

The etiology of support for violence: the role of legal culture, personality, and life circumstances

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Using data from the 2020 CCES, this paper investigates the sources of support for several forms of politically motivated violence: protest violence, vigilante violence, and (illegitimate) police violence. Findings suggest that non-economic factors are the primary drivers of this support: negative emotions, an external locus of control (Bandura, 2015) and personality (dogmatism and a lower sense of empathy, and optimism) predicts higher support for violence, while support for the rule of law and other democratic norms strongly reduce violent tendencies. Findings also provide a clue for why economic factors do not always predict outbreaks of various forms of violence: many of these non-economic factors seem to be “activated” by economic grievances. A corollary of this is that the absence of economic grievances reduce the impact of negative life experiences and personality. The analysis suggests that when people’s expectations about their life, status, and social identity are violated, they support violence at higher levels. Interestingly, racial or ethnic group identity reduces support for violence among non-whites, but among whites, such an identity increases support for violence. That, combined with the inference from the external locus of control, suggests that when people are empowered to influence the electoral system or in their own lives, they do not support violence.

Using data from the 2020 CCES, this paper investigates the sources of support for several forms of politically motivated violence among U.S. residents: protest violence, vigilante violence, and (illegitimate) police violence. One puzzle emanating from the scholarship of political violence suggest that economic deprivation – even relative deprivation – does not always predict outbreaks of violence. Because much of political violence is studied at the aggregate level, the micro foundations are less well understood, making it difficult to extract a generalizable explanation for what causes ordinary people to support or participate in violence.

To be sure, what causes ordinary residents of the U.S. to support political violence in 2020 cannot be generalized to other historical, geographical, and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, the timing of this survey corresponded with the increased violence between protesters and police in the summer of 2020, not to mention the violence that culminated with the January 6th capitol riot. Moreover, a cursory glance at U.S. history reveals many periods of intense (racist) vigilante violence in the South and the “Wild West,” race riots, domestic terrorism, and police violence, not to mention the fact that the U.S. has participated in at least one foreign war virtually every year since WWII.

The U.S. therefore is an important context for understanding what contributes to support for using violence as a political tool. Indeed, scholars of comparative violence have put out alarm bells that, having applied what they learned from other systems, that the U.S. is showing signs of moving toward another civil war, or at least that we are heading toward a period of increased political violence (Walter 2022). This makes the U.S. a good place to put some of the theories explaining political violence from other contexts to a micro level test. Theoretical generalizability notwithstanding, the political violence in the current context makes this an important question in the U.S. in and of itself.

Before creating our survey instrument in the spring of 2020, we conducted a thorough literature review of the comparative and historical literatures about factors believed to be at the source of political violence, both in the U.S., where the literature in political science is sparse

(c.f. for example, Kalmoe and Mason, 2022; Olzak, 1992) and in other countries and time periods. Our interpretation of that literature is that a bird's eye view reveals an important similarity: when people have reason to feel badly about their place in society, particularly when they have reason to expect better, bouts of violence are more likely. Often, this has to do with various racial, ethnic, and political identities, but much of the literature focuses on economic grievances, likely because these attributes can be measured at an aggregate level.

As our data quality has improved, scholars have learned something interesting: economic grievances (despite increasingly creative measures) are not always directly tied to supporting or participating in violence. Moreover, intense ethnic conflict does not always predict bouts of violence. As one example, Javeline and Baird's (2011) systematic survey of the *population* of victims of the horrific Beslan hostage taking reveals a "surprisingly nonviolent aftermath" and report that victims' support for violent retaliation was low. Indeed, those in dominant racial or ethnic groups are more likely to choose violence, not when they suffer, but when they have been exposed to some signal that a group they perceive to be of lower status (i.e. African Americans) begins to increase in economic or political power (e.g. Obama's election).¹ Those in the minority tend to support or participate in violence when they improve their economic circumstances. For instance, Hillsend (2015) finds that when young Palestinians become more educated and have

¹ Two seemingly unrelated studies of violence tell a similar story. Klan violence in the U.S. and political vigilantism in Eastern Europe at the close of WWII reveal this similarity. Olzak (1992) finds that Klan violence occurred when people had reason to believe that African Americans were doing well politically and economically (e.g. bombing of "Black Wall Street," in Tulsa). Petersen (2002) conducts a case study that highlights the vigilantes in Latvia targeted ethnic Germans who had recently obtained political power during the Nazi occupation. He compares this to the vigilantism in Lithuania, which targeted Jews, who had been ushered into political power by the Soviet Union. As Peterson puts it: vigilantism was driven by "status concerns, especially the loss of dominance" (2002, p. 205).

more income they support violence more than their less educated counterparts), suggesting that as people hope for better but are thwarted, they support violence at higher levels. Putting these theories into a more all-encompassing understanding, we believe that much of this scholarship points to “violated expectations” as the root of political violence for both majorities and minorities.

In other words, support for violence may not always be about people’s hatred of “the other.” It may also be a function of various personality traits, social identity, beliefs, and personal life circumstances. Because of the dearth of micro level studies on support for violence are more rare than contextual studies, we know little about these individual level attributes interact with economic variables. Because so much previous scholarship has focused on relative deprivation, usually measured by societal levels of inequality, we included original measures of multiple dimensions of people’s perceptions of relative deprivation that focuses on the meaning of “relative.” In other words, we wanted to understand: relative to whom? Using variables that measure people’s sense of their economic situation, as compared to 1) their own expectations, 2) their family and friends, and 3) the rest of the country allows us to test the theory of relative deprivation – which has dominated the political violence literature – more extensively.

Having stated our initial purpose, it is important to lay out some caveats, the importance of which cannot be overstated. *We are not arguing that we can assume that the sources of violence in other contexts can automatically be compared to the U.S.* Instead, we argue that what we learn from these literatures, in conjunction with a review of the political and social psychology literatures in the U.S., *can help us generate hypotheses that we put to the test in this manuscript.* Moreover, given that this project takes place during the infancy of our understanding of the micro level processes of support for violence in the U.S., *these findings are about as far from conclusive as any study that uses survey data.* Moreover, the fact that the study took place during an extraordinary time period (e.g. the COVID pandemic and resulting economic shutdown and joblessness, the unusual success of the Black Lives Matter social movement after George Floyd was murdered, the angry clashes between protesters and the police in the summer

of 2020, and the relatively widespread white nationalist violence that culminated with an insurrection) makes us *entirely incapable of reaching any conclusions that could be generalizable* to other time periods in the United States context. *Moreover, obviously, we do not attempt to make any causal inferences as observational survey data do not allow for causal inference.*

On the other hand, we hope that this study can help us generate the seed of our understanding of what might have been at the source of the violence we observed in 2020. It may be that these original data we collected may be the only survey data we have on support for the most common forms of political violence we observed during this time period: the violence perpetrated by the police, protesters, and vigilantes (though, unlike, we do not have indicators of “partisan violence”). Because of the topic’s importance, we believe that we are justified in searching far and wide for clues for what may have been at the source of this violence, its support, or its acquiescence, *the critiques of which* will form the basis for what we hope will be a burgeoning literature on the sources of support for all kinds of political violence. We believe that while a theory of American exceptionalism can be used as a lens to criticize our use of comparative literature to generate hypotheses, we also argue that American exceptionalism may be at the root of scholars’ widespread lack of attention to Americans’ acceptance of violence as a political tool. If we had an extensive political psychology literature conducted in the U.S. to build on, we wouldn’t have to rely on clues from comparative scholarship.

While we believe that the strength of this manuscript will come from future scholars’ critiques this work, we also believe that the strength of this project is its unusually violent time period, which may have unearthed support for violence that may have been dormant. Another strength of these data is that our predictors are widespread in nature. As a preview, we have multiple indicators in the following categories:

- people’s economic circumstances, including multiple measures of various perceptions of relative deprivation

- government trust and political efficacy, including whether respondents blame the system for their problems (or the problems of those like themselves)
- people's noneconomic life circumstances, including life changes in the last year (e.g. had a child, or were divorced), whether people sense that they have control over their life (using Bandura's work as inspiration), and their experience of negative emotions in their personal life (anger, hatred, and loneliness)
- group identification (both superordinate and subgroup – class, race, and political group identities), including how people see themselves and whether they see their fate as linked to those groups)
- democratic norms, including a variety of indicators of legal culture
- personality: affective empathy, authoritarianism, dogmatism, trait optimism, and social desirability

The most important predictors of violence are the daily experience of personal anger and hatred, support for the rule of law, and an external locus of control in one's personal life. Other findings suggest that while economic perceptions are correlated with support for violence, the impact seems to be mediated by an external locus of control (another explanation being that an external locus of control causes their sense of economic grievance). Of all the economic indicators, what seems to matter most is the sense that the "country has left them behind," not when they are doing more poorly than they expected or as compared to their family and friends.

Some of our puzzling findings led us to test some interactions between people's life circumstances and personality traits. Economic factors matter most when activated by trait optimism and a superordinate identification, which suggests that they matter most when people had reason to expect better, consistent with our theory of "violated expectations." The negative aspects of a person's personal life depress the impact of democratic norms, whereas dogmatism tends to intensify the effect of those negative circumstances, including economic grievances.

