# Some People Want the Fall of the Regime: Explaining Demands for Regime Change in the Arab World

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## Abstract

The Arab Spring was characterized by protests demanding regime change, representing a shift from more conciliatory demands before 2011. Protests that demand regime may be more likely to attain it, but could also provoke governments into more punitive responses. This article seeks to explain why protest groups call for regime change. Calls for regime change are more likely from less established opposition groups, whose members are not able to hone grievances to particular policies. Whereas more established opposition groups have a vested interest in moderating supporters views and are less likely to demand the regimes fall. These assertions are tested through a survey experiment in Lebanon, finding that less politically connected individuals are more likely to join protests demanding regime change, and a large-N test that shows that groups not represented in national legislatures are more likely to call for regime change in some protests across the Arab World since 1992.

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On August 15, 2011, long after the flight of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the fall of the autocratic regime underpinned by his Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), two protest groups gathered in two different parts of Tunisia's capital, Tunis, to voice their displeasure with the transitional government. Near the Interior Ministry, hundreds of youths, in scenes that resembled the revolution months before, threw missiles at police, who responded with tear gas, while reciting the Arab Spring's galvanizing chant, "The people want the fall of the regime."[1] On the other side of the city at the labor exchange, 2,000 peaceful demonstrators that included members of the moderate Islamist Ennahda party and the country's largest trade union marched peacefully, calling for an independent judiciary and more reform from the transitional government (Agencie Presse France, 2011). The stark difference in the tone and demands of these two protests, taking place only a few kilometers from one another, motivates this article's central question: why do protest groups call for regime change?

Protests – public gatherings of groups of citizens to make demands on public officials (Schumaker, 1975) – have precipitated the fall of both democratic and autocratic governments around the world, most notably during 2011's Arab Spring, when the leaders of Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen were deposed in mass protests against their rule. What was noticeable about these revolutions was not the mere occurrence of protests – demonstrations had been a common feature of politics in the Arab World before the Arab Spring, with vibrant protest movements in Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan (Noueihed and Warren, 2012) – but the rapidly increased prevalence in calls for regime change. It is natural for opposition movements to governments to break down along the lines of reformers and revolutionaries. The former making moderate demands and calling for incremental politi-

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الشاب يريد إسقاط النظام [1]

cal change and the latter calling for radical overthrow of the established regime (DeNardo, 1985). However, increasingly radical stances from protest movements are likely to be met with more repression from the central government, even in democracies, threatening to upend any gains from mobilization for opposition movements (Koopmans, 1993). Movements calling for regime change rather than reform represent a more existential threat to regimes and warrant increased physical sanctions (Poe et al., 2000). Thus, the shift to demanding regime change comes with considerable costs in terms of both repression and failure to accomplish any movement goals. Previous work has linked demands for regime change to various structural indicators, such as income inequality (Houle, 2009), regime co-optation of political leaders (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006) or to repression of protests that make moderate demands (Rasler, 1996; Shirazi, 2013). While these explanations can, in part, be applied to circumstances during the Arab Spring, they cannot explain rapid adaptation of demands for regime change without intervening repression and in spite of co-optation or the widespread participation of students and the middle class in such protests — essentially the two benefactors of economic inequality. Not only would an explanation of the determinants of protest demands be useful for establishing these cross-national patterns, but it could also yield substantial insight into how and why the Arab Spring, one of the most striking sequences of protest revolutions since the end of the Cold War, developed.

This article uses the distinction between established and newly formed political movements to explain variation in protest demands. Rather than decrease the likelihood of demands for regime change altogether, it is predicted that co-optation, or even the potential for co-optation, creates two tiers of opposition with two distinct constituencies: a co-opted tier of established groups that makes moderate demands and a non-co-opted tier of novel

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or *ad hoc* groups that makes demands for regime change. Thus, the age and organization structure of opposition groups should determine the likelihood of demands for regime change made during protests. This assertion has implications at the individual level as those that are disconnected from the political process, as a whole, should be less likely to participate in moderate protests. Both an individual-level mechanism and group-level prediction are tested in the article. First, a survey experiment in Lebanon, home to two protest-led leadership changes in 1992 and 2005, shows that individuals that are indoctrinated in specific messaging relating to government policy are less likely to participate in regime changing protest, while being more likely to participate in moderate protests. Then, a large-N study outlines the cross-country patterns in protest demands, finding that non-established and *ad hoc* political groups are more likely to demand regime change. The theory and statistical tests are covered in detail in the following sections.

