. As the Taif Agreement of 1989, which ended the civil war, failed to mend the sectarian division between these communities, this relatively peaceful era is a very fragile one (Bahout 2014). In fact, the consociational system established in postwar Lebanon has reinforced the Shia-Sunni cleavage by fueling societal fragmentation (Salamey 2009). With the parliament in paralysis, the slow fragmentation of Lebanese Armed Forces under the influence of Hezbollah, and the absence of neutral institutions capable of brokering peace between the Sunni and Shia communities, the groups have drifted further apart. Thus, the crisis in Syria has easily found resonance in Lebanon, fueling citizens to identify with being either a Shiite or Sunni, not just as a group identity in Lebanon but in the world. Framing the SCW around transnational identities has found an ideal translation in Lebanese society, activating the psychological attachment to group identities.

The coherence of interests is certainly fueled by the emotional appeal of being a Sunni or a Shia within and across borders but in the case of SCW, it goes beyond that by the Lebanese citizens' perceptions of how the tangible gains or losses in Syria might impose on their own identities. First, individuals may support a foreign cause if they perceive it represents a threat to (or threatens) their transnational identity. Many who joined the conflict in Syria as foreign fighters were inspired by calls from prominent religious leaders such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi (who framed the mobilization as the Sunni community's fight against the Shia threat, supported and defended by Hezbollah) (Heghammer and Zelin 2013).[2] Hence, a conflict between the Assad regime and insurgents becomes a conflict between the Shia and the Sunni–a conflict that affects all Sunni and Shia communities, in Syria and beyond. Thus, actual

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[2]http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/06/02/Top-cleric-Qaradawi-calls-for-Jihad-against-Hezbollah-Assad-in-Syria.html

or perceived threats abroad turn into real threats at home. It is the interplay of national identity cleavages and transnational identities that turns an outside conflict into an internal one. This is because, where local identities are salient and the associated cleavage in the nation is resistant to change, the perception of a proximate threat to one's identity, whether violent or nonviolent, always exists.

SCW reflects a cleavage that exactly mirrors a national cleavage in Lebanon and increases the security dilemma in Lebanese population, that is the atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and lack of information that drive ethnic groups to continuously suspect the intentions of other group members (Lake and Rothchild 1998). Therefore, the faraway conflict is expected to spill over into the national context, affecting interactions between group members (specifically between the immediate family members, other relatives, and friends who are left behind). Indeed, radicalization, first and foremost, starts with social networks (Della Porta 1988; Fair 2004). One could expect this, in turn, to lead to further radicalization in the local population and create a security dilemma. Additionally, one million Syrian refugees and the duration of their stay exacerbate the threat to the local status of groups as refugees. Refugees, with their sizable numbers, often increase the demographic size, saliency, and upward positioning of certain identities at the expense of others. And because refugees may be perceived as altering the welfare, not to mention the social and cultural life of certain groups in Lebanon as their existence facilitates the redistribution of political, economic and social resources within the nation (Fetzer 2000; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). Again, identity affects the psychological lens through which such losses are evaluated. Thus, the existence of refugees further helps the identity groups in Lebanon align their interests to what is happening in SCW because what happens in Syria has repercussions to what happens in Lebanon.

Where the reasoning of the conflict finds seamless resonance with a national cleavage, we expect the 'others' war' to turn into a theater of domestic competition for both sides. Given the nature of the transnational relationships, people in Lebanon develop either a negative or positive attitude toward various groups fighting in Syria, based on how likely they are to influence the national cleavage demarcated sharply along ethnic or religious lines at home. It is well established in the literature that identity groups, based on their status and dominance within their own country can change the local conditions of external kin through various means such as political, military, economic or moral support or leverage (Cederman et al. 2013; Davis and Moore 1997; Saideman 2001; Woodwell 2004). This means, for example, that the empowerment of the Syrian Sunni once the conflict is over can spill over to empower the Sunni in Lebanon. Likewise, the transmission of transnational losses from the Syrian war into the local arena could result in perpetuation of one's inferior status such as the lack of fair representation in government jobs,

unequal citizenship rights, lack of fair judicial processes, violence targeting the group, or even symbolic slippages in the prestige and image of one's identity group (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010, 94). In other words, a war fought abroad is a war at home if the tensions between the transnational identity groups have the power to change dynamics at the national level. Therefore, the attitudes toward the in-group and out-group members in SCW are expected to be in resonance with the national cleavages at home.

What about the attitudes of Maronites, the third actor in Lebanese identity politics? The Maronites have no transnational identity in relation to the civil war in Syria to induce group cohesion from an emotional perspective. Yet, SCW too threatens the Maronites' interests in Lebanon even in the absence of direct ties to the conflicts in Syria. Thus, it is the threats to identity that is effective in determining group attitudes. Since the 1975 Lebanese civil war which pitted the Maronites against the Sunni as well as other Muslim militias, and the loss of political power that came with the end of war, the cleavages between the Maronites and the other two communities have not been stable unlike the constant rift between the Shia and the Sunni communities. The Maronites, now politically and demographically weaker in number than the Muslims, have continuously engaged in strategic alliances with one group versus another to preserve their place in a Muslim-dominated Lebanon.

With the assassination of Prime Minister Saad Hariri (a secular Sunni figure in Lebanese politics, also known as one of the major Sunni leaders in the region), the Aoun-Nasrallah (Maronite-Shiite) alliance has helped curb a potential increase in Sunni dominance in the country and the region. Since then, Hezbollah and Aoun's media have frequently emphasized the close ties between the two groups while denigrating the Sunni actions in Syria (Daher 2015). Hezbollah has employed a winning strategy with the Christians by supporting their strong leader Aoun in presidency; even the anti-Hezbollah Christian party, Lebanese Forces, has described this a positive move for Christian representation in government institutions (Shebaya 2017). The rise of ISIS and the threat it posed has also reduced hostility toward Hezbollah. The successful military action Hezbollah took with the Lebanese Army to eradicate the armed presence of ISIS in northeastern Lebanon along the Syrian border has led to a sigh of relief among the Christians (Malik 2018). In the words of the Maronite patriarch Msgr. Beshara Boutros al-Rahi himself in 2014, "if not for Hezbollah, ISIS would have marched all the way to the (coastal and Christian) town of Jounieh" (Daher 2015). The patriarch obviously assessed that the extent of an ISIS threat went beyond the Christians living in Syria, as the town of Jounieh lies within the borders of Lebanon.

Although some Christians might be aligned with anti-Hezbollah Lebanese Forces, given the salience and seriousness of an ISIS threat reinforcing the role of local identity, and the fact that a Shia alliance constituted by Hezbollah and the Assad Regime is the sole insurance for the survival of Christians in Lebanon, we expect the Maronites to consistently balance their attitudes

toward the actors fighting in SCW. We argue that such considerations help shape the Maronites' attitudes in SCW despite the absence of a Christian group participating in the war. Furthermore, the majority of the Christians are reminded that Hezbollah has recently acted to bolster the position of the Christians in Lebanon, preventing the mounting Sunni pressure aiming to marginalize the Christians (Malik 2018). That is, the Maronites can be expected to support fighters whose empowerment in Syria would, even if indirectly, translate into solid gains for the Christians in Lebanon.

In sum, looking at identities allows us to form expectations about how the Shia, the Sunni and the Maronites in Lebanon are likely to form attitudes on foreign fighters in the context of SCW. The emotional appeal of the Shiites and the Sunnis self-identification with their transnational identity in SCW has been accentuated and triggered by perceived threats. The expectation that such threats are to be transmitted as losses to one's identity in the local arena, have led to in-group favoritism and out – group bias toward fighting groups. In the context of Maronites, where the local identity lacks resonance in SCW, it is solely the existence of threats to their political, economic and symbolic standing in Lebanon which is likely to lead to an alignment of attitudes. Applying our theoretical propositions into the context of Lebanon, we state the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Members of a transnational identity group are more likely to show sympathy and support for their in-group abroad.