But we also find an underlying theme that empowerment (both personal and political) ameliorates support for violence. As one prominent example: African Americans who exhibit a strong group identification (both linked fate and how they see themselves), *are significantly less violent than any other racial or ethnic group*. African Americans without group identification

exhibit higher support for violence than any other group. Moreover, we find that *partisanship reduces support for violence* (though we neither include measure of extreme partisanship, nor measures of partisan violence), so this finding does not undermine the important findings of Kalmoe and Mason (2022). Even more telling, those partisans who report particularly negative feeling thermometers for the opposite party (again, not a measure of extreme partisanship) exhibit lower levels of support for violence, though controlling for indicators of political efficacy reduces this effect entirely to zero. In other words, partisanship, as it is normally measured, indicates that a person may believe in conventional or electoral avenues to pursue political change, whereas those who are not electorally empowered may turn to violence as the avenue. This in combination with the extraordinary explanatory power of the external locus of control suggests that people may turn to violence as a vehicle to claim power when they are otherwise unempowered.

The data

We use original data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES, n=1,000), a nationally representative sample² fielded in the summer and fall of 2020. The CCES is an online national stratified sample survey administered by YouGov. The time period of the survey obviously turned out to be a period defined by extraordinary political violence, including protest violence, police violence, and even vigilante violence. At first glance, this may seem as though this time period is not generalizable to others, but on the other hand, the U.S. has more political violence in its history than its (mostly) absence from the political violence literature would suggest. To reiterate, because the *political psychology* of support for violence in the U.S. is in its infancy, we make use of literatures from the comparative and historical literature about the roots of violence so that these literatures can speak to one another.

² The CCES has recently been criticized for its lack of representativeness, so this must be considered when evaluating these findings (Herrick and Pryor 2020).

Literature review

Much of the literature on political violence (e.g. Gurr, 1970; Muller and Seligson, 1987) has tended to focus on relative deprivation, usually measured by aspects of political and economic inequality at the state (or other geographic unit) level. Looking closely at the contextual similarities across very different forms of politically motivated violence, across history and throughout the world, reveals that they often happen when people occupying the “lower echelons” begin to exhibit either political or economic power. When those occupying higher (racial, ethnic, religious, or ideological) echelons cannot depend on the political system to preserve their superordinate status, there is an increased likelihood of bouts of political, vigilante, or inter-group violence (Olzak 1992; Petersen 2002). The micro level implication of this is that, as people feel their political system has abandoned them (or people like them), they will be more likely to support state or other forms of violence.

A more general form of this theory can be extended to those with lower status: when the political system is perceived to harm people like them when they had reason to expect better, they are more likely to support violence. While some support for violence may be a function of material conditions, findings here imply that support for violence can be exacerbated by non-economic personal circumstances: loneliness, negative emotions, and having an external locus of control (Bandura 2015). Unsurprisingly, support for aspects of the U.S. legal and political culture (e.g. support for the rule of law, protest liberties, and democracy) provides an anti-violence salve. This can be ameliorated by a sense of political empowerment, whether in the form of higher political engagement or group identification. Counter to expectations, for example, blacks with higher group identification support violence at lower rates than those without such attachment. It may be that political empowerment in general mollifies violence, akin to having a high locus of control in a person’s personal life.

Measuring political violence

Measuring political violence at the micro level is not straightforward, partially because it is a newer literature that looks at this support using nationally representative survey data. Kalmoe and Mason (2022) and Pape (2021) created some of the newest measures of support for partisan violence, eventually leading to a significant critique (Westwood, et al. 2022), causing Kalmoe and Mason to update their measures. Not having had the foresight of this critique by the time we submitted our survey instruments, we took a close look at what we could do to ameliorate the impact of these critiques.

But first, it is important to distinguish our purpose from that of Pape, and Kalmoe and Mason. They are scholars of American public opinion and specialize in understanding extreme partisanship and the consequences of polarization. We, on the other hand, have been scholars of both comparative legal culture: support for courts across countries (Gibson, Caldeira and Baird, 1998; comparing East and West Germany (Baird 2001) and states (Barwick and Dawson 2020).

We are working on a book that makes use of the literature associated with democratic norms and procedural justice to understand the sources of support for the rule of law and its concrete applications. Initial findings from our 2016 survey suggested, puzzlingly, that support for the abstract rule of law did not always predict higher support for concrete applications (and indeed was at times negatively correlated), so we wondered whether support for the rule of law would at the very least predict lower support for political violence. Our having reviewed the literature that focuses on violent outbreaks from other times and geographical contexts, we sought a measurement approach that links up with that literature's typology of forms of political violence. For this reason, understanding extreme partisan violence in the U.S. was not our intended theoretical motivation.

Instead, we focus on support for three kinds of violence: illegitimate state (police) violence, vigilante violence, and violence by political protesters. These six indicators are measured with seven-point Likert scales, that range from "disagree strongly" to "agree strongly,"

with “neither agree nor disagree” in the middle of each scale. Thus, they are balanced, avoiding some of the critique (but not all, as this analysis will illustrate) lodged by Westwood, et al. (2022).

Table 1. Support for politically motivated violence

Concept	Indicator	Mean	Standard deviation
Support for police violence	It is sometimes acceptable for police officers to use physical force to control non-violent demonstrations	.35	.32
	It is sometimes acceptable for police officers to use physical force against a handcuffed offender	.41	.32
Support for vigilante violence	It is all right for members of the public to beat up criminals	.31	.28
	It is sometimes acceptable for people to take the law into their own hands, even if they become violent	.31	.28
Support for protest violence	Sometimes it is understandable that people get violent when they protest against injustice	.34	.30
	It is sometimes acceptable to encourage violence against authorities who harm innocent people	.35	.32

Note: All scales range from 0-1 and each has an N of 1000. The correlations between the items comprising each scale are as follows: police violence ($r = .61$), vigilante violence ($r = .56$), and protest violence ($r = .54$).

Looking closely at one of the critiques presented by Westwood, et al. (2022), we believe that the critique that some of our indicators may be overstating support for violence, particularly in the indicators for support for protest and police violence. For example, if a person believes that the police can be trusted not to engage in *illegitimate* violence, they might answer in the affirmative, because they imagine that they might have a legitimate reason to fear for their own life or that a handcuffed person or a nonviolent demonstration could present a threat to public safety. Along the same lines, if a person sympathizes with the policy goals of social justice protesters might believe it is “understandable” when they get violent (yet not support its use) or

that it is acceptable to return with violence if violence is perpetrated by authorities. We also have to remember that respondents may have been watching this happen in news reports of clashes between protesters and the police in the summer of 2020.

We conducted an OLS regression analysis, using support for the police, and support for police accountability as independent variables predicting items measuring support for police violence, saving the residual. Then, we conducted a similar analysis for support for protest violence, using measures of support for two salient social justice goals (support for more open immigration and support for universal health care). What we found surprised us.

It seems obvious that support for protest violence should be negatively correlated with support for police violence. But after correcting for this bias in the overestimation of support for violence, the resulting residuals were all positively correlated with one another. Indeed, a factor analysis reveals that the six items load on a single factor and the reliability is high ($\alpha = .78$). Table 2 illustrates this point, with Pearson r correlation coefficients for the mean indexes of the original scales in black, and the correlations using the residuals, adjusting for the political bias for the police and protesters, respectively. Where support for police violence is negatively correlated with support for protest violence with the initial scales, those created with the adjusted scales are positively correlated.

There were a number of ways to use this information to create the final index we use for this paper: 1) create a mean index from the original indicators, 2) create a mean index from the adjusted residuals, and 3) create a factor score from the original indicators, understanding that the second factor is likely related to the political bias we were trying to remove. These three options were correlated very highly (ranging from $r = .96$ to $r = .98$). We opted for the third choice, a factor score, which we then readjusted to range from 0-1.

Figure 1 shows that indeed, using the factor score reveals very low percentages of those who support violence and indeed, the distribution is more in line with Westwood and his colleagues' findings. Moreover, this scale is not correlated with party identification ($r = .01$), and thus, we can be assured that it removes the political bias that might result from the fact that two

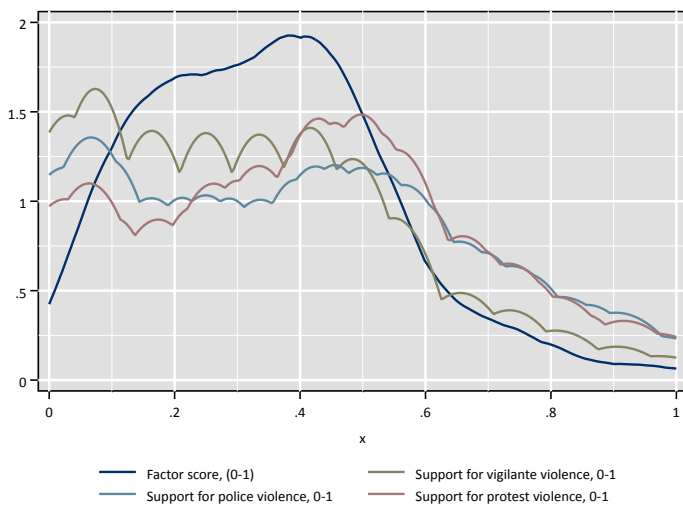
thirds of the scale might be the kind of violence that would be more likely to be supported by members of the Republican party. Republicans are more likely to support police violence using the original measure ($r = .50$), but the corrected measure for police violence is only correlated at $r = .19$. Democrats are more likely to support protest violence, as originally measured ($r = -.31$), but the corrected measure is $r = .00$. What we find interesting is that once the political bias was removed, the three kinds of violence are all positively correlated, suggesting that support for violence may be a latent trait that exists regardless of political orientation.

