Abstract: In this study, we examine the statistical relationship between educational attainment and attitudes towards resorting to war with another country. We use the Pew Global Attitudes Survey 2005 data from four predominantly Muslim countries facing potential war: Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey. Holding all other characteristics constant, our multivariate regression results provide no evidence that those with greater educational attainment are more supportive of obtaining United Nations approval before engaging in war. We do find evidence, however, that respondents with greater educational attainment in Lebanon and Turkey are more likely to believe that war is justified as a means of obtaining justice. This weak statistical relationship draws attention to curricular reform.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Engaging in war with another country causes massive loss of lives and destruction of property, and can severely impede economic and social progress. Whether or not a country pursues war or peaceful methods of international conflict resolution depends partly on the attitudes of ordinary men and women who participate in the political decision making process through votes, protests, and financial support. Indeed, the conventional wisdom in policy circles is that educated people oppose war. There are growing concerns, however, about how educational attainment shapes attitudes towards war. The major report Education, Conflict and International Development (prepared for the U.K. Department for International Development) notes: “It is extremely important to consider the many ways in which education can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution”. Another key UNICEF report The Two Faces of Education in Conflict explains that educational institutions can encourage war by inculcating attitudes of superiority through the presentation of other countries in an inferior light, and by manipulating history and textbooks.

This policy brief examines the statistical relationship between educational attainment and attitudes of ordinary adults towards war in four predominantly Muslim developing countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey. These four countries make compelling case studies because each frequently contemplates the use of military force against neighboring countries. Specifically, we use public opinion data from the Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP) to statistically examine the relationship between educational attainment and beliefs about war being justified as a means of obtaining justice, and the relationship between educational attainment and support for obtaining United Nations (U.N.) approval before engaging in war.1

2. CURRENT VIEW

Political scientists generally categorize attitudes towards or perspectives about war into one of three categories: just war theory, pacifism, and realism. Those who subscribe to just war theory will argue that sometimes there is a moral basis for war, such as the allied forces taking on Nazi Germany; just war theory has been applied to international law, such as the U.N. charter, to ensure that strict protocols are followed to minimize harm. Those subscribing to pacifism also strongly emphasize the moral basis for engaging in war, but believe that there are always other alternatives to settling international conflict, such as diplomacy and economic sanctions; prominent pacifists have included Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Unlike followers of just war theory and pacifism, those subscribing to realism believe that morals should stay out of the decision to engage in war; instead, realists argue that the decision to engage in war should only be based on increasing national power and ensuring security.

As discussed in the Introduction, the conventional view is that educated people are more likely to support peaceful perspectives, such as pacifism or just war theory. Educational researchers, however, would argue that this view is contingent upon educational institutions emphasizing moral education, peace education, human rights education, and international studies curricula which promote a thoughtful understanding of other nations and enable people to better assess the moral, social, and economic consequences of settling international conflicts using war. As mentioned in the Introduction, the main policy concern is educational institutions inculcating

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1 Our data on public attitudes in our countries of interest come from the Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP), carried out by the Pew Research Center—a non-partisan think-tank based in Washington, DC. Interviews were conducted with a random sample of ordinary men and women from urban and rural areas. Data for approximately 1000 respondents are collected for each country.
 perverse morals; perhaps the most recent extreme examples of war mongering come from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, where higher educational institutions spread propaganda on the merits of war. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that education can affect attitudes towards war in at least limited or indirect ways. It is possible, for example, that educational attainment indirectly affects political outcomes by determining one’s social status and network—which then affect a person’s attitudes towards war. However, the role of educational attainment and institutions can be eclipsed by values instilled by one’s family and community. To clarify, our aim in this study is not to examine the content of education instilled in educational institutions and the resulting student attitudes. Nor do we investigate the effects of familial and social networks. Rather, we focus on the statistical relationship between educational attainment and attitudes towards war among ordinary adults in predominantly Muslim nations facing the possibility of war.