> *a: The Sunnis in Lebanon are more likely to support their Sunni brethren (i.e., Free Syrian Army) than non-Sunnis fighting in SCW.*
> *b: The Shiites in Lebanon are more likely to support their Shiite brethren (i.e., Assad Regime) than non-Shiites fighting in SCW.*

Hypothesis 2: Members of a transnational identity group are less likely to show sympathy and support for their out-group abroad.

> *a) The Sunnis in Lebanon are less likely to support the groups fighting against their Sunni brethren (i.e., Assad Regime and YPG – Kurdish insurgents).*
> *b) The Shiites in Lebanon are less likely to support the groups fighting against their Shiite brethren (i.e., Free Syrian Army).*

> *Hypothesis 3: Members of an identity group are more/less likely to show sympathy and support for the in/out-group of their domestic ally/rival abroad.*

> *a) The Maronites in Lebanon are more likely to support the groups fighting in Syria that bolster their status in Lebanon (i.e., Assad Regime and YPG – Kurdish insurgents).*

b) The Maronites in Lebanon are less likely to support the groups fighting in Syria that threaten their status in Lebanon (i.e., Free Syrian Army).

Research Design

To test whether the saliency of an ethno-religious cleavage at home shaped the individuals' tendency to support someone else's fight in a foreign country, we worked with *Statistics Lebanon* to conduct a nation-wide face-to-face survey, which reflected the socioeconomic and confessional demographics in Lebanon between October 2 and 26, 2015. The sample includes 1,200 adults over the age of eighteen. The sample is drawn from surveys conducted in all Lebanese regions: Beirut (10%), Mount Lebanon (40%), the North (20%), the South (11%), El Nabatieh (6%), and Beqaa (13%). There are 877,000 households divided into 1361 districts in Lebanon. Within 1,361 districts, we created 27,550 statistical clusters. Using Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling technique we selected 153 clusters, which is our Primary Sampling Unit. Each cluster includes 100 to 150 households. We, then, chose eight to ten households from each cluster. Using the Kish table, we chose a random respondent in each household. Enumerators with various identity backgrounds were selected carefully to minimize triggering social desirability bias, and they visited any given place of residence a maximum of three times in order to find a potential respondent at home. If the residents were not accessible because they were unwilling to answer or the interviewers were not able to reach them after three trials, we randomly chose the next household to visit.[3] Our sample is representative of the Lebanese socioeconomic and confessional distribution. In the absence of a national census conducted in Lebanon since 1932, we turned to other frequently used sources to compare whether our survey reflected the representative of Lebanese religious and socioeconomic demographics (e.g., CIA Factbook, the Arab Barometer [2013] and the United States State Department data), which was the case (see the Appendix). Taking into account the design effect due to cluster sampling rather than simple random sampling, the margin of error for this survey is ± 3%.

Dependent Variables

We used two sets of dependent variables to test our claims. First, we predicted the sympathy for the actors fighting in Syria. To this end, we asked the respondents which group they supported the most among the Assad Regime forces, the YPG (the Kurdish insurgents) or the Free Syrian Army (FSA – Sunni insurgents).[4]

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[3]One of the authors of this article, running this survey in Lebanon, participated in the training session of the surveyors before running a pilot study.

[4]Whereas the first two groups are more or less homogenous in terms of group boundaries, the Sunni group is heterogeneous in regard to ideological stance, adopted means, and ends. However, based on the preliminary analysis of our survey results, there was insufficient variance in attitudes toward two major extremist groups (ISIS and Al-Nusra, in both countries), making it impossible to derive reliable conclusions based on this limited sample. Therefore, we focused on the Free Syrian Army as the Sunni insurgents in our analysis.

Hence, our first dependent variable is a categorical one, each category representing the most favorable group of a respondent.

Next, we created a second dependent variable to measure the level of support for the actors fighting in SCW. We designed this dependent variable to measure the respondents' operational and logistic support for cross-border actors in the conflict. The literature focuses on direct combat support to measure the impact of foreign fighters. However, the provision of scarce economic resources or assistance in the recruitment process may be of equal importance in tipping the balance of power in external conflicts. Indeed, veteran foreign fighters who return home frequently recruit new freedom fighters for the cause. Thus, to form this variable, we asked three questions to measure each respondent's attitude toward providing combat and logistical support, each measured in a five-point Likert scale. Then, we created an additive index by combining each support type and ended up with a support measure ranging between zero and fifteen, the higher scores indicating greater support.[5]

Independent Variables

Since we hypothesize that ethnic/sectarian identity determines the target of support for cross-border actors in the SCW, our independent variable is each respondent's self-reported ethno-religious identity. We dummy out each ethno-religious identity, namely the Shiite and Sunni in Lebanon, in order to employ them separately in the analysis as binary variables.

One concern in employing ethnic/sectarian identity as the main independent variable in our surveys is that self-identification, in some contexts, may not be sincere. People may hide or intentionally give the wrong information in regard to their ethnic/sectarian backgrounds due to security concerns. Especially in places with frequent ethnic/religious conflicts where the rule of non-democratic, repressive regimes hinges on an alliance with specific ethnic/sectarian groups in the region, requests for identity-related information may not yield accurate results. However, such concerns are limited in the Lebanese case. This context is relatively free from such concerns as the political system encourages ethnic/sectarian groups to become more visible and to acquire high organizational capacity through a proportional representation system, and more importantly, a power-sharing system, that empowers all ethnic groups. In addition, the main identity groups in Lebanon, from which the respondents in our surveys are drawn, happen to be similar in terms of size and organizational capacity. This indicates that they have equivalent political mobilization power in these regards,

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[5]If a respondent does not reveal any sympathy for the group, then their operational and logistic support automatically calculated as zero. This is to differentiate those who reveal sympathy but against any operational/logistic support from those who do not reveal any sympathy at all. We also run each item as separate dependent variables. We further explain the findings in the Result section and report them in the Appendix.

although in terms of culture there may be significant differences between the groups in practice. Comparing the estimated percentages of the respective identity groups and their composition in our survey also obviates potential concerns about the accuracy of the data on self-reported identity (see Appendix).

Control Variables

To account for other factors likely to influence individuals' attitudes toward foreign fighters, we included a number of control variables in our models. The first set of controls consists of demographics such as the age, gender, formal educational level, and income of the respondents, as well as whether or not they are employed in the public sector. We included a second set of variables to account for the factors that shape the political views of the respondents. We controlled for religiosity, an ordinal measure of the extent to which an individual considers religion to be important in his/her daily life. We added two evaluations of the economy to our model: an egocentric evaluation of the economy (the individual's assessment of his/her situation) and a socio-tropic evaluation of the economy (the individual's assessment of the national situation). These are ordinal measures concerned with the individual's satisfaction with domestic politics. To control for political activism, we added a variable indicating whether the respondent voted in the last parliamentary elections in Lebanon. Lastly, we controlled for the frequency with which an individual is exposed to media sources such as TV, radio, and newspapers. We took this step because those who are frequent recipients of political news can be expected to have a greater awareness of political events and the internal and external actors in the SCW than those who are not. This awareness may shape the extent to which respondents make connections across domestic and international contexts.

Empirical Strategy

Our first dependent variable is a categorical one, whereby each category indicates the armed group in Syria for which the survey respondent has the most sympathy. We employed a multinomial logistic regression to predict the role of national identity in explaining support for actors in Syria. Then, given that our second dependent variable (which is designed to measure operational and logistic support) is a summative index ranging from zero to fifteen, we employed an ordinary least square estimation with robust standard errors. Alternatively, we could have used an ordinal least square estimator in our preliminary analysis to treat the values of the dependent variables. This method is especially recommended when an additional assumption is made in the maximum likelihood approach, or more specifically, when the parallel regression lines assumption in the case of ordered logistic regression is

violated. The results of the post-estimation tests, however, show that this is not the case with our models. A comparison of the results from two different estimators do not yield any substantive changes in our findings, and given that interpretation of the coefficients is straightforward in OLS estimation, we report the OLS results in the main models, yet also report ordered logistic regression estimates in the Appendix.