Table 2. Correlation matrix among the mean indexes of support for violence

	Vigilante violence	Protest violence
Vigilante violence	--	--
Protest violence	.39 .47	--
Police violence	.26 .27	-.19 .19

Entries are Pearson r correlation coefficients. Those adjusting for the bias caused by sympathy with protesters and police are entered in red.

Figure 1: Kernel densities, mean indices of support for violence, unadjusted, and factor score density (all rescored 0-1)



Etiology of support for violence

In this section we lay out three major theoretical approaches scholars have proposed for either support for, or engagement in, politically motivated violence. In brief, the first theory, *relative deprivation*, argues that violent conflict is a product of economic inequality. In short, people who are economically underprivileged are more likely to resort to political violence when there is a large gap between what they have and what they desire to have. The second theory, *social identity theory*, posits that people see themselves in terms of “in-groups” and “out-groups”—an “us versus them” mentality. How this theory is connected to support for violence will be expanded upon below, but the idea is that if a person closely identifies with a subordinate identity (like a particular race or religious group below the level of the nation) and that person feels like their group is threatened, they are more likely to support and reward those that engage in violence, especially towards the out-group. Finally, the third theory, or collection of *other psychological* theories rather, argues that individual-level factors like emotions and personality play a significant role in support for violence. From a bird’s-eye view, we believe the first theory puts *economic* factors front-and-center in explaining support for political violence; the second theory emphasizes linkages to *groups* as a motivator for support for violence; the third set of theories suggests *psychological traits*, like specific emotions and personality-types are driving determinants for political violence. Although there is a dearth of literature on American support for political violence, scholars have widely studied engagement in politically motivated violence in a variety of fields. As mentioned in the introduction, we believe one of the contributions this paper makes to the literature is theoretical. These theories have been developed, and empirically tested, in either a comparative context or, when racially motivated violence was high in the United States, a historical context. But while we draw on these literatures for the broad categories of factors that may play a role in support for political violence in contemporary America, significant theoretical development is needed in each.

Economic conditions, relative deprivation, and changes in other life circumstances

One of the leading theories in the comparative and international relations literature focuses on the role economic inequality plays in the creating the environment necessary for political violence to occur. Simply put, the more economic inequality in a country, the more instances of political violence. Indeed, Østby (2013, p. 208) writes, “A remarkably diverse literature, both ancient and modern, theoretical as well as empirical, has coalesced on the proposition that political violence is a function of economic inequality.” The theorized causal mechanism for this relationship, known as relative deprivation, was first developed by sociologist James C. Davies (1962) and later brought into the political world by Ted Gurr (1970). According to Davies (1962), revolutions occur when there is a period of sustained economic growth followed by a rather sudden and drastic economic downturn. Citizens get used to a certain standard of living and when that standard of living collapses, they feel deprived—relative to a prior point in time. Gurr (1970), on the other hand, argues that political violence occurs when there is a large gap between the wealthiest individuals and the poorest individuals in society. The poor feel deprived—relative to those hoarding all the country’s resources.

The answer to the question, “Does economic inequality cause political violence?,” is far from straightforward, however. Empirical evidence for this relationship is underwhelming. While a full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this project, Østby (2013, p. 210) comes to the conclusion that there is a “plethora of inconsistent findings in the literature.” Most of these studies on relative deprivation measure economic inequality at the country-level (e.g., the Gini coefficient). But Gurr’s (1970) definition of the concept of relative deprivation does not imply a country-level measurement is appropriate: relative deprivation is “a state of mind that I have defined as a discrepancy between people’s expectations about the goods and conditions of life to which they are justifiably entitled, on the one hand, and on the other, their value

capabilities—the degree to which they think they can attain those goods and conditions” (Gurr 1969, 462–63). Only individuals vary in their states of mind.

Smith et al. (2012, p. 204) break down relative deprivation into three steps: First, Individual A makes a comparison to Individual B. Second, Individual A, in comparing themselves to Individual B, believes they are at a disadvantage. Third, Individual A believes that the Individual B has is somehow unfair or unjust. *Who* Individual B is supposed to be, however, is not at all clear. Who are individuals theorized to compare themselves to? One of our goals is to test relative deprivation theory as a driving force behind individual support for violence at the *individual*-level. We believe this may be one of the first, if not the first study to do so, at least in the American context. In doing so, we test multiple possible interpretations of who people may (or may) feel deprived, relative to. Prior literature finds support for at least three possible comparisons: Individual B *is* Individual A, just at a prior point in time (Gurr 1970).

According to recent review of relative deprivation theory research, this type of comparison seems to where the vast majority of political science research lies (H. J. Smith and Pettigrew 2015). But there is no reason to expect individuals only care about themselves relative to their earlier selves. An individual’s family and friends, what Granovetter (1973) calls “strong ties,” are often influential in shaping political opinions. Having “poor friends” within one’s social network has even been found to indirectly influence support for economic redistribution (Newman 2014). It stands to reason that having strong ties, such as family and friends, that are doing much better off economically could produce feelings of frustration and ultimately lead to support for violence. Although this may initially seem farfetched, scholars of terrorism and political violence are starting to look at terrorists’ social networks to explain how a person goes from being aggrieved to radicalized (Perliger and Pedahzur 2011). Finally, any study using

macro-level measures of economic inequality (Yitzhaki, 1979; Gini coefficient) to test relative deprivation theory as properly articulated at the individual-level are making an ecological fallacy—inferring individual behavior from group-level statistical results.

The theory, however, could still hold true. But, even relatively recent defenses of using the Gini coefficient (Pederson 2004) admit that an individual is a part of a reference group, and the Gini coefficient assumes that the reference group (what we call Individual B) is the *entire* nation-state population. Put differently, the Gini coefficient in a sense measures relative deprivation if the individual is comparing her economic fortunes to the economic fortunes of all of the other individuals in that particular country. Replace “Gini coefficient” with any other macro-level variable measuring inequality and the measure of inequality in [land/property/income] relative to the [country/state/province/city/neighborhood] turns into a measure of relative deprivation, *assuming* a person cares about their land/property/income relative to the country/state/province/city/neighborhood. Since most comparative studies in political science use some variable at the country-level, the appropriate referent population would be the nation as a whole, which is, in this case, the United States.

Summing up, we test three separate “relative deprivation” hypotheses: 1) the respondent’s economic well-being now, compared to how they were doing before the survey took place; 2) the respondent’s economic well-being compared to their family and friends; and 3) the respondent’s economic well-being compared to the nation as a whole. Based on decades of literature, relative deprivation theory could reasonably be interpreted as predicting support for violence in one or more of these hypotheses. Of course, it could be the case that some of these referent population groups matter more so for some people than others. To test such a possibility would require an incalculable number of statistical interactions. Nevertheless, considering the

extremely inconsistent findings in the literature, it is quite plausible that the findings are inconsistent *because* only some people care about how they are doing, relative to their prior selves, others care how they are doing relative to their family and friends, and still others care about how they are doing relative to the country. We explore this option at the end of the paper.

Figures 2, 3, and 4 (below) present the results of models that look at the results of the impact of both absolute material conditions and the perceptions of relative deprivation on our measure of support for political violence. We also explore whether a change in people's noneconomic life circumstances has any impact on support for violence.

The impact of political and economic grievances on support for violence

While it may be that people's economic comparisons are directed toward the people in their lives, what may be leading people to support violence is whether they perceive that the problems in the political or economic system are causing their personal problems. They may believe that the political system causes the problems they face or they worry that the economy of the country has had, or will have, a negative impact on their personal lives. The more institutions are thought to be harmful, particularly, when they perceive this harm in their personal lives, the more they are likely to support political violence.

Prior research suggests that people who are aggrieved by the political system are unlikely to participate in politics (Vose 1959; Cortner 1968; Keniston 1968; Morris 1981; Moore 1975; Leahy and Mazur 1978; Klandermans 1979; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Scheppele and Walker 1991; Gilliam and Kaufman 1998; Tate 2003). Although they may be dissatisfied with policies or have other economic grievances, alienated individuals lack the identification with the political system and current officeholders and the perception of government fairness that allows a less alienated individual with similar dissatisfactions and grievances to believe that participation is a

plausible mechanism for redressing the grievances. We believe that this may translate into higher support for political violence. In addition to understanding the impact of political and economic grievances, we wanted to understand the impact of distrust or the lack of efficacy with government officials, we include controls for a general sense of personal efficacy (confidence in oneself to perform difficult tasks) and internal political efficacy.

Belief that one's life is out of control (the external locus of control)

(Bandura 1997) seminal book: *Self Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* argues that the belief that one's life is out of control leads to moral decline because it alienates people from their own agency. He has followed this up with an equally provocative book in 2015 about how the loss of self-efficacy leads to evil, in *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live With Themselves* (Bandura 2015). He also believes that this lack of self-efficacy leads to aggression, both in support for aggression as well as actual behavior (Bandura 1973; Bandura and Walters 1959). His theory has serious implications for the development of our theory in terms of separating the abstract rule of law from concrete applications. He believes that:

“almost everyone is virtuous in the abstract,” but the marked differences in ethical behavior are all too often produced by the mechanisms of moral disengagement that impinge “under the conditional circumstances of everyday life” (Bandura 2015, 37).