3. COUNTRY BACKGROUNDS

The four countries we examine are predominantly Muslim but from different regions of the Muslim world: the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon), South Asia (Pakistan), and Eurasia (Turkey). Two are democracies (Lebanon and Turkey), one shifts between democracy and military rule (Pakistan), and one is a monarchy with a weak parliament (Jordan). According to the CIA World Factbook, the annual expenditure on military as a percentage of Gross National Product in Jordan (8.6%), Lebanon (3.1%), Pakistan (3.0%), and Turkey (5.3%) are all higher than the world average (2.0%). Additionally, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and to a lesser extent Turkey have all engaged in war with perceived international threats. There are some differences by educational attainment across the four countries: significantly larger shares of respondents in Lebanon (50.1%) and Turkey (58.5%) have completed secondary or higher education compared to Jordan (36.0%) and Pakistan (17.3%). Contrary to what many believe, madrassas (or Islamic schools) only educated a tiny share of the population (less than 1%) in each of the countries.

**Jordan** has always been seen as a moderate force in the Middle East. While it participated in wars against Israel in 1948 and 1967, leading to waves of Palestinian refugees making up 60% of the population, in 1994, Jordan became the only country other than Egypt to sign a peace agreement with Israel, and has since signed subsequent agreements on water, environment, and trade. Despite some support in the country for al Qaeda and its activities, Jordan’s King Abdullah II has worked to affirm strong relations with Western Europe and the United States. In addition, although Jordan has a stated interest in building an atomic energy program, it intends to use this for civilian nuclear purposes. This interest in nuclear energy is likely a result of the development of Iran’s nuclear program, and suggests that Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries discussing the possibility of nuclear development are doing so as a warning to Iran.

**Lebanon**, unlike Jordan, has an ongoing history of military involvement, as well as of U.N. involvement in its conflicts. Lebanon’s conflicts largely stem from the existence of anti-Israel groups within its borders. Thus, in addition to Lebanon’s involvement in the 1948 war between Israel and its neighbors, Israel has invaded Lebanon a number of times since 1978 in an effort to counter attacks by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and, more recently, Hezbollah. Israeli incursions led to the establishment of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978, with a mandate to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the nation and help maintain peace and security. UNIFIL has been present in Lebanon continuously since then, monitoring the situation; it was instrumental in attempting to restore peace when violence
erupted between Israel and Lebanon again in 1982 because of an Israeli invasion designed to destroy the PLO’s military and political infrastructure in Lebanon, which resulted in the PLO leaving Lebanon for Tunis after a two-month siege and bombardment of Beirut. UNIFIL’s mandate was also extended in an effort to restore peace most recently in the summer of 2006 during Israel’s clashes with Hezbollah. In addition to ongoing skirmishes with Israel, Lebanon has also experienced conflict with its neighbor Syria, which occupied the country in 1976 as part of an Arab peacekeeping force and left only in 2005, after dominating Lebanese politics for nearly thirty years. Nevertheless, Syrian involvement in the countries has not ended: for example, Syrian actors continue to smuggle arms into Lebanese territory to equip Hezbollah in the fight against Israel. However, anti-Syrian sentiment led to the creation of a new opposition party that won national parliamentary elections in the month following Syria’s withdrawal. Lebanon’s current Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora, is an associate of opposition party leader Saad Hariri and embodies pro-Western views.