Results

We report our findings in Table 2–4 report the results on the extent to which each identity group sympathizes with the various fighting actors in Syria compared to the absence of sympathizing with any of them. Table 4 shows the logistic and operational support of the Lebanese to the fighting actors in SCW which might be as foreign fighters, recruitment of foreign fighters from Lebanon or financial aid provision to their in-group across the border.

Table 2 shows that the Shiites in Lebanon are significantly more sympathetic toward the Assad regime, and significantly less sympathetic toward the Sunni insurgents (FSA) fighting against the Assad regime and Kurdish insurgents (YPG). On the contrary, the Lebanese Sunni groups express significantly positive attitudes toward the Sunni insurgents and negative attitudes toward the Assad regime and Kurdish insurgents. These findings strongly confirm our theoretical expectations based on the SIT (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). In regard to attitudes toward the rivals (Assad regime and Syrian Kurds for the Sunni in Lebanon, and Syrian Sunni for the Shiites in Lebanon), we found confirmatory results in line with our theoretical expectations as well. Although the Kurds are not a party to the national cleavage in Lebanon, the Shiites, in line with our hypothesis, express positive attitudes toward the Kurdish rebels fighting against the Sunnis in Syria, whereas the Sunnis express negative attitudes. Hence, the findings reveal that when transnational identities are activated as in the case of Lebanon–Syria, it is more likely for individuals to show positive attitudes toward their in-group abroad as well as their allies, and to show negative attitudes toward their out-group abroad and their in-group's rivals. Hence, we statistically confirm Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Yet to conclude the expectations of the SIT, which accounts for the relative gains and losses derived from transnational identity ties, we should also check the attitudes of Maronites toward the Assad regime, Sunni and Kurdish insurgents in Table 3. The Maronites in Lebanon, to remind the reader, are neither a party of the conflict in Syria nor do they share any common identity with the actors fighting in Syria. Moreover, given that they are Christians, it is very unlikely for them to show any sympathy to a sectarian cause within the borders of Syria. Nonetheless, we argue that if the conflict in Syria has direct and indirect impact on the status quo in Lebanese politics, then the Maronites, despite having no cognitive predisposition to do so, are expected to develop

Table 1. Survey questions for dependent variables.

Question for DV 1: As you know, there are several major groups that fight in Syrian conflict. Each group has different causes in this conflict, even though we may disagree (these causes). Nevertheless, one may think that the Syrian regime or one of these groups may deserve our sympathy for different reasons. Among these groups, which one do you have the sympathy the most?

(1) Assad Regime
(2) Al-Nusra
(3) Free Syrian Army
(4) Kurdish Forces
(5) Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)

Question for DV 2: Regarding this group, [GROUP MENTIONED ABOVE] Please tell me if you have a very unfavorable, unfavorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, favorable or very favorable opinion of those who

	1.Very unfavorable	2. Unfavorable	3. Neither favorable nor unfavorable	4. Favorable	5. Very favorable	9. Don't know
(1) Join the fight	1	2	3	4	5	9
(2) Give financial aid to those armed groups in Syrian conflict?	1	2	3	4	5	9
(3) Help these groups to recruit	1	2	3	4	5	9

Table 2. Attitudes of Shiites and Sunnis toward actors fighting in SCW.

	(Shia in Lebanon) Favorable attitudes for			(Sunni in Lebanon) Favorable attitudes for		
	Assad	FSA	YPG	Assad	FSA	YPG
Shiites	3.024***	−1.271[+]	2.747***			
	(0.251)	(0.749)	(0.351)			
Sunnis				−1.832***	1.529***	−1.303***
				(0.213)	(0.225)	(0.360)
News	−0.121	−0.472***	−0.479***	−0.069	−0.486***	−0.406***
	(0.074)	(0.103)	(0.134)	(0.067)	(0.116)	(0.121)
Ego-centric	−0.083	0.305[+]	−0.013	0.120	0.283	0.159
	(0.148)	(0.171)	(0.214)	(0.131)	(0.191)	(0.202)
Socio-tropic	−0.187	−0.225	−2.786**	0.001	−0.164	−2.563*
	(0.233)	(0.312)	(1.040)	(0.199)	(0.305)	(1.010)
Voted in 2009	0.855***	0.630**	0.704*	0.901***	0.691**	0.747**
	(0.177)	(0.221)	(0.287)	(0.160)	(0.229)	(0.286)
Religious	−0.231[+]	−0.046	0.053	−0.244*	−0.066	0.010
	(0.123)	(0.143)	(0.216)	(0.113)	(0.159)	(0.204)
Male	0.151	0.197	0.520*	0.194	0.167	0.562*
	(0.161)	(0.207)	(0.262)	(0.148)	(0.214)	(0.260)
Age	0.007	−0.006	−0.006	−0.015**	0.003	−0.022*
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Education	0.046	−0.011	0.193**	0.014	0.043	0.170**
	(0.035)	(0.048)	(0.062)	(0.034)	(0.050)	(0.063)
Income	0.146*	0.007	0.078	−0.040	0.102	−0.103
	(0.062)	(0.074)	(0.116)	(0.056)	(0.082)	(0.105)
Public Employment	0.114	−0.613	−1.120	0.417	−0.805	−0.765
	(0.392)	(0.659)	(0.819)	(0.305)	(0.644)	(0.777)
Constant	−1.135[+]	−0.019	−0.197	1.211[+]	−1.990[+]	1.661
	(0.685)	(0.866)	(1.689)	(0.632)	(1.025)	(1.661)
Observations	1138			1138		
Pseudo R^2	0.173			0.137		
Log likelihood	−1104.611			−1153.144		
χ^2	277.196			286.083		

Robust standard errors in parentheses, [+] $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

positive or negative attitudes toward some of the actors in Syria in order to better their own group interests locally.

Our first set of multinomial logistic regression analysis show that the Maronites are significantly less likely to show sympathy for FSA (i.e., confirming Hypothesis 3b) and the Assad Regime (i.e., failing to reject the null for Hypothesis 3a) compared to showing no sympathy for any of the actors fighting in SCW, while their attitudes toward YPG is also negative but not significant. In other words, the Maronites, indeed, do not have a clear support for any of the actors fighting in SCW. In fact, the finding that the Maronites do not align themselves directly with the Assad regime or Kurdish insurgents is not very surprising. This is a risk aversive behavior as predicted by the prospect theory. After all, there is no in-group for the Maronites to advance their interests abroad, and hence at home, but various out-groups.

Nevertheless, we further question, if they had to choose among these out-groups, what would be their preference? Although we cannot answer this question directly due to data availability issues, we attempt to indirectly answer this question by revealing the relative attitudinal position of an average Maronite citizen. To this end, we switch the base category to the Sunnis in

Table 3. Attitudes of Maronites toward actors fighting in SCW.