Bandura's argument is connected to the literature on support for or engagement with terrorism. There are some material antecedents; (Atran 2003, 27) claims that when the number of Palestinians who were educated doubled, this coincided with a severe drop in employment and this is considered a major reason that they become susceptible to recruiting by Al Qaeda. On the other hand, Friedman believes that it is the humiliating ways they are treated by Israeli soldiers, among other sources of humiliation to their ethnicity and religion (Atran 2003; Friedman 2003).

Attention on what has caused the radicalization of white Christian Americans may provide some insights that this is not as material as we think. (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008, 79) claim that

The same mechanisms moving people toward radicalization and terrorism will operate as well in those who react to radicals and terrorists. Even a cursory look at the experience of the U.S., since the attacks of September 11, 2001, can suggest that those attacked have not escaped a radicalization of their own.

While this point may be highly speculative, it seems that this radicalization based on race, ethnicity and religious identity may contributed to a vote for Trump.

This has important implications for our study of the factors that may lead one to violence. If people eschew violence, then they are for the rule of “principle” over “peoples.” When this is rejected to support social cohesion in the context of the lack of agency, the underling logic of the rule of law is abandoned and violence is the only remaining solution. If people react to the inability to be agents in their own lives by engaging in evil and rationalizing it, this works for Islamic terrorists just as much for radicalized Americans.

Figure 2: Absolute economic conditions

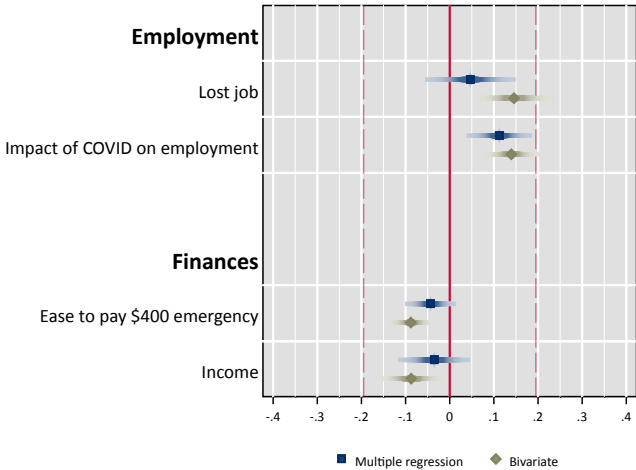


Figure 3: Life circumstances, changed in the last year

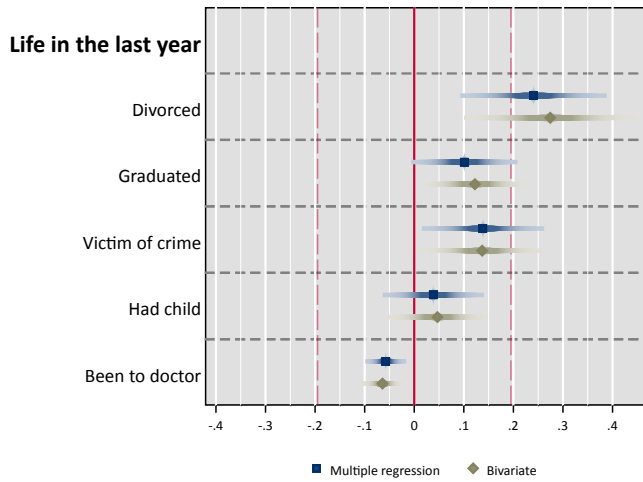


Figure 4: Relative deprivation

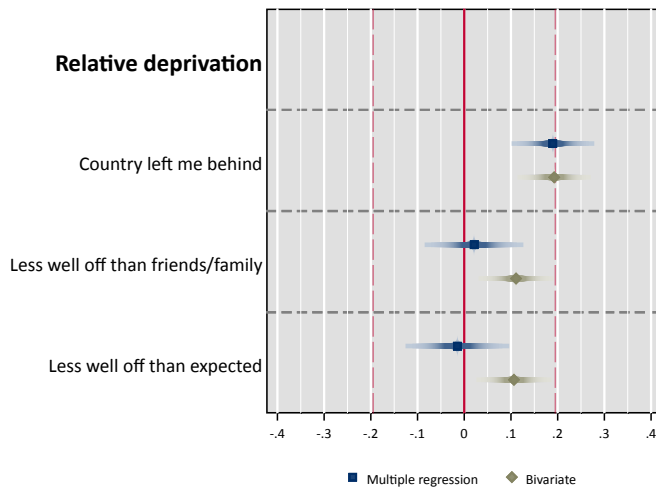


Figure 5: Political efficacy

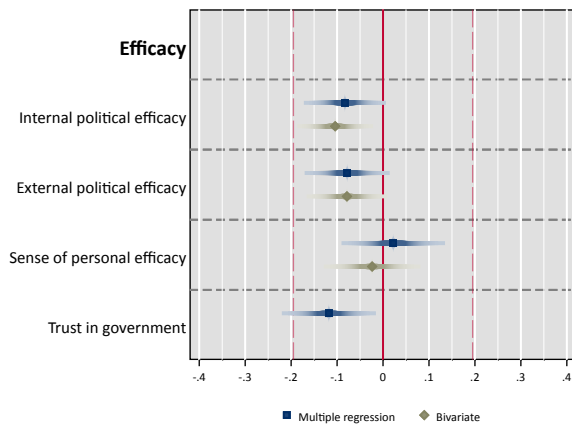
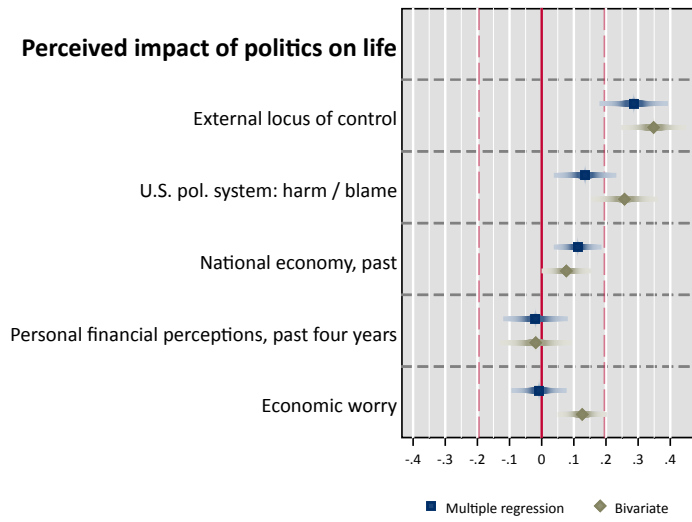


Figure 6: The impact of political and economic grievances on support for violence



Social identity theory

The basic idea behind social identity theory is that people tend to view themselves in terms of in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The Tajfel and Turner (1986) framework begins by making the reasonable assumption that people naturally desire positive self-esteem. An individual's self-esteem is linked to what groups they identify with, because these groups provide a sense of belonging. Whether it be as a member of a sports team (which is unlikely to be politically salient) or a certain political party (which is), people take pride in the social groups they identify with. While being a member of a group can often provide that sense of belonging, it can have a dark side. When people believe their fortunes in society are tied to the success of that group, a concept called "linked fate," perceived threats to that group can result in violence. Scholars have linked this in-group/out-group categorization to hate crimes against people who identify as gay or lesbian (Hamner 1992), breakouts of violence at sports events (Wann 1993), and the necessary first step in explaining genocide (Moshman 2011).

On the flipside, identifying with an overarching identity, in this case as "American," can bring people together and, as we argue, reduce support for violence. This model, which stems from social identity theory, is called the Common Intergroup Identity Model (CIIM) (Gaertner et al., 1993). In short, CIIM predicts a decrease in intergroup bias if a common identity is at the forefront of an individual's mind. The "common" identity is often referred to as the superordinate identity—an identity that is shared by all group members. Groups below that of the superordinate identity are called subgroups. For example, two college roommates from different racial groups might identify with their racial subgroup (e.g. White, Black, Latino/a, or Asian) but they share a common identity, which is that the roommates both go to the same university; that is their superordinate identity. Psychologists discovered that roommates who differed in their racial subgroups but who more strongly viewed their identity in terms of commonalities (the university) were more likely to become—and stay—friends for longer periods of time (West et al. 2009).

Social Identity Theory and the CIIM have enormous implications for explaining political phenomenon. Citrin and Sears (2014) found that Americans of all races have a high level of patriotism and sense of national attachment; “patriotism is norm among all the main ethnic groups” (268). The findings of Citrin, Sears, and colleagues suggest that subgroup identification, at least a racial one, cannot be an explanation for violence; people, on average, place significant importance on their national identity. And, combined with the findings of Huo et al. (1996), as long as people identify strongly with the superordinate identity, strong identification with a subgroup identity will not significantly affect authorities’ ability to maintain social order. This finding in the procedural justice literature appears to have borne out in more political contexts. For example, Transue (2007) discovered that when priming people to think about their superordinate, national identity, they were more likely to support increased taxation for particularistic policies—that is policies that benefit a subgroup (in that case, a racial subgroup). Indeed priming national identity has been found to reduce affective polarization, the concept that Democrats and Republicans in the American public tend to dislike the “outgroup” more and more (Levendusky 2018).