Pakistan, like Lebanon, has experienced ongoing conflict for the past half-century. Sporadic fighting with India over the territory of Kashmir escalated to full-scale war twice, in 1947 and 1964, and continued until a ceasefire was signed in November 2003; however, the ceasefire remains unstable. The U.N. has been involved in attempts to diffuse tensions between India and Pakistan since 1948 through the U.N. Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which has been deployed continuously on the Kashmiri border between India and Pakistan since 1949. In addition to the Kashmir conflict, India and Pakistan fought a war in 1971 over Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), which seceded from Pakistan because of demands for autonomy not being met. Pakistan’s conflicts with India have been particularly troubling in the last 25 years as both countries have developed nuclear weapons—Pakistan doing so as a result of the loss of Bangladesh in its 1972 conflict with India. In 1998, Pakistan responded to India’s test of nuclear weapons by conducting six nuclear bomb tests, resulting in sanctions by the United States. Although Pakistan has pledged not to engage in an arms race with India and pledged no-first-use-against-non-nuclear-weapon-states, concerns exist about its potential use of nuclear weapons as a deterrence strategy as well as about the potential of terrorist organizations and other states obtaining nuclear expertise or weapons from Pakistan; such concerns have gain legitimacy through recent exposure of the nuclear network involving the founder of Pakistan nuclear program, A. Q. Khan (Kerr and Nitkin, 2008).

Turkey has had little direct involvement in external war has been the most limited. The state’s primary conflict has been an ongoing internal conflict with the Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan (PKK), or Kurdish Worker’s Party. However, Turkey’s involvement in Cyprus—particularly the Turkish invasion of the Northern part of Cyprus in 1974—has led to continued tensions with Greece. Turkey has raised the threat of coercive action against Greece multiple times, most recently as a response to Greece’s role in harboring a leader of the PKK and to the Greek Cypriot government’s planned purchase of Russian S-300 air-defense missiles. In addition, Turkey invaded Northern Iraq in February 2008 in an attempt to minimize the PKK’s ability there. Turkey’s recent elections, giving center-right party AKP a ruling majority in the Parliament and electing AKP member Abdullah Gul to the Prime Minister’s office, reflect wariness of Western influence.

In summary, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey face delicate political situations, with war being a strong possibility. Despite the curiosity of policymakers, little is known about how attitudes towards war in these countries vary with different levels of educational attainment.
3. EDUCATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD WAR BEING JUSTIFIED AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING JUSTICE

To investigate attitudes towards war, we use the following question: “Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement: Under some conditions, war is sometimes necessary to obtain justice—do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?” The respondents were given the following options: (a) “Strongly agree”; (b) “Somewhat agree”; (c) “Somewhat disagree”; (d) “Strongly disagree”; (e) “Don’t know”/Refused to answer. Respondents who respond “strongly disagree” are likely to be strict pacifists, who believe that there are always peaceful diplomatic methods of international conflict resolution. Those who respond “somewhat disagree” or “somewhat agree” are likely to believe in just war theory or realism.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between respondents’ educational attainment and strongly disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing with the statement that war is not justified as a means of obtaining justice. There are some differences across countries. Support for pacifism (rather than war) ranges from 31% to 64% in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. In Pakistan, the large majority of respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree that war is necessary to achieve justice; as discussed earlier, the nuclear arms race with India and ensuing political propaganda is likely to be responsible for this large support. Across educational attainment levels, there appears to be no relationship between educational attainment and attitudes on war being justified in Jordan, Lebanon, and Pakistan. In Turkey, however, higher levels of educational attainment are associated with believing war is justified; this finding is surprising because educational attainment is associated with being supportive of U.N. approval in Turkey. The reconciliation of these seemingly contradictory findings may suggest that the educated believe that U.N. approval will ensure a morally just war with fewer economic and social repercussions.
Figure 1: Educational attainment and responses to the question “Under some conditions, war is sometimes necessary to obtain justice—do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?”

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP) 2005

The multivariate results from Lebanon and Turkey suggest that those with secondary education and especially higher education are more likely to agree that war is sometimes necessary to obtain justice. However, there is no statistical evidence from Jordan and Pakistan suggesting that educational attainment is associated with support or opposition towards engaging in war in order to obtain justice.