## What leads to Demands for Regime Change?

The pathways toward protest participation are fundamental in determining protest demands once the decision to mobilize is made. Protests are influenced by the political opportunity structure in each of their respective societies (Tarrow, 1994). This structure ranges from how open or closed the political system is to social movements, to a state's capacity to repress potential movements once they begin (McAdam et al., 1996). In terms of initiating protests, some established movements in fairly open societies organize social movements as a tool for attaining their goals when the policy-making process is closed to outsiders (Kitschelt, 1986). On the other side of the coin, movements in highly repressive societies form spontaneously

from the bottom-up as a result of outside shocks that lower the costs of collective action for many potential participants, bringing about spontaneous mass uprisings (Kuran, 1991; Tucker, 2007).

The political opportunity structure of protest movements also influences their recruitment of individual participants. The outcomes from recruitment create distinctly composed groupings of protesters that diverge in their demands of the government. Fundamentally, all protest movement face a challenge in recruiting participants for collective action: as, in a rational world, individuals incur far more costs (i.e. opportunity costs, physical costs, potential repression) than benefits (i.e. contributing to a movement's political success, financial benefits) (Olson, 1965). There are, of course, numerous factors that increase the perceived benefits for individual participation, ranging from ideological (Kitschelt, 1994) or identity group ascription (Petersen, 2001) to strong emotional responses or dispositions in regard to a certain cause (Seger et al., 2009). These potential benefits are open to emphasis and, even manipulation, by organizers. For instance, emotional reactions can be incited strategically to violent ends (Petersen, 2011; Wilkinson, 2004), while the patronage mechanisms associated with membership in an identity group can be exploited to mobilize protest participants (Radnitz, 2010).

Established political movements, despite their ostensible opposition to autocratic regimes, may also have or seek vested material connections to the regime. Authoritarian governments may include some opposition movements in the patronage process of the regime Weingast (1997) or provide some meaningful influence on decision-making in the legislative process (Gandhi, 2008). This is particularly true of regimes in Morocco, Egypt (before 2011) and Jordan, where political participation was managed to include mostly liberal parties in govern-

ment and tentatively exclude Islamist groups (Lust-Okar, 2005). Combined with connections to the regime, established opposition forces retain and cultivate their patronage networks, while seeking to expand influence within the regime. They do so with political protests that make moderate demands of the government, while demonstrating their mobilizational strength. These protests may then bring about moderate change in favor of the included opposition. The institutionalized groups' patronage networks also allow them to both confine participation in a protest to ideological supporters or clients of the group and ensure that new members are indoctrinated into seeking policy rather than regime change, enforcing the protest's moderate message and preventing potentially dangerous calls for regime change.

However, not all potential opposition voices within a country are able to galvanize within a coherent grouping. This is may be true for all political opponents in highly repressive single party authoritarian regimes, like Qaddafi's Libya or politically active, but undermobilized groups in otherwise inclusive authoritarian regimes, such as students in Mubarak's Egypt. These groups are generally new to the policial arena when they do mobilize and lack access to regime institutions or patronage. Thus, such movements are more likely to rely on spontaneous mobilization of regime opponents, in the vein of the uprisings around the Arab World in early 2011, to draw in supporters for protest movements. And while the intent of less institutionally connected protest movements may not purposely demand regime change, their ability to control protest participants is substantially lower than established opposition groups. Newer and less organized movements do not have the same patronage or identity links as established and connected movements. This inability to constrain protest participants to those that will stay on message makes protests organized by disconnected groups more likely to either organically call for regime change or to have their movement hijacked by

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regime opponents demanding the overthrow of the regime. In essence, while institutionally-connected groups can filter the voices that speak out during their demonstrations, new or *ad hoc* groups lack such influence. Instead, they mobilize at times when collective shocks make regime opponents more likely to spontaneously band together and draw on members that are less politically indoctrinated, less likely to have specific policy grievances and more likely to have radical views or demands. Thus, the reliance on spontaneously gathered regime opponents also forces new or excluded groups to call for regime change. While there is a chance of regime change, the demand also increases the likelihood of repression of the movement. It follows that:

**Hypothesis 1** *Newer and more* ad hoc *movements are more likely to call for regime change during protests.*

The preceding hypothesis makes a key assumption at the individual level: politically disconnected individuals, especially those that are not indoctrinated into the political messages of established movements and have particular policy grievances, are more likely to join protests that call for regime change. The assertion is an implication of the first hypothesis: if institutionally connected movements have indoctrinated constituents that they can mobilize for protests, they are able to control the message of their demonstrations without needing to enlist political outsiders. On the other hand, protests composed primarily of individuals that have not been indoctrinated into moderate messages for an organized political opposition will be less capable of channeling their grievances into specific demands and more likely to participate in regime changing protests. It follows that:

**Hypothesis 2** *Individuals that are more politically indoctrinated into the messages of an*

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*organized political opposition should be less likely to join anti-regime protests and more likely to join moderate protests than other individuals.*

The predictions for protest groups and individuals paint a larger-scale picture with implications at the national level. Specifically, calls for regime change should be rare in consolidated democratic countries because rival political movements to the incumbent regime are fairly well-established and have implicitly agreed to participate within democratic norms (Gunther et al., 1995). Given that all of a society's major groups are included in a government, there should also be few potential non-institutional movements and fewer individuals who are susceptible to shocks toward spontaneous protests for those movements to attract. Thus, social movements take a more conciliatory tone with more inclusive (generally speaking more democratic) incumbents, leading to fewer demands for the downfall of those incumbents. On the other hand, if incumbents centralize power within a single institutional entity that excludes potential challengers, opposition members are forced to proselytize outside of formal political institutions.[2] Absent a source of patronage to mobilize potential supporters, organizers become more likely to rely on spontaneous protests under the threat of repression that are composed of individuals that are openly dissatisfied with the regime, rather than supportive of a particular counter-movement. While repression is also likely minimize the amount of protests that occur in these societies, the protests that do take place should be more likely to call for regime change. Thus, the prediction that follows is that:

**Hypothesis 3** *Countries with fewer institutionalized opposition movements should experience fewer cumulative protests, but more calls for regime change.*

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[2]This could resemble a single-party authoritarian regime (Geddes, 1999) for a description of authoritarian regime typologies.

Taken together, these predictions present an environment where different types of individuals join different protesting groups conditional on the message of that protest, while the institutional circumstances of each respective group shapes the type of message that protest organizers initially decide to adopt. In the following sections, both the mechanism of the theory and the theory itself are tested through a survey experiment, and a large-N quantitative analysis of protests in the Arab World, respectively.

# Testing Mechanisms through a Survey Experiment

Before presenting larger patterns of the theory, it is important to test the mechanisms that underpin the group-level theoretical assertions at the local level. In this section, the results from a survey experiment conducted in Lebanon, a country that experienced two major regime-changing protest movements since 1992, are presented to systematically outline the individual motivations for participation in both protests that call for moderate reforms and for regime change.

## Lebanon: Politics and Survey Environment

Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy with political divisions drawn along sectarian lines with imbalances in the distribution of both political and economic power across sect. While the vast majority of Lebanon's population is ethnically Arab, there are adherents to multiple sects within both Islam and Christianity among the population. Since Lebanon's independence, its sectarian divisions have been formalized through the distribution of seats in

Parliament and the National Pact.[3] Institutionalized discrimination for Muslims and Druze in Parliament before 1975 was a major contributing factor for the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War. Following the war, Lebanon's modern politics have been shaped by foreign occupation, by Israel in South Lebanon from 1982 to 2000 and by Syrian troops until 2005 (Evron, 2013). The Syrian occupation was particularly taxing politically, as, in spite of ostensibly democratic elections, gerrymandering and occasionally ballot stuffing ensured the pro-Syrian candidates were elected in parliamentary elections prior to 2005 (Shields, 2008). This lack of true political representation often led both organized and non-organized opponents of the government to take their demands to the street in response to either economic or political grievances. In 1992, soaring prices led to violent protests calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Omar Karami, who stepped shortly thereafter. In 2005, the assassination of popular former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, led to an even greater outpouring of protest action that not only called for the resignation of the sitting prime minister (again, Omar Karami), but the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanese soil Amrieh (2015). The success of both movements, the latter known as the Cedar Revolution and considered a major precursor of the Arab Spring (Inayatullah, 2011), underscores both the plausibility of asking Lebanese respondents about participation in protest action and of calling for the fall of a particular government.

At the time the survey was administered, in April and May of 2014, Lebanon had been beset by political gridlock. Elections, originally scheduled for 2013, had been postponed

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[3]The National Pact is a more informal agreement where the President of the Lebanese republic was always to be from the Maronite Christian sect, the prime minister was always to be Sunni Muslim and the speaker of parliament was always Shia, to divide the major executive sources of power among the three largest sects (Suleiman, 1967). After the civil war ended, the position of president became largely ceremonial and most power was given to the prime minister.

for 17 months. The parliament had only recently formed a unity government after a year of inaction and presidential elections in Parliament consistently failed to produce a successor to Michel Sulieman, who stood down shortly after the survey was completed (Bassam, 2014