	(Base Category: Non) Favorable attitudes for			(Base Category: Sunni) Favorable attitudes for		
	Assad	FSA	YPG	Non	Assad	YPG
Maronites	−0.660***	−1.142***	−0.419	0.482+	0.724*	1.142***
	(0.157)	(0.252)	(0.282)	(0.257)	(0.344)	(0.252)
News	−0.030	−0.499***	−0.381**	0.469***	0.118	0.499***
	(0.067)	(0.108)	(0.122)	(0.108)	(0.146)	(0.108)
Ego-centric	0.086	0.242	0.154	−0.156	−0.089	−0.242
	(0.126)	(0.175)	(0.198)	(0.176)	(0.232)	(0.175)
Socio-tropic	0.032	−0.263	−2.522*	0.296	−2.259*	0.263
	(0.192)	(0.304)	(1.005)	(0.301)	(1.024)	(0.304)
Voted in 2009	0.967***	0.701**	0.816**	0.267	0.115	−0.701**
	(0.155)	(0.224)	(0.284)	(0.224)	(0.326)	(0.224)
Religious	−0.240*	0.006	0.036	−0.247+	0.030	−0.006
	(0.112)	(0.149)	(0.210)	(0.144)	(0.226)	(0.149)
Male	0.183	0.188	0.535*	−0.004	0.348	−0.188
	(0.142)	(0.208)	(0.257)	(0.208)	(0.297)	(0.208)
Age	−0.003	−0.001	−0.014	−0.003	−0.013	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Education	0.081*	0.021	0.218***	0.060	0.197**	−0.021
	(0.032)	(0.050)	(0.060)	(0.048)	(0.070)	(0.050)
Income	0.024	0.043	−0.044	−0.019	−0.087	−0.043
	(0.054)	(0.074)	(0.105)	(0.074)	(0.116)	(0.074)
Public Employment	0.295	−0.874	−0.846	1.169+	0.028	0.874
	(0.320)	(0.660)	(0.777)	(0.619)	(0.937)	(0.660)
Constant	−0.328	−0.358	0.344	0.030	0.702	0.358
	(0.618)	(0.907)	(1.636)	(0.883)	(1.727)	(0.907)
Observations	1138			1138		
Pseudo R^2	0.065			0.065		
Log likelihood	−1248.851			−1248.851		
χ^2	150.902			150.902		

Robust standard errors in parentheses, + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

the second set of the models. In so doing, we now compare how the Maronites treat all actors fighting in SCW compared to their treatment of the Sunnis. The reason why we choose the Sunni as the reference point is hypothesized above (Hypothesis 3a). Accordingly, we expect the Maronites to show less sympathy toward the Sunni given the alliances and rivalries in Lebanese politics. In the second set of the findings reported in Table 3, we find that the Maronites are more likely to express positive attitudes toward the Assad Regime and YPG compared to Free Syrian Army (the Sunni). In light of these results, we confirm Hypotheses 3b, and find partial support for Hypothesis 3a.

Revealing sympathy for an actor does not automatically imply active support for that actor. To investigate to what extent this sympathy turns into logistic and operational support, we switch our dependent variable and run OLS estimation as reported in Table 4. The Lebanese Shiites are in favor of operational support for the Assad regime and Kurdish insurgents while being against the Sunni insurgents, whereas the Lebanese Sunni are in favor of their brethren in Syria but are against the Shia Assad regime and the Kurds. However, the results warn us to be cautious in reaching any conclusions based on the Maronites' active support of the groups across the border. Some mixed results clearly show that when it comes to operational support

Table 4. Operational and Logistic support for actors fighting in SCW.

DV: Operational & logistic support for	(1) Assad	(2) Assad	(3) Assad	(4) FSA	(5) FSA	(6) FSA	(7) YPG	(8) YPG	(9) YPG
Shiites	6.086*** (0.402)							0.911** (0.281)	
Sunnis		-4.520*** (0.341)		3.257*** (0.364)			-0.647*** (0.191)		
Maronites			-0.968* (0.420)			-1.070*** (0.257)			-0.050 (0.220)
News	-0.180 (0.157)	-0.145 (0.166)	0.035 (0.174)	-0.470*** (0.115)	-0.533*** (0.120)	-0.593*** (0.123)	-0.194* (0.078)	-0.201* (0.080)	-0.169* (0.076)
Ego-centric	-0.562$^+$ (0.307)	-0.088 (0.316)	-0.188 (0.328)	0.329 (0.224)	0.496* (0.232)	0.318 (0.232)	0.058 (0.164)	-0.012 (0.162)	0.048 (0.163)
Socio-tropic	0.237 (0.443)	0.426 (0.490)	0.570 (0.520)	-0.227 (0.311)	-0.224 (0.329)	-0.306 (0.339)	-0.773*** (0.164)	-0.803*** (0.170)	-0.754*** (0.161)
Voted in 2009	1.212** (0.375)	1.563*** (0.383)	1.854*** (0.399)	0.268 (0.258)	0.269 (0.270)	0.123 (0.271)	0.215 (0.209)	0.161 (0.205)	0.254 (0.211)
Religious	-0.380 (0.269)	-0.413 (0.282)	-0.506$^+$ (0.293)	0.046 (0.180)	0.102 (0.189)	0.231 (0.192)	0.260$^+$ (0.145)	0.266$^+$ (0.146)	0.240$^+$ (0.146)
Male	-0.023 (0.351)	0.157 (0.365)	0.107 (0.385)	0.121 (0.247)	0.199 (0.259)	0.168 (0.261)	0.313 (0.200)	0.286 (0.200)	0.305 (0.201)
Age	0.022$^+$ (0.013)	-0.026$^+$ (0.013)	-0.001 (0.014)	0.014 (0.009)	-0.008 (0.010)	0.007 (0.010)	-0.014* (0.007)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.011$^+$ (0.006)
Education	0.062 (0.077)	-0.024 (0.081)	0.151$^+$ (0.086)	0.032 (0.060)	-0.057 (0.063)	-0.048 (0.063)	0.111* (0.046)	0.123** (0.046)	0.133** (0.045)
Income	0.279* (0.122)	-0.107 (0.133)	0.052 (0.137)	0.092 (0.081)	-0.082 (0.086)	0.019 (0.084)	-0.089 (0.076)	-0.032 (0.076)	-0.069 (0.076)
Public Employment	-0.167 (0.785)	0.762 (0.760)	0.723 (0.839)	-0.778* (0.361)	-0.531 (0.374)	-0.980* (0.394)	-0.605* (0.304)	-0.745* (0.317)	-0.599* (0.301)
Constant	2.167 (1.467)	8.004*** (1.606)	3.724* (1.661)	0.246 (1.050)	3.633** (1.118)	2.578* (1.125)	1.608$^+$ (0.839)	0.760 (0.786)	1.034 (0.794)
Observations	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138
R^2	.19	.12	.03	.14	.07	.04	.03	.04	.03

Robust standard errors in parentheses, $^+$ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

(i.e., joining the fight, giving financial aid, or helping recruit fighters), the Maronites are not in support of intended behaviors that could be risky and costly. Coupled with the results in Table 3, it is possible to derive the conclusion that though the Maronites are more sympathetic toward the Assad regime and the Kurds, these sympathies are likely to fall short of engaging in concrete action. This may be because though the Maronites use social balancing to arrive at a cognitive assessment of who is a 'friend' or an 'enemy' in the SCW, compared to the Sunni and the Shiites, the transnational cleavages find the least resonance at home in the case of Maronites.

In Figure 1, we use the estimations in Table 4 to report the impact of belonging to an identity group vs. others on supporting those providing manpower or logistical backup in favor of the groups in Syria. Given that we run OLS model to predict the support with a dependent variable ranging from zero to fifteen, the results reveal the change in support index score. Hence the figure shows that while being a Sunni decreases the operational and logistic support for the Assad regime by approximately 5 points, being a Shiite increases it by 6 points.