4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND BELIEVING THAT ONE’S COUNTRY SHOULD SEEK U.N. SUPPORT BEFORE ENGAGING IN WAR

To measure public attitudes about the U.N., we use the following PGAP question: “Do you think our country should have U.N. approval before it uses military force to deal with an international threat or do you think that would make it too difficult for our country to deal with international threats?” The respondents were given the following options: (a) “Should have U.N. approval”; (b) “Would make it too difficult to deal with threats”; (c) “Don’t know”/Refused (to respond). As discussed earlier, this question will evoke a different threat for each country: Jordanians about Iran; Lebanese will think of Israel and Syria; Pakistanis will think of India; and Turks will likely think of Greece.

Desiring U.N. approval before engaging in international conflict reveals several characteristics about a respondent’s attitude. It may show that the person wants to avoid conflict unless absolutely necessary and that the respondent supports diplomacy as a first means of addressing conflict. Support for U.N. approval may also show that individuals do not entirely trust the judgment of politicians, and may therefore require verification from an external
organization such as the U.N. In addition, individuals may support U.N. approval because it ensures that the cost of the war will not be borne by the country alone, and that other nations will help protect the country. Support for U.N. approval does not necessarily imply pacifism because a person may support war provided that the U.N. ensures that the costs of this war will be shared by other countries. Further, there is a potential drawback to using this question, which is the fact that some people may not be aware of the U.N. as an international organization, particularly those with low levels of education. This raises the possibility that responses to this question may not fully reflect attitudes about engagement in international conflict.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between respondent’s educational attainment and believing that U.N. approval is necessary before using military force to deal with an international threat. In each country, 30% to 50% of respondents believe that U.N. approval is necessary. There are no discernable patterns between educational attainment at the below primary, primary, and secondary levels and support for obtaining U.N. approval in Jordan, Lebanon, and Pakistan; in contrast, support for obtaining U.N. approval increases with higher levels of educational attainment in Turkey. In each of the four countries, respondents with higher education are especially supportive of gaining U.N. approval before engaging in war.

**Figure 2: Educational attainment and responses to the question “Do you think our country should have U.N. approval before it uses military force to deal with an international threat or do you think that would make it too difficult for our country to deal with international threats?”**

![Figure 2: Educational attainment and responses to the question “Do you think our country should have U.N. approval before it uses military force to deal with an international threat or do you think that would make it too difficult for our country to deal with international threats?”](image)

*Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP) 2005*

The multivariate analysis provides almost no statistical evidence that educational attainment is associated with attitudes towards U.N. approval in three countries. For respondents in Jordan reveal that those who have only completed secondary education are 13.7% less likely
to support U.N. approval. However, there is no statistical association between higher educational attainment and attitudes towards U.N. intervention in any of the four countries.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy brief addressed the little understood relationship between educational attainment and public attitudes towards engaging in war with another country. The analysis of ordinary men and women suggests that, holding a range of respondent characteristics factors constant indicates that educational attainment is not associated with opposition to war for obtaining justice; rather there is evidence from Lebanon and Turkey that obtaining secondary education and especially higher education is associated with support for war for obtaining justice. There is no evidence, however, of an association between educational attainment and support towards gaining U.N. approval before engaging in war. Our findings have several policy implications:

- **We know little about the extent to which educational curricula affect attitudes towards war**
  
  Specifically, we know little about the content of education is a key determinant of attitudes towards war. We are unable to provide insight on this matter because the PGAP 2005 did not collect data on the content of education its respondents had experienced as student. Therefore, rather than surveying ordinary adults, it will be useful to survey students and teachers from various schools, colleges, and universities—in the spirit of the Civic Education Survey (a survey of ninth graders and their teachers). Because there are no such surveys in predominantly Muslim countries, it is difficult to make declarations on the causal nature of educational attainment and attitudes towards war.

- **We need to find out how education can matter more in discouraging war**

  Evidence from other regions has shown that the adoption of curricula emphasizing civic education, moral education, human rights education, peace education, and international studies in can improve attitudes towards war. For policymakers and educators, the challenge is to create such curricula while considering national sensitivities in mind. In all likelihood, the benefits of peace far outweigh the costs of implementing such curricular reform.