This positive outlook for America is, however, not set in stone. Sidanius et al. (1997) uncovered results that indicate strong identification with a subgroup directly undercuts patriotism. Strong subgroup identification has been found in the comparative literature to increase intolerance and antipathy towards the outgroup (Gibson and Gouws 2000). Social Identity Theory has been used to explain gay-bashing (Hamner 1992) and recent research has found that increases in Mexican immigration *reduce* racially-motivated violence against African Americans in the United States (Fouka and Tabellini 2021). This finding could be interpreted in multiple ways: Mexican immigration triggers a superordinate American identity that is shared by white and African Americans; the CIIM would predict exactly that. On the other hand, in areas where there is an absence of a large influx of Mexican immigrants, hate crimes against African Americans are higher.

Broadly speaking, we test the hypothesis that strong identification with a politically salient subgroup increases support for political violence while strong identification with the superordinate, national identity decreases support for political violence. Although by no means complete, relevant political identities we have considered are: class, race, political party, and the superordinate identity—America. Each of these selected political identities have deep roots in America politics.

Class. Although conventional wisdom holds that class plays little role in American political behavior, recent research places class-based identities at the heart of decades of American politics; “How people place themselves in the social class hierarchy has a significant bearing on whether they are politically interested, feel politically efficacious, judge government responsive, believe that good citizens should be politically involved, or actually become politically involved” (Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004, 489). After conducting hundreds of interviews with Wisconsinites, Katherine Cramer concluded that “many of the people I spent time with in rural areas used identities rooted in place and class...to structure the causal stories to each other” (Cramer 2016, 6).

Race. Race is central to American politics (Hutchings and Valentino 2004). The black-white racial divide was present in the beginning of the United States; it infects American politics and explains many political preferences and outcomes. Even in recent elections, white voters who are racially prejudiced but *share* party identification with a black candidate for office are more likely to stay home than sacrifice either their party—or their prejudice (Krupnikov and Piston 2015). Scholars have discovered that race is so enmeshed in American politics that when people update their affect toward a particular racial group it simultaneously affects their views of the outgroup party (Westwood and Peterson 2020).

Party. Partisanship is the “unmoved mover” of American politics (Campbell et al. 1960). There is a slew of literature arguing that affective polarization—the increasing hatred of people who identify with the party not shared by a particular individual—is undermining democracy and support for democratic norms (Gidron, Adams, and Horne 2020; Kingzette et al. 2021; McCoy

and Somer 2019). These arguments bear out in empirical evidence as a forthcoming book by Nathan Kalmoe and Lilliana Mason who find that American partisanship can cause violent hostility towards outgroup partisans (Kalmoe and Mason 2022).

Superordinate, or national identity. Americans are proud of their country. As noted earlier, levels of patriotism and support for the United States as a whole are—and remain high—for all racial and ethnic subgroup populations (Citrin and Sears 2014). Cross-nationally, Americans are at, or near, the top of any measure of “national pride” since at least the mid-1990s (T. W. Smith and Kim 2006). Unlike in the early days of the republic, where the “superordinate” identity was the state one lived in, today, we identify as American. Huo, et al. 1998 find, for instance, that only people with a superordinate identity care about procedures over outcomes in a study that looked at satisfaction with employment procedures. Whether they thought of themselves connected to their ethnic group mattered less than whether they also considered themselves “American.”

Figures 7, 8, and 9 present results for the impact of superordinate identity and three forms of subgroup identities: racial/ethnic group identification, class identification, and a person’s political identity. Within these subgroups, we ask people two things: whether they see themselves and their identity as connected to their group, and whether they see their fate as “linked” with this group. Because we believe that the meaning of racial group identification depends on whether they are in the majority or the minority, we test for the interaction of these identities with their racial/ethnic category. Because the findings with regard to linked fate and seeing themselves as connected are virtually identical, we combine them and present the interaction of racial group identity with the nominal variable of race and ethnicity.

Figure 7: The impact of superordinate identity on support for violence

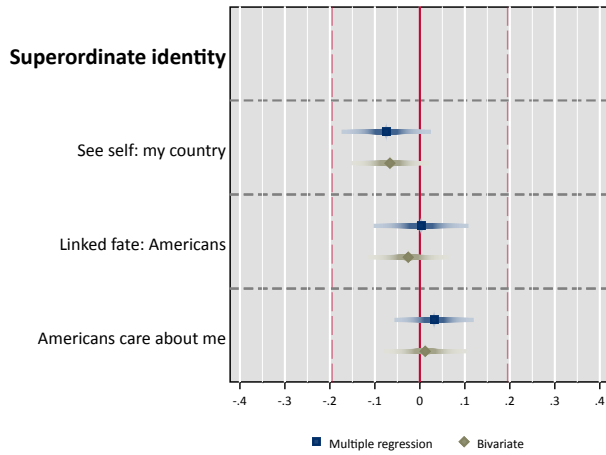


Figure 8: The impact of race and class identity on support for violence

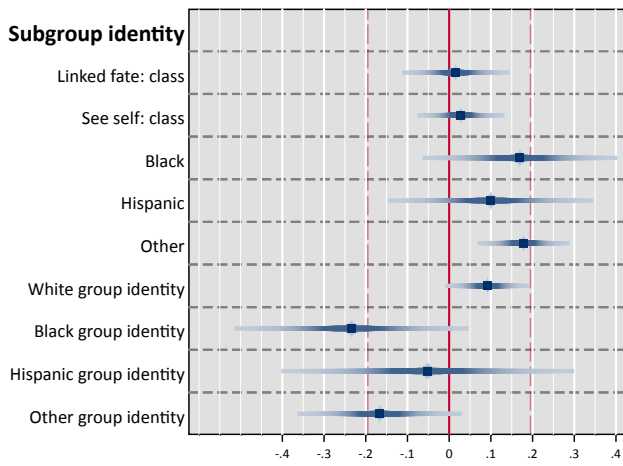
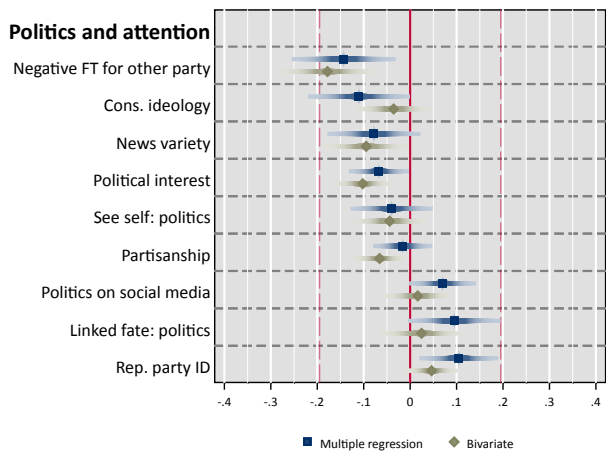


Figure 9: The impact of political identities and attention to politics on support for violence



Psychological factors: Personality, emotions, and democratic norms

Personality

Another strand of literature in psychology emphasizes the role “worldviews” play in making the decision to engage in violence. A worldview, according to We examine the possibility that two such worldviews affect support for political violence: authoritarianism and dogmatism.

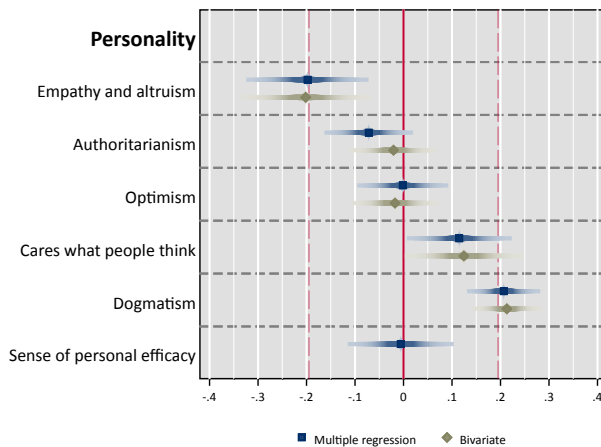
Authoritarianism. We expect authoritarianism to cause people to be less likely to support violence, particularly in the abstract. McFarland, Ageyev, and Abalakina-Paap (1992) find that authoritarianism predicts whatever the dominant norms of society are. In the former Soviet Union, authoritarianism means support for communism and equality whereas the opposite is true in the U.S. Authoritarianism makes people more individualistic, compared to their Soviet counterparts.

Dogmatism, sometimes referred to as psychological insecurity, should be positively related to support for violence, because even in the abstract, people with strong ideas that there is only one truth will not agree to obey laws they consider unjust. Those who believe that their group cannot exist for long if it tolerates people of different opinions are more likely to seek rule-based outcomes as well as adhere to what they believe are the dominant norms of society, one of which is Americans’ strong support for the rule of law. Moreover, dogmatism will be particularly negatively related to supporting laws that violate their values, particularly civil liberties for those they most dislike. It is related negatively to support for the U.S. Supreme Court (Caldeira and Gibson 1992) and consistently negatively related to political tolerance (Gibson 2006). Yet, as Eisenstein (2006, 343) argues that the inability to explain how threat perceptions are manifested in our attitudinal formation, understanding dogmatism may be the key. Perhaps the role of dogmatism in support for the rule of law could shed light on that understanding. Sullivan et al. (1981) find that psychological insecurity, the belief that groups that tolerate diverse members of society, being the strongest element of their scale, has a strong negative relationship with general democratic norms, political tolerance but positively related to

conservatism. Caldeira and Gibson (1992) find that dogmatism is related very strongly to a commitment to social order, suggesting that it will be related to the rule of law. Davis and Silver (2004) investigate security versus civil liberties and they find that dogmatism is related to security, not liberty (Rokeach 1954; 1960). Thus, we expect dogmatism to be related to abstract support for the rule of law, but when questioned about laws that protect civil liberties, it will be negatively related.