In terms of operational support for the Sunni insurgents, we expected the Lebanese Sunni to express positive attitudes toward the active supporters of the group, and the Shiites to express negative ones. This is because, as we argued, fighting for the group was equivalent to fighting for a transnational
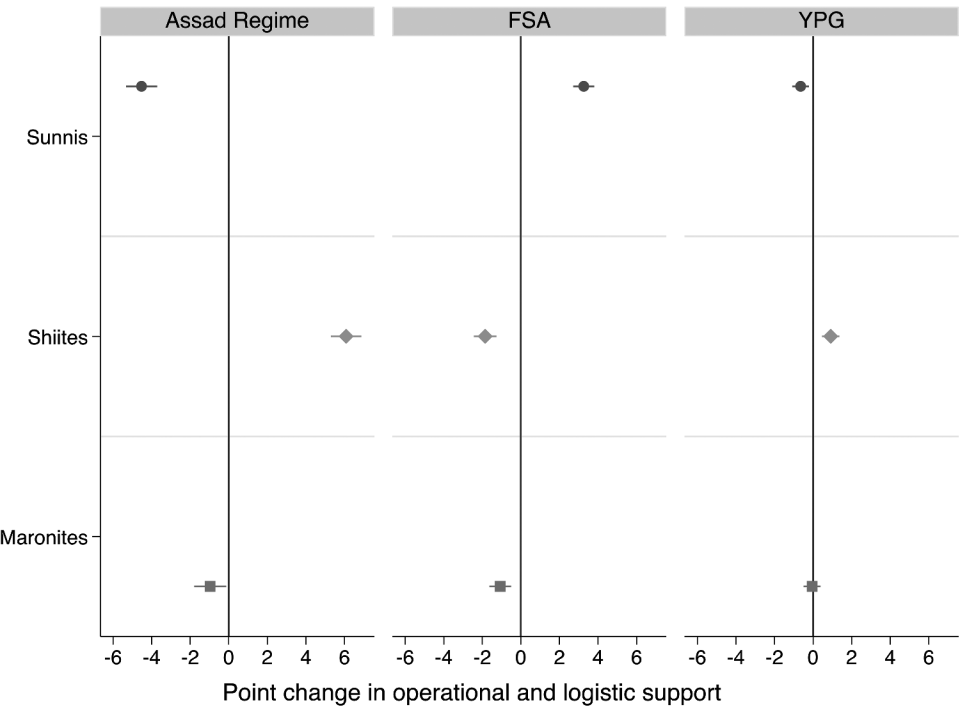

Figure 1. Effect of Identities on Operational and Logistic Support (Based on Table 4).

Sunni identity, despite the Sunni FSA embracing a more secular agenda and declaring its commitment to democracy and human rights numerous times. That said, we find robust empirical support for our claims across all model specifications. Accordingly, sympathy to combat and support for FSA is around 3.5 points more for those belonging to the Sunni sect compared to others. Meanwhile, it is two points less for the Shiites. When it comes to measuring the support of the Maronites, we find that they are not inclined to support the Sunni, a finding we expected. Lastly, being a Lebanese Sunni decreases overall operational support to the Kurds by one-point. On the other hand, an average Lebanese Shiite expresses one-point less support for YPG militants compared to others.

Robustness Checks

To check the robustness of our theoretical claims supported by the empirical analysis, we conducted twofold of robustness checks: 1) we checked the sensitivity of the findings regarding the measurement of the dependent variable, and 2) we tested our theoretical claims in Turkey to see the external validity of our findings. To begin with the first one, we ran models with each support item separately as the dependent variable. We again employed OLS estimation, as the dependent variable is the extent to which individuals favor each support type for each group on a 5-point Likert scale, the higher scores indicating greater support. The results largely hold and confirm all our hypotheses, as reported in the Appendix.

Regarding the second point, one common criticism to public opinion surveys in a single country is the external validity of the findings. To test the generalizability of the causal mechanism, we took an additional step and ran identical models by using original survey data collected in Turkey. We believe that Turkey, as a least-similar comparison case, provides another setting to test our expectations using the SIT, as its citizens have a stake in the SCW similar to the Lebanese case (despite major differences between two countries regarding the political system as well as social and economic conditions). Accordingly, many of Turkey's Kurdish citizens feel kinship ties with the broader Kurdish community in Syria and Iraq (Sarigil Forthcoming). Moreover, the tendency to sympathize with the Kurdish community in Syria, however, goes beyond cognitive and primordialist ties. Therefore, any threat to the transnational identity in the SCW which has been fought over the same salient cleavage as the national one has significant repercussions for the balance of power in Turkey. Any increase in the economic and political power of the Kurds in Syria will have repercussions for the national dynamics in Turkey. Accordingly, Turkish government's strong opposition to the *de jure* or *de facto* independence of the Kurds in Syria threatens the transnational Kurdish identity, whereas the long-standing ties between the YPG in Syria

and the PKK directly jeopardize the Turkish national interest and territorial integrity as Turkey's Minister of National Defense states " … it is not possible to distinguish the structures of the YPG/PYD from the PKK" (Bianet 02.30.2018).

We collected original data in Turkey by conducting face-to-face surveys (see Appendix for the details about the conduct of the survey). To ensure an exact comparison between the two countries, we asked the very same questions to constitute our dependent and independent variables in both surveys. Hence, the sympathy for fighting actors in the SCW is our dependent variable in Table A7, and support for them in Table A8 in the Appendix, and we run the exact same model specifications with the same set of variables.

In terms of the sympathy for actors fighting in Syria, we observe significantly unfavorable attitudes among the Turks, and significantly favorable attitudes among the Kurds, toward the Kurdish insurgents in Syria, as Turks largely consider that Kurdish insurgents are affiliated with the PKK. That is, a powerful YPG means a powerful PKK. Moreover, the Kurds show significantly less sympathy for the Sunnis in Syria fighting against the Kurdish insurgents (YPG). Hence, while transnational identity ties (Kurds in Turkey and Kurds in Syria) are robust in predicting support for in-group fighting far from home, the lack of such ties fails to predict direct support for out-groups, as in the case of Maronites in Lebanon. Yet, examining the results of operational and logistic support for those fighting within the parties of Syrian Civil War, we find that being Turkish significantly predicts support for the FSA, the rival of YPG, which, in return, supported by the Kurds in Turkey. Hence, as in the case of identity groups in Lebanon, we observe very similar attitudinal responses (i.e., showing sympathy for in-groups and against rivals, and expressing operational and logistic support for the in-groups and against the rivals) from both Turks and Kurds given that the consequences of SCW have an impact on the domestic politics.

Conclusion

Third party support is a reality in contemporary conflicts and this support is not only limited to state sponsorships. Foreign fighters, as an example of third-party support in conflicts, have set a precedent, which is very hard to reverse. Foreign fighters do not only radicalize the conflicts to which they contribute, but they also pose threats in their communities once they return from conflict. That is why it is imperative to understand what drives individuals to support a conflict outside of their country and develop sympathy for foreign fighters. We argued in this paper that individuals are more motivated to support others' wars when a faraway conflict finds resonance back at home because of a reciprocal identity cleavage. It is only then that the transnational threat becomes a national one as interests spill over into the local context and

ignorance becomes costly as it jeopardizes one's well-being as well as inter-communal dynamics in one's local community.

By using two original survey studies from Lebanon and Turkey, we show that not only transnational identity ties, but also the domestic power balance shapes the attitudes of individuals in terms of sympathy and support for actors in conflicts abroad. Our findings have important policy implications: first, countries that do not share social cleavages with other countries in civil conflicts have less to worry about their citizens' sympathy or involvement in that civil war across their borders. Second, efforts to end the trend toward foreign fighters must start at home by mending the relations between groups in national contexts, specifically by employing strategies and policies that can create alliances between groups politically, socially, and economically. Cross-cutting cleavages should replace fixed and salient national cleavages, which render politics and daily interactions between groups a zero-sum game.

It is necessary to consider our results in relation to an important limitation pertinent to our central concern of determining the factors that predispose individuals to become, or at least to support, foreign fighters. Given that we lacked fine-grained data on actual foreign fighting, we used a proxy for this action. That is, we used attitudes toward participating in somebody else's war as a proxy, and we collected data by asking individuals direct and indirect questions to determine the extent to which they sympathized with and support fighters in SCW. Obviously, claiming to sympathize with foreign fighters; claiming to provide operational or logistical support or supporting a war fought elsewhere is not equivalent (or even close) to actually participating in a conflict as a foreign fighter. Hence, we believe that we need further large-N studies to examine direct behavioral support for our theoretical claims at the macro-level, and therefore, future research should pay more attention to the presence/absence of this mapping between national and transnational clea-vages and the refined conditions under which it shapes actions (such as foreign fighting) around identities.

We were able to test our expectations better in Lebanon where the national cleavage was aligned rather well with the ethnic/religious cleavage in Syria. In Turkey, where we had a far more limited evidence of an alignment, we were also limited in our ability to understand the attitudes to fighting in SCW. The comparison between the two cases emphasizes the importance of mapping between national and transnational identities when applying the SIT theory. Indeed, the motivation to give support to somebody else's war arises from the harmonious mapping of cleavages and threats salient to a transnational iden-tity onto a corresponding local identity. In such a case, transnational identity becomes as salient as the local one. A faraway conflict finds resonance in another country such that the transnational threat becomes a national one, and inactivity and nonparticipation appear costly as individuals perceive a threat to their well-being as well as to the political and social balance in

their local community. Thus, threats to transnational identity become aggravated to the point of personal survival at home.