Our measure of dogmatism is a seven-point Likert scale, which measures the extent respondents agreed with the following statement: “A group which tolerates too many differences of opinion among its own members cannot exist for long.” This question is one (out of a battery of five) asked in previous surveys to measure psychological (in)security, close-mindedness and dogmatism, beginning with (Rokeach 1954; 1960). This variable is almost perfectly normally distributed with fewer than 10% on the extremes of the scale and 23% who neither agree, nor disagree.

Figure 10: The impact of personality factors on support for violence

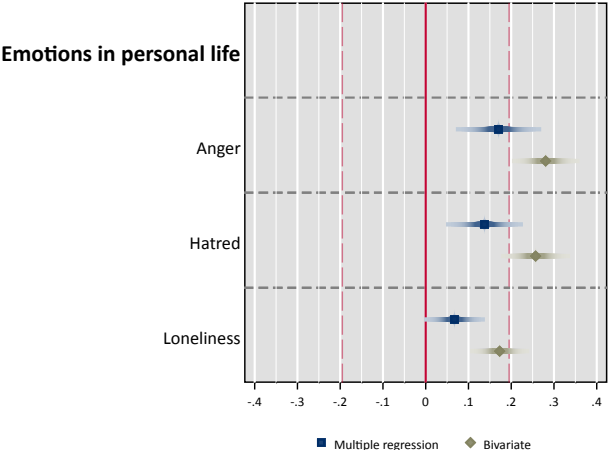


Negative emotions in one's personal life

The role emotions play in political violence is not well understood. What studies do exist look at the role emotions play in the most extreme form of political violence—terrorism. “But

while it is true that not every angry, alienated and humiliated person becomes a terrorist, all terrorists have a deep sense of social anger, alienation and humiliation” (Wright-Neville and Smith 2009, 93). We also believe that anger – or indeed hatred – that one experiences in one’s personal life may be having an impact on support for violence. We explicitly avoided asking directly about political anger or out-group hatreds when measuring these concepts because it is more obvious that political anger may be having an impact on support for violence, but we wanted to understand the impact of personal anger or hatred, or the experience of loneliness in one’s life, on people’s support for violence. Figure 11 presents the results with regard to this personal experience of negative emotions.

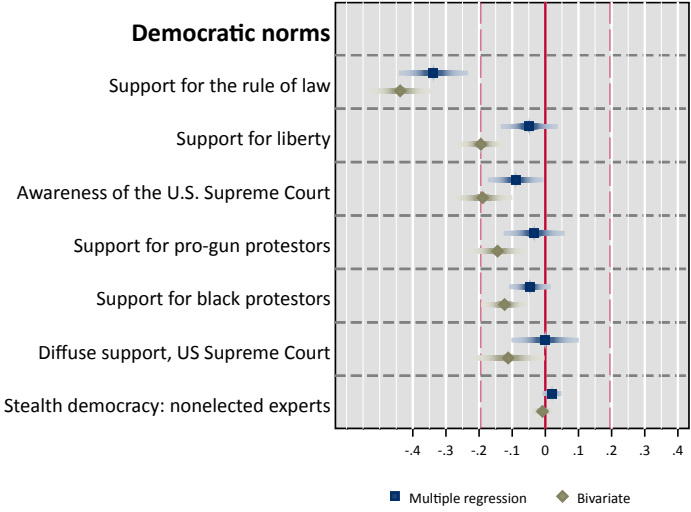
Figure 11: The impact of the daily experience of negative emotions in people’s personal life on support for violence



Democratic norms and demographics

Uncontroversially, we also believe that democratic norms should ameliorate violence, including support for the rule of law, (lack of) support for ‘stealth’ democracy, diffuse support and awareness of the U.S. Supreme Court, and support for protest liberties (black protesters and pro-gun protesters). We also believe that women and older people will exhibit lower support for violence.

Figure 12: The impact of democratic norms on support for violence



Analysis: Multiple regression

Figures 13 and 14 present the results of the multiple regression. Because support for the rule of law, negative emotions, and external locus of control explained such a good amount of variation ($R^2 = .34$ for just those three items), we present a model without those variables. Moreover, we combined some of the indicators into indexes to prevent too much multicollinearity. (See appendix for exact measures of all variables and indexes).

Figure 13 includes all predictors that are significant, without those three variables added. Relative deprivation is not significant, so it is not included; the only indicator of absolute economic condition is employment stability, which brings support for violence down, but only slightly. The belief that the political system is to blame for one's condition, on the other hand, is highly significant (but not including the external locus of control). People's understanding of politics and support for liberty brings down violence, yet neither is significant in the final model. Having been divorced in the last year seems to be making people more violent, independent of its impact on people's finances. Moreover, it is nearly significant, even controlling for the external locus of control and the negative emotions of anger and hatred.

We also find it notable that group identification makes nonwhites less supportive of violence, whereas the same racial closeness among whites makes them more supportive. The factors we include among personality make a big difference: both dogmatism and optimism increase violence support, whereas empathy reduces it (authoritarianism just misses statistical significance). The impact of these variables seems to, if anything, be enhanced in Figure 14, where we include the three mediators in the model. This is the same with the personality factors: controlling for those mediators enhances the impact of dogmatism and empathy.

What we learn from all this is that support for violence does not seem affected as much by most economic factors, except when people actively blame the government for those problems, and even then, such blame is not significant when considering the external locus of control and the experience of negative emotions of one's personal life. Violence seems to be more a problem of personality and people's personal problems, which means that generally,

government policy may not be very effective at ameliorating violence, except for the strong impact of support for the rule of law, which people may have learned in school. Of course, this is a first stab at understanding support for violence in the U.S. and must be the focus of research in the future if we are to understand these dynamics further.

Figure 13: The impact of a variety of factors on support for political violence, without mediators (support for the rule of law, external locus of control, and the experience of anger and hatred in personal life)

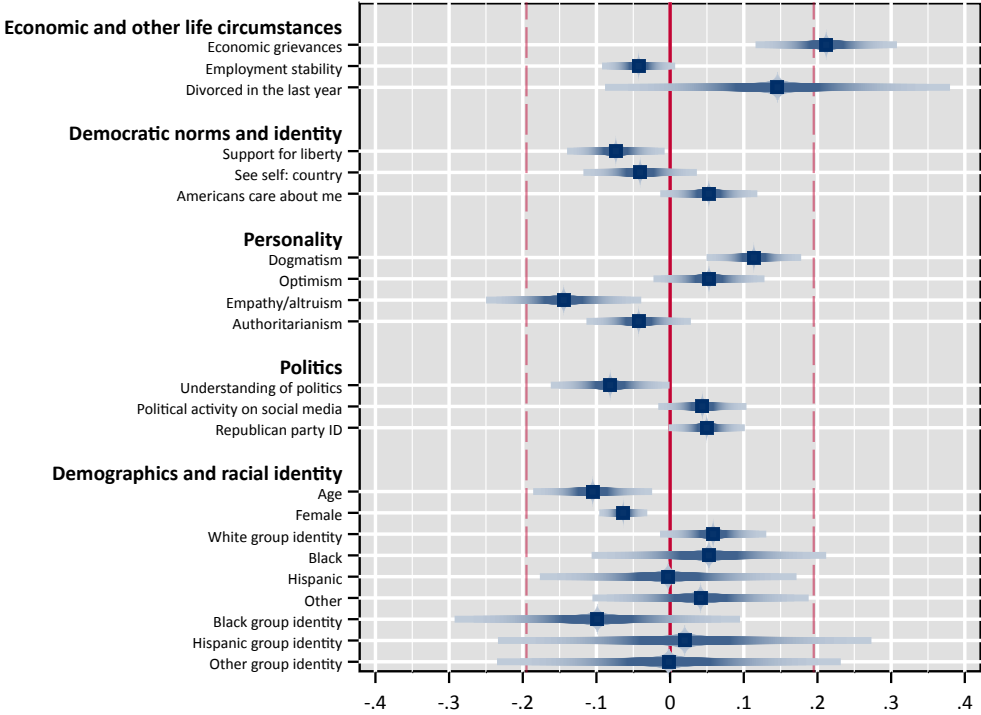
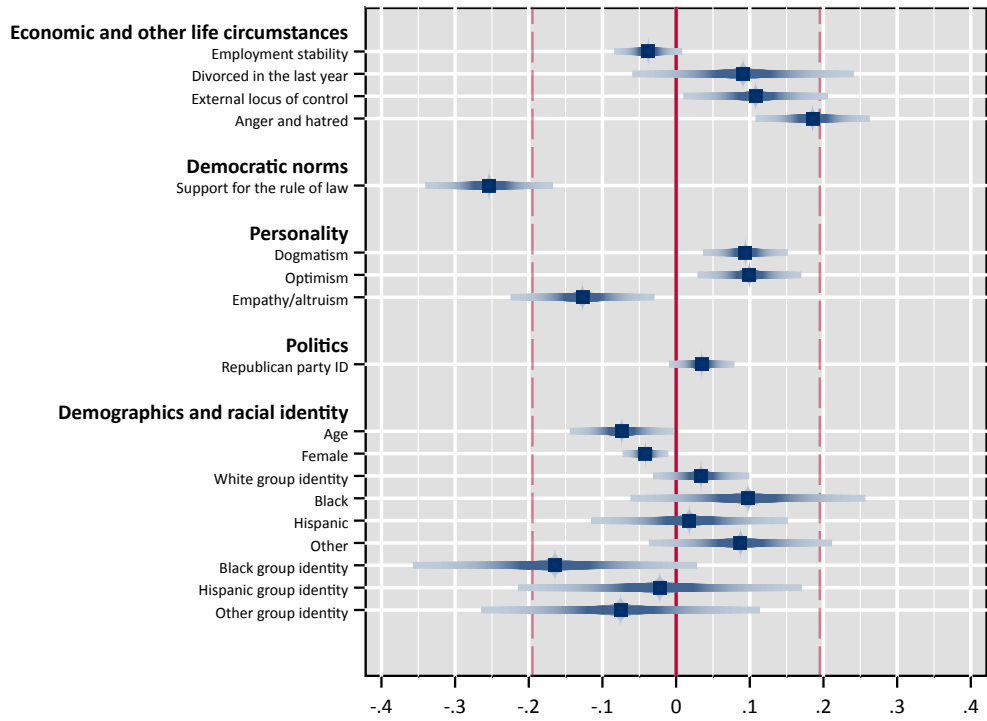
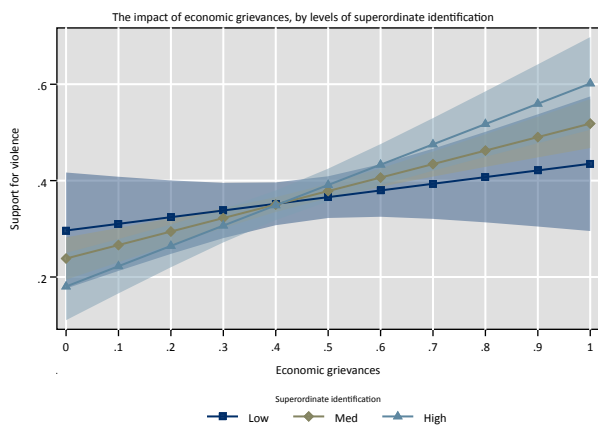
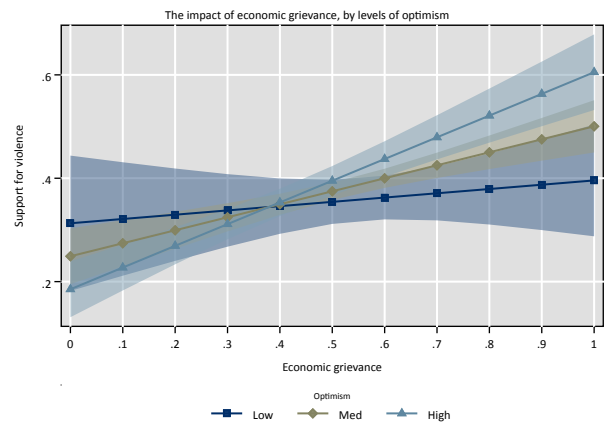
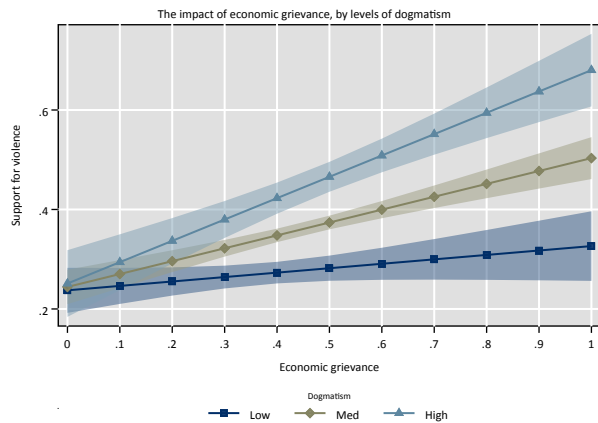


Figure 14: The impact of a variety of factors on support for political violence, reduced model

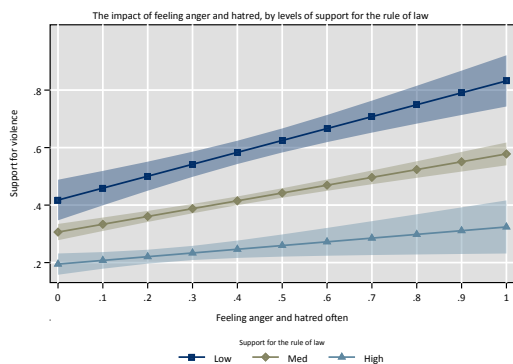
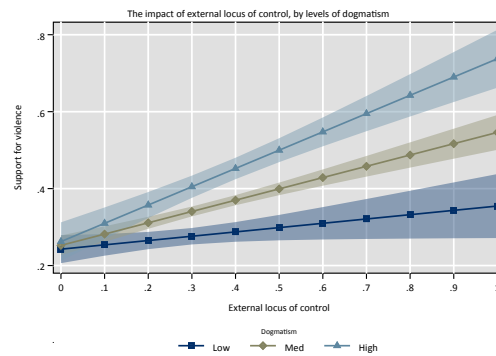
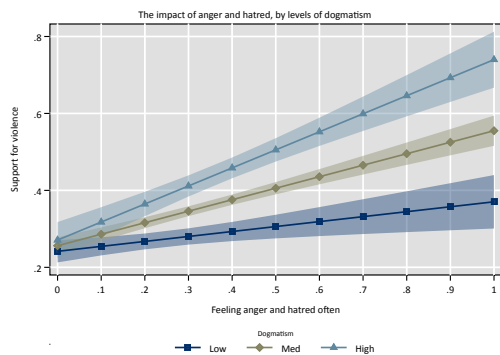


Evidence for “violated expectations” hypothesis: the role of economic and political grievances

Before we closed the door on economic grievances, we conducted some analyses to see whether we could test for our theory of “violated expectations,” that is, we wanted to see whether optimism or superordinate identity could “activate” these grievances to make a person more supportive of violence. Moreover, we considered whether perhaps the personality factors that lead to support for violence would make violence even more supported if dogmatism, for instance, coincided with the perception that the American system harms them. Indeed, we find some evidence for this hypothesis. Economic and political grievances bring dogmatic and optimistic people from about .2 on the violence scale to .6 or .7 on the violence scale, an effect that represents three standard deviations of the scale! For those who feel American, but have economic and political grievances, the impact is similar.



We also find that dogmatism activates two indicators that people are suffering in their personal life: the daily experience of anger and hatred and the external locus of control, two factors that have a strong significant impact on their own, have a greater impact for dogmatic people. Support for the rule of law, on the other hand, can act to reduce support for violence, even for those who are experiencing negative emotions. When support is high, negative emotions have nearly no effect, whereas when support for the rule of law is low, people increase support for violence from about .4 to about .8 at high levels of anger and hatred. This shows that it is essential that we begin to understand the dynamics of socialization toward the law. Moreover, to really understand support for violence as a political tool, it is important to measure people's experiences in their everyday life, at the micro level, rather than depending on the kind of variables that can only be measured at the aggregate level, such as inequality.



Implications

We have a ton to unpack here in this analysis. Again, we are hoping to inspire more researchers to study violence at the micro level, even violence that is not explicitly partisan, because we do not believe that we have shown anything conclusive. Nevertheless, we are hoping we have provided some food for thought. Finding that empowerment can ameliorate violence is one of the most important aspects of this study. The external locus of control has big implications for our understanding of what Bandura has called “moral disengagement.” Kalmoe and Mason (2022) also build on Bandura’s work, but they provide added understanding of the most proximate variables: those with an external locus of control, Bandura argues, will be more likely to dehumanize their opponents, making support for violence against those opponents higher. But the fact that a more exogenous factor – how much control people perceive they have over their own lives – would have such a large impact on support for violence in this study – is surprising.

The finding that political empowerment of minorities that comes from group identity is also an exciting finding. One way to interpret the findings related to white identity versus minority race or ethnic identity is as follows: one can feel supported by group members to try to have an impact on public opinion by participating in social movements. Even if they themselves do not participate, they feel supported by those who do. This is empowering. If empowerment leads to lower support for violence, then this may be one interpretation of this finding. An alternative interpretation is that this is context dependent: Black Lives Matter was incredibly successful at gaining legitimacy among the minority, signaled by the number of white people – even those from mostly white small communities – having such a high level of participation in Black Lives Matter protests suggests to members of minority racial and ethnic groups that they can have an impact. Austin, for instance, defunded the police. But among those without such group identification feel alienated from such empowerment, explaining their higher support for violence than whites without a strong racial identity.

Of course, one interpretation of the finding that those with white identity are more supportive of violence is consistent with alarm bells that have gone off—from law enforcement from more than a decade ago – that white nationalists are a more severe terrorist threat than foreign terrorists.³ But this explains too little: the question is what has caused members of the superordinate identity, who also witnessed the reality of their impact on the presidential race, to support, or participate, in such violence? Perhaps the answer can be found here: what they want has nothing to do with policy outcomes. They sense a loss of their superordinate standing and they want it back. And no amount of policy change will give them the sense that the rest of the country believes they deserve such higher standing. As Joan Williams maintains in the book she began the night Trump was elected, that the concept of “white trash” is a stigma that haunts those members who have a tendency to see themselves as the dominant group in society because they are white. If they sense that they may lose this privilege, they are poised for a fight. Graham and Haidt (2010) claim for instance, that the problem is a mismatch of values. Conservatives and liberals both embrace fairness and other universal principles (such as the rule of law). But the religious values and local town identity is one that may be perceived to be eschewed by liberals; that perception (whether true or not) may be driving some conservatives to be angry. They are not only charged with being racist (there may not be a bigger insult in American society), but are also accused of being “hicks” or “hillbillies” and small-minded if they do not know the latest word for gay is no longer “homosexual” just to name one example. All this may have led to the Republican obsession with “political correctness” that they cite as being one of the most important issues in American society, which just could not be further away from policy minded thinking.