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Appendix

Table A1. Support of Lebanon's and Turkey's citizens for fighting actors in Syria.

Most Sympathy for	N of Respondents	%
Lebanon		
The Assad Regime	484	40.3%
Kurdish Insurgents (YPG)	79	6.6%
Free Syrian Army (Sunni)	133	11.1%
Al-Nusra	8	0.7%
ISIS	2	0.2%
None	494	41.2%
Total	1200	100%
Turkey		
The Assad Regime	30	2.6%
Kurdish Insurgents (YPG)	129	11.4%
Free Syrian Army (Sunni)	126	11.1%
ISIS	22	1.9%
None	659	58%
NA/DK	170	15%
Total	1136	100%

[a]Sunni radical groups Al-Nusra and ISIS were included into Free Syrian Army in the analysis

Table A2. Identities of respondents in Lebanon.

	How would you describe your religious denomination?							
Mouhafaza	Sunni	Shiite	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholics	Druze	Other	Total
Beirut	60	10	26	7	10	0	7	120
El Nabatieh	0	70	0	0	0	0	0	70
Bekaa	40	80	10	2	8	20	0	160
Mount Lebanon	30	70	218	33	27	80	22	480
North	160	0	57	22	1	0	0	240
South	30	80	18	0	2	0	0	130
Total	320	310	329	64	48	100	29	1,200
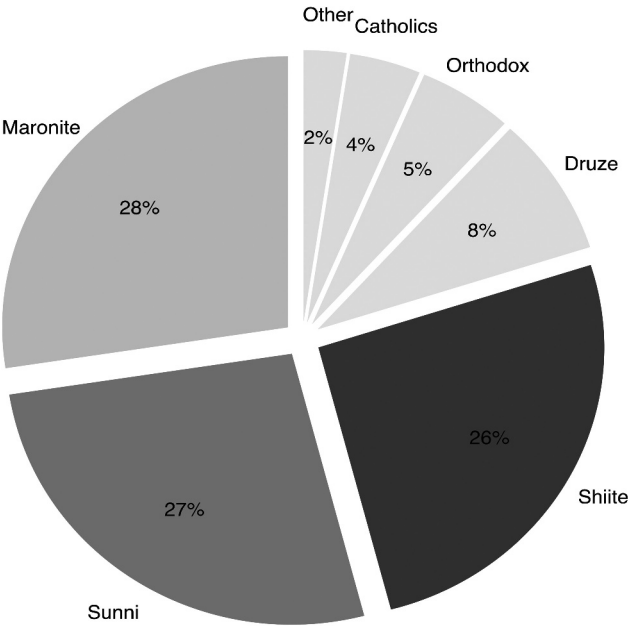
Figure A1. Representative power of the survey in Lebanon.[a] [a]According to estimates provided by the CIA and *The World Factbook*, in 2012, Sunnis and Shiites each comprised 27% of the population whereas Maronites comprised around 28%. These figures are in line with our distribution in the survey data, although Maronites are slightly overrepresented in our survey.

Table A3. Descriptive statistics for the main analyses – Lebanon.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	N	Mean	Sd	Min	Max
Support for Assad Regime	1,200	4.732	6.231	0	15
Support for FSA	1,200	1.484	4.221	0	15
Support for YPG	1,200	0.803	3.199	0	15
Sunnis	1,200	0.267	0.442	0	1
Shiites	1,200	0.258	0.438	0	1
Maronites	1,200	0.274	0.446	0	1
Media	1,155	2.950	1.089	1	5
Ego-centric	1,198	1.504	0.602	1	3
Socio-tropic	1,186	1.141	0.378	1	3
Voted in 2009	1,198	0.584	0.493	0	1
Religious	1,197	3.063	0.653	1	4
Male	1,200	0.500	0.500	0	1
Age	1,200	44.18	15.69	18	81
Education	1,200	6.656	2.441	1	11
Income	1,200	4.272	1.414	1	8
Public employment	1,200	0.0550	0.228	0	1

Table A4. Replication of Table 4 using ordered logistic regression.

DV: Operational & logistic support for	(1) Assad	(2) Assad	(3) Assad	(4) FSA	(5) FSA	(6) FSA	(7) YPG	(8) YPG	(9) YPG
Shiites	1.789*** (0.133)						1.001*** (0.275)		
Sunnis		−1.972*** (0.200)			2.184*** (0.211)			−1.022** (0.344)	
Maronites			−0.325* (0.145)	−3.282*** (0.716)		−0.837*** (0.245)			0.033 (0.267)
News	−0.051 (0.056)	−0.050 (0.055)	0.020 (0.055)	−0.418*** (0.101)	−0.461*** (0.115)	−0.469*** (0.104)	−0.345** (0.121)	−0.307** (0.109)	−0.279* (0.111)
Ego-centric	−0.162 (0.105)	−0.004 (0.100)	−0.029 (0.098)	0.372* (0.168)	0.244 (0.186)	0.223 (0.167)	−0.083 (0.198)	0.029 (0.187)	0.040 (0.186)
Socio-tropic	−0.008 (0.137)	0.071 (0.143)	0.130 (0.143)	−0.146 (0.277)	−0.140 (0.265)	−0.212 (0.272)	−2.607* (1.027)	−2.506* (1.014)	−2.448* (1.007)
Voted in 2009	0.484*** (0.137)	0.583*** (0.143)	0.651*** (0.136)	0.285 (0.214)	0.295 (0.217)	0.173 (0.208)	0.190 (0.273)	0.250 (0.277)	0.301 (0.274)
Religious	−0.124 (0.097)	−0.134 (0.098)	−0.165+ (0.095)	0.075 (0.142)	0.071 (0.158)	0.159 (0.142)	0.188 (0.203)	0.176 (0.189)	0.166 (0.194)
Male	0.036 (0.126)	0.046 (0.129)	0.052 (0.125)	0.150 (0.201)	0.087 (0.205)	0.097 (0.197)	0.376 (0.252)	0.403 (0.254)	0.385 (0.251)
Age	0.007 (0.005)	−0.009+ (0.005)	−0.001 (0.005)	−0.008 (0.007)	0.009 (0.008)	0.002 (0.007)	−0.012 (0.009)	−0.019* (0.009)	−0.016+ (0.009)
Education	0.029 (0.028)	0.000 (0.029)	0.056* (0.028)	−0.049 (0.047)	0.015 (0.049)	−0.045 (0.047)	0.175*** (0.059)	0.159*** (0.060)	0.176** (0.057)
Income	0.084* (0.041)	−0.039 (0.042)	0.008 (0.042)	−0.067 (0.070)	0.090 (0.077)	0.016 (0.068)	−0.027 (0.105)	−0.118 (0.101)	−0.086 (0.101)
Public Employment	−0.041 (0.243)	0.192 (0.204)	0.209 (0.215)	−0.612 (0.597)	−0.997+ (0.542)	−1.008+ (0.594)	−1.276+ (0.756)	−0.963 (0.731)	−0.917 (0.727)
Observations	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138	1138
Pseudo R^2	0.063	0.053	0.013	0.084	0.128	0.042	0.066	0.062	0.050
Log likelihood	−1559.320	−1577.062	−1643.308	−547.942	−521.459	−572.811	−367.829	−369.348	−374.366
χ^2	223.488	120.931	44.295	50.048	135.089	41.891	42.037	44.851	34.139

Robust standard errors in parentheses, + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A5. Disaggregated operational and logistic support in Lebanon.

| | Assad Regime | | | FSA | | | YPG | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
	Fight	Aid	Recruitment	Fight	Aid	Recruitment	Fight	Aid	Recruitment
Shiites	1.720***	1.584***	1.590***	−0.300***	−0.272***	−0.283***	0.265**	0.287***	0.294***
	(0.189)	(0.186)	(0.186)	(0.096)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.105)	(0.102)	(0.102)
Sunnis	−0.983***	−0.936***	−0.941***	0.876***	0.857***	0.850***	−0.102	−0.091	−0.092
	(0.169)	(0.165)	(0.164)	(0.149)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.079)	(0.072)	(0.072)
Maronites	−0.034	−0.148	−0.171	−0.147	−0.122	−0.131	0.032	0.054	0.046
	(0.189)	(0.183)	(0.183)	(0.110)	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.092)	(0.087)	(0.086)
News	−0.072	−0.080	−0.090*	−0.147***	−0.153***	−0.153***	−0.077***	−0.065**	−0.070***
	(0.054)	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Ego-centric	−0.092	−0.164	−0.165	0.150**	0.146*	0.150**	0.016	−0.006	−0.001
	(0.104)	(0.103)	(0.102)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.054)
Socio-tropic	0.081	0.067	0.078	−0.046	−0.068	−0.057	−0.288***	−0.263***	−0.265***
	(0.151)	(0.148)	(0.150)	(0.106)	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Voted in 2009	0.403***	0.373***	0.369***	0.106	0.114	0.103	0.052	0.053	0.043
	(0.128)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.088)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.069)
Religious	−0.119	−0.091	−0.077	0.017	0.004	0.010	0.083	0.092*	0.089*
	(0.093)	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.060)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.048)
Male	0.022	−0.013	0.006	0.038	0.033	0.030	0.105	0.097	0.091
	(0.119)	(0.116)	(0.115)	(0.082)	(0.081)	(0.080)	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.066)
Age	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.005	0.005	0.005	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Education	0.000	−0.002	0.002	0.004	0.003	0.005	0.040**	0.037**	0.034**
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Income	0.033	0.056	0.052	0.028	0.031	0.032	−0.022	−0.013	−0.010
	(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Public Employment	−0.010	0.021	0.029	−0.279**	−0.312***	−0.289**	−0.241**	−0.263***	−0.225**
	(0.263)	(0.248)	(0.256)	(0.121)	(0.112)	(0.115)	(0.112)	(0.096)	(0.111)
Constant	1.703***	1.560***	1.514***	0.169	0.207	0.170	0.394	0.317	0.362
	(0.525)	(0.507)	(0.508)	(0.361)	(0.357)	(0.355)	(0.276)	(0.279)	(0.258)
Observations	1131	1136	1136	1137	1137	1137	1136	1136	1136
R^2	.23	.21	.22	.14	.14	.14	.04	.04	.04

Robust standard errors in parentheses, $^+$ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A6. Descriptive statistics for main analyses – Turkey.

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) Mean	(3) Sd	(4) Min	(5) Max
Support for FSA	1,136	0.751	2.535	0	15
Support for YPG	1,136	0.960	3.273	0	15
Turk	1,125	0.619	0.486	0	1
Kurd	1,125	0.346	0.476	0	1
Media	1,122	4.605	1.960	1	7
Ego-centric	1,133	5.374	2.920	1	10
Socio-tropic	1,095	2.149	1.091	1	10
Voted in 2015	989	0.890	0.313	0	1
Religious	1,109	6.684	2.360	1	10
Male	1,136	0.510	0.500	0	1
Age	1,136	37.62	13.37	18	77
Education	1,134	4.175	1.515	1	8
Income	1,015	4.597	2.466	1	10
Public employment	1,117	0.021	0.145	0	1

Turkish case as a robustness check:

While Turkey offers the presence of a domestic cleavage that partially reverberates in SCW, the lack of a salient Sunni vs. Shia divide or competition makes Turkey a less similar case within the Middle East as compared to Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Yemen (countries with a significant and salient Shiite population). As a major difference between Turkey and Lebanon, the national cleavage in Lebanon centers around the Sunni–Shia divide and it is encompassed in the conflict in Syria, making the conflict and the threat national, not just transnational. However, this is only partially true in the case of Turkey. The national cleavage centers around the Turkish–Kurdish divide in Turkey. Kurdish identity is made salient in Syria through the efforts of the YPG, a Kurdish insurgent group fighting in Syria. Yet, the mapping between the national cleavage in Turkey and Syria ends there. Certainly, the majority of the Kurds in Turkey are Sunni and the majority of Turks are Sunni, which means that religion cuts across ethnicity in Turkey. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that religiosity reduces support for the PKK, which was about 45% among Kurds across Turkey in 2013 (Karakoç and Sarıgil 2020, 16). Hence, unlike Lebanon, we can contend that the application of argument does not cut both ways in the Turkish case; we only expect to see in-group favoritism from the Kurds as the cognitive approach of SIT predicts, and out-group negativity from Turks to YPG in Syria as the realistic approach of SIT predicts.

We collected original data in Turkey by conducting face-to-face surveys with a sample of citizens selected at random from three cities: Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Diyarbakir. Whereas the religious groups in Lebanon are relatively equally distributed in Lebanon, this is not the case in Turkey. The exact number of Kurdish citizens living in Turkey is predicted as 18–20% of the society; yet, they are also asymmetrically located in Turkey. Therefore, we adopted a mixed-sampling strategy: a convenience sampling method to choose cities that ensure sufficient numbers of Turks and Kurds would participate in the study, and random sampling to choose respondents from each city. That said, Istanbul is a cosmopolitan city with nearly 15 million inhabitants including various ethnic and religious backgrounds, so a scaled image of Turkey, the city of Diyarbakir is a Kurdish stronghold with around two million inhabitants. Lastly, Gaziantep is a city located along the Syrian border with a significant presence of both ethnicities. Hence, our sample is not nationally representative; yet, representative of the actual ethnic and socioeconomic distribution in these three cities. Building on the population distribution of the cities, between December 24, 2016, and January 22, 2017–a period when the conflict still involved all the actors in Syria–we interviewed 1,136 people over the age of 18: Istanbul

(N = 518), Gaziantep (N = 315), and Diyarbakir (N = 303).[6] Additionally, ISIS attacks and the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army in Turkey were present before the survey was conducted, only serving to emphasize the saliency of the in-group vs. out-group dichotomy.

Our independent variable is self-reported ethnic identity (i.e., the fact of being a Turk or a Kurd). We also controlled for demographics, political attitude, and political information seeking and activism, as in the case of the Lebanon survey. Finally, we followed the same empirical strategy, as our unit of interest and the method for measuring dependent variables are also the same. Replication of the analysis conducted for Lebanon is reported for Turkey below. In Table A8, we only report the estimates of operational and logistic support for Free Syrian Army and YPG because when it comes to the Assad regime, there is almost no variation in the data. This is because 1) the Turkish government was publicly denouncing the Assad government, 2) The Turkish fighter jet was shot down by the Assad regime back in 2012 and 3) there is no salient transnational identity alignment with the minority groups from Turkey and the Assad regime.

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[6]We selected 141 districts randomly from all three cities to ensure a representative sample for each city. Four streets were randomly chosen from each district, and then two houses were selected randomly from each street for an interview. In the case of no response, the interviewers skipped three houses and conducted an interview with the fourth one. The interviews were held only with household members. Thirty-one interviewers carefully selected by Infakto to represent the ethnic and religious characteristics of the cities and districts conducted the interviews.

Table A7. Turkey – survey questions.

Question for DV 1:
As you know, there are several major groups that fight in Syrian conflict. Each group has different causes in this conflict, even though we may disagree (these causes). Nevertheless, one may think that the Syrian regime or one of these groups may deserve our sympathy for different reasons. Among these groups, which one do you have the sympathy the most?