In other words, the grievances may be less about policy and perhaps more about whether people feel at home in their own country (Baird and Wolak 2021 reveal that those grievance

³ This has been updated by the Joint Intelligence Bulletin in 2017.

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3924852-White-Supremacist-Extremism-JIB.html>

perceptions, measured similarly in the CCES in 2016, are only very loosely tied to actual economic conditions, and are more a function of personality. When they expect to feel at home in their own country, or when they expect to hold the dominant social group, and they feel that they are going to lose the respect that comes from that dominance, they may be eschewing universal principles, making it more likely that people will support (or at least acquiesce to) political violence. In short, it may be that they want their country back. And for those who do not occupy the dominant group, as they feel like they can gain in policy, they are empowered, but as gridlock makes those policy advances, they may also support more violence.

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Measures

Support for police violence

- “It is sometimes acceptable for police officers to use physical force to control non-violent demonstrations” (Range 0-1, mean = .35; sd = .32)
- “It is sometimes acceptable for police officers to use physical force against a handcuffed offender” (Range 0-1, mean = .41; sd = .32)

Support for vigilante violence

- “It is all right for members of the public to beat up criminals” (Range 0-1, mean = .31; sd = .28)
- “It is sometimes acceptable for people to take the law into their own hands, even if they become violent” (Range 0-1, mean = .31; sd = .28)

Support for protest violence

- “Sometimes it is understandable that people get violent when they protest against injustice” (Range 0-1, mean = .34; sd = .30)
- “It is sometimes acceptable to encourage violence against authorities who harm innocent people” (Range 0-1, mean = .46; sd = .32)

Support for democratic norms

Support for stealth democracy “Government runs better if decisions were left to nonelected, independent experts rather than politicians”

Support for liberty over order “Free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views”

Trust in government four indicators of government trust: federal, state, local, and local board of elections

External efficacy two items:

Public officials don't care much what people like me think

People like me don't have any say about what the government does

Internal efficacy three items

I feel I understand the most important political issues of this country

I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics

I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people

Support for the rule of law three items

Disagree: Sometimes it is necessary to bend the law to deal with social problems

Disagree: It is not necessary to obey a law you consider unjust

Disagree: Judges should make decisions based on what they consider right without regard to the law

Support for black protest “Since black protestors often get out of hand, it is more important to keep the peace than to allow people to have their voices heard”

Support for pro-gun protest “Since pro-gun protestors often get out of hand, it is more important to keep the peace than to allow people to have their voices heard”

Awareness of the U.S. Supreme Court ““Would you say that you are very aware, somewhat aware, not very aware, or have you never heard of the United States Supreme Court?”

Diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court three items

Disagree: The U.S. Supreme Court started making a lot of decisions that most people disagree with, it might be better to do away with the Supreme Court altogether

Disagree: The right of the Supreme Court to decide certain types of controversial issues should be reduced

Disagree: The The U.S. Supreme Court gets too mixed up in politics

Economic conditions and perceptions

National economy, past “Over the past year, do you think the nation’s economy has gotten worse/better”

Personal financial perceptions “Over the past four years, has your household’s annual income decreased / increased”

Ease of paying \$400 emergency a number of indicators measuring how easy it would be to pay off a “\$400 emergency

1 = easy, .5 = pay off over time or borrow friend/fam 0 = cannot or payday loan

Work stability is an indicator of the impact of COVID on employment:

0= no change; .33=some fluctuation; .67: partial employment loss; 1 = job loss, not recovered

Relative deprivation

Less well off than expected "I believe that I am not as financially successful as I thought I would be"

Less well off than friends and family "I feel that I am less financially successful than my friends and family"

Perception of the impact of politics on life

Country left me behind "When I think about my financial situation, I feel that my country has left me behind"

Harms people like me "The American political system tends to harm people like me"

Causes my problems "I believe that the problems in my life are caused by the problems in our political system"

Support for the police five items

Police make R feel mostly unsafe to mostly safe

Best way to deal with crime is to improve law enforcement with more police

Police apply the rules consistently to different kinds of people

The police act in ways that are consistent with my own moral values about how people should be treated

The police act in ways that are consistent with my own moral values about how people should be treated

External locus of control

External locus of control two items

I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by people with all the power

I believe the problems in my life are completely out of my control

Personality

Personal self-efficacy "When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will be able to accomplish them"

Social desirability two items

It is important to me to be considered successful

It is very important to me to be considered a good person by other people, even if I don't know them well

Empathy/altruism two items

In general, it makes me very upset when I see someone being unkind to a stranger

Are you a person who is willing to share with others without expecting anything in return (0-10)

Trait optimism "Generally, I tend to feel very optimistic about my future

Authoritarianism "In today's world, parents should emphasize obedience more

Dogmatism "A group which tolerates too many differences of opinion among its own members cannot exist for long"

Negative emotions

Loneliness: I feel the emotion of loneliness often

Hatred: I feel the emotion of hatred often

Anger: I feel the emotion of anger often

Superordinate identity

Americans care about me: I believe that most Americans care very much about what happens to people like me

"Some social categories may be more important to the way you see yourself than others. On a scale from 1-to-7 with 1 being "Not at all important to who I am," and 7 being "extremely important to who I am," how important are each of the following to the way you see yourself?

- My country

"Some people feel that what happens to other people who are like them will also have something to do with their own lives. Others feel that what happens to other people who are like them will have nothing to do with their own lives. On a scale from 1-to-7 with 1 being "not at all likely," and 7 being "extremely likely," how likely is it that your life will be affected by what happens to...

- Americans as a whole

Group identification (how people see themselves)

“Some social categories may be more important to the way you see yourself than others. On a scale from 1-to-7 with 1 being “Not at all important to who I am,” and 7 being “extremely important to who I am,” how important are each of the following to the way you see yourself?

- My racial or ethnic heritage
- My political beliefs
- My socio-economic class

Not at all important to who I am Extremely important to who I am

Group identification (Linked fate)

“Some people feel that what happens to other people who are like them will also have something to do with their own lives. Others feel that what happens to other people who are like them will have nothing to do with their own lives. On a scale from 1-to-7 with 1 being “not at all likely,” and 7 being “extremely likely,” how likely is it that your life will be affected by what happens to...

- Those who share your race or ethnicity
- Those who share your political beliefs
- Those who share your socio-economic class

Denial of racism four items

White people have certain advantages because of the color of their skin

Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations

Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up.

Blacks should do the same without any special favors

Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class

Resentment of women two items

Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

Women are too easily offended.

List of indices

Social desirability

This is an index of two indicators measuring whether a person wants to be seen as a good person, even to a stranger, and the other is the sense that a person wants to be seen as successful, $r=.39$.

Empathy/altruism

This is an index of two indicators measuring a combination of affective empathy, a self-report of a willingness to share without expectation, and a tendency to experience distress at seeing a stranger suffer ($r=.24$)

Superordinate identity

This is an index of one indicator measuring whether a person believes other Americans care about them, and another about whether being American is important to a person's identity ($r=.30$)

Political understanding

This is an index of political interest, internal efficacy (one's understanding, sense of understanding, and qualification to participate politics, knowledge of who controls Congress, and awareness of the U.S. Supreme Court) ($r=.30$)

Political and economic grievance

American pol. system 1) causes my problems, 2) harms people like me, and 3) has left me behind, financially

Harms people like me "The American political system tends to harm people like me
Causes my problems "I believe that the problems in my life are caused by the problems in our political system

Country left me behind "When I think about my financial situation, I feel that my country has left me behind"

Personal financial situation (absolute economic conditions)

Index of 1) family income, 2) ease of paying for \$400 emergency, and 3) level of financial worry and 4) employment stability over the last year ($\alpha =.64$)

Relative deprivation

Deprivation, relative to 1) family and friends, and 2) personal expectations

Anger and hatred in personal life

I feel the emotion of 1) anger, and 2) hatred, often

Support for immigration eight items:

Withhold federal funds from any local police department that does not report to the federal government anyone they identify as an illegal immigrant

Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

Reduce immigration by eliminating the visa lottery and ending family-based migration.

Declare a national emergency to permit construction of border wall with Mexico

Suspend a program that allows migrants to remain in the US while their asylum cases were being decided

Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years, and not been convicted of any felony crimes.

Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.

Provide permanent resident status to children of immigrants who were brought to the United States by their parents (also known as Dreamers). Provide these immigrants a pathway to citizenship if they meet the citizenship requirements and commit no crimes.

Support for health care four items

- Expand Medicare to a single comprehensive public health care coverage program that would cover all Americans.
- Allow the government to negotiate with drug companies to get a lower price on prescription drugs that would apply to both Medicare and private insurance. Maximum negotiated price could not exceed 120% of the average prices in 6 other countries.
- Lower the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 50.
- A combination of the following two items on the ACA
 - Repeal the entire Affordable Care Act. and the Affordable Care Act's mandate that all individuals be required to purchase health insurance.
 - Allow states to import prescription drugs from other countries.