(1) Assad Regime
(2) Al-Nusra
(3) Free Syrian Army
(4) Kurdish Forces (PYD-YPG)
(5) Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)

Question for DV 2:
Regarding this group, -[GROUP MENTIONED ABOVE] Please tell me if you have a very unfavorable, unfavorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, favorable or very favorable opinion of those who

	1.Very unfavorable	2. Unfavorable	3. Neither favorable nor unfavorable	4. Favorable	5. Very favorable	9. Don't know
(1) Join the fight	1	2	3	4	5	9
(2) Give financial aid to those armed groups in Syrian conflict?	1	2	3	4	5	9
(3) Help these groups to recruit	1	2	3	4	5	9

Table A8. Attitudes of Turks and Kurds toward actors fighting in SCW.

	(Turks in Turkey) Favorable attitudes for				(Kurds in Turkey) Favorable attitudes for			
	Assad	FSA	YPG	ISIS	Assad	FSA	YPG	ISIS
Turk	0.568	0.381	-2.702***	-0.986+				
	(0.658)	(0.309)	(0.350)	(0.532)				
Kurd					-0.337	-0.418	2.612***	0.941+
					(0.662)	(0.332)	(0.328)	(0.542)
News	-0.004	0.190*	0.145*	0.078	-0.010	0.188*	0.179*	0.081
	(0.126)	(0.074)	(0.070)	(0.136)	(0.125)	(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.136)
Ego-centric	0.010	0.063	-0.134**	0.218*	0.020	0.063	-0.152**	0.215*
	(0.092)	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.108)	(0.091)	(0.046)	(0.050)	(0.108)
Socio-tropic	0.097	0.548***	-0.557***	0.019	0.106	0.548***	-0.532**	0.020
	(0.225)	(0.112)	(0.171)	(0.241)	(0.224)	(0.112)	(0.171)	(0.240)
Voted in 2015	13.559	-0.207	0.812+	-0.593	14.237	-0.212	0.756+	-0.598
	(563.487)	(0.415)	(0.455)	(0.709)	(776.513)	(0.415)	(0.456)	(0.705)
Religious	-0.304***	-0.068	-0.165**	-0.230*	-0.302***	-0.066	-0.218***	-0.237*
	(0.091)	(0.054)	(0.058)	(0.103)	(0.090)	(0.054)	(0.060)	(0.103)
Male	-0.093	0.773**	0.556*	0.798	-0.099	0.772**	0.587*	0.819
	(0.471)	(0.249)	(0.272)	(0.539)	(0.470)	(0.249)	(0.274)	(0.539)
Age	-0.010	0.004	-0.026*	0.012	-0.009	0.005	-0.024*	0.012
	(0.019)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.020)
Education	-0.053	-0.063	0.156	0.119	-0.033	-0.060	0.124	0.112
	(0.196)	(0.094)	(0.113)	(0.188)	(0.193)	(0.094)	(0.113)	(0.188)
Income	0.120	0.190***	-0.265***	0.085	0.124	0.189***	-0.257***	0.084
	(0.105)	(0.054)	(0.073)	(0.118)	(0.106)	(0.054)	(0.074)	(0.117)
Public Employment	0.540	-0.341	-0.189	1.136	0.522	-0.333	-0.289	1.116
	(1.225)	(0.711)	(1.052)	(0.917)	(1.220)	(0.712)	(1.071)	(0.918)
Constant	-15.445	-5.184***	1.757+	-4.347**	-15.801	-4.831***	-0.507	-5.215**
	(563.489)	(0.886)	(0.893)	(1.682)	(776.514)	(0.884)	(0.949)	(1.754)
Observations	750				750			
Pseudo R^2	0.254				0.253			
Log likelihood	-584.097				-585.090			
χ^2	397.366				395.378			

Robust standard errors in parentheses, + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A9. Attitudes of Turks and Kurds toward actors fighting in SCW.

DV: Operational & logistic support for	(1) FSA	(2) FSA	(3) FSA	(4) FSA	(5) YPG	(6) YPG	(7) YPG	(8) YPG
Turk	0.803***	0.344+			−1.978***	−1.894***		
	(0.155)	(0.205)			(0.193)	(0.260)		
Kurd			−0.825***	−0.307			2.121***	2.094***
			(0.158)	(0.211)			(0.196)	(0.265)
News		0.158**		0.157**		0.261***		0.280***
		(0.050)		(0.050)		(0.064)		(0.063)
Ego-centric		0.050		0.052		−0.093*		−0.095*
		(0.034)		(0.034)		(0.043)		(0.043)
Socio-tropic		0.321***		0.322***		−0.387***		−0.362**
		(0.090)		(0.090)		(0.114)		(0.113)
Voted in 2015		−0.016		−0.014		0.881*		0.902*
		(0.305)		(0.305)		(0.385)		(0.384)
Religious		−0.011		−0.010		−0.087+		−0.100*
		(0.040)		(0.040)		(0.050)		(0.050)
Male		0.692***		0.690***		0.246		0.249
		(0.183)		(0.183)		(0.231)		(0.230)
Age		−0.004		−0.004		−0.030**		−0.030**
		(0.007)		(0.007)		(0.009)		(0.009)
Education		−0.085		−0.082		0.038		0.026
		(0.074)		(0.074)		(0.093)		(0.093)
Income		0.166***		0.168***		−0.271***		−0.258***
		(0.042)		(0.042)		(0.053)		(0.053)
Public Employment		−0.158		−0.158		−0.211		−0.306
		(0.587)		(0.588)		(0.743)		(0.740)
Constant	0.259*	−1.549*	1.041***	−1.267+	2.193***	4.402***	0.236*	2.424**
	(0.122)	(0.610)	(0.093)	(0.649)	(0.152)	(0.772)	(0.115)	(0.817)
Observations	1125	843	1125	843	1125	843	1125	843
Pseudo R^2	.02	.11	.02	.11	.09	.21	.09	.22

Robust standard errors in parentheses, + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.
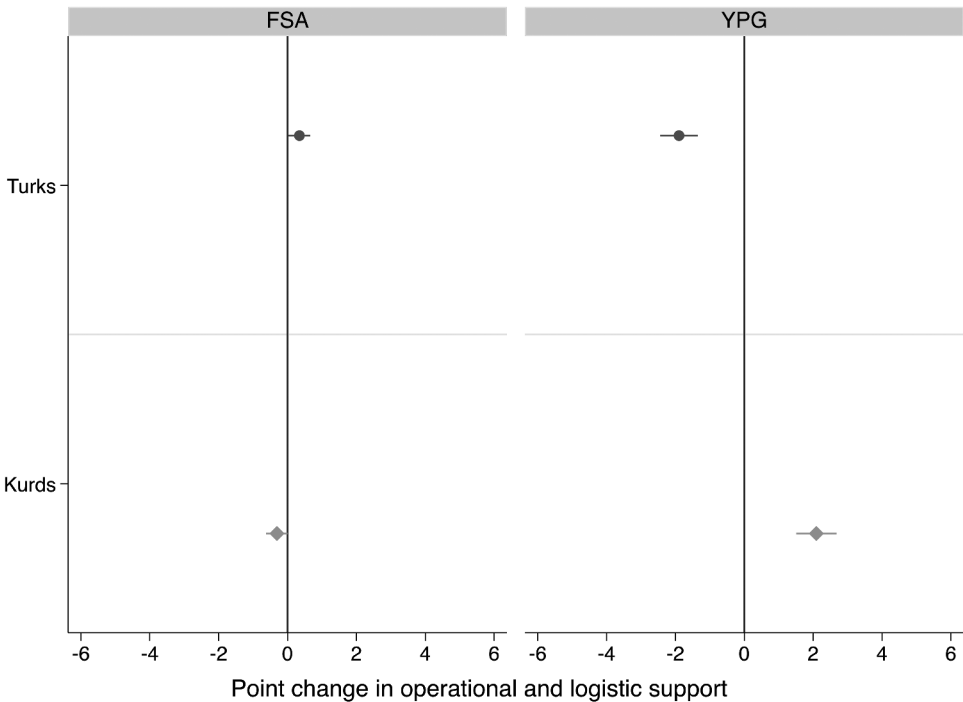
Figure A2. Effect of identities in Turkey on operational and logistic support (based on models 2, 4, 6, 8 of Table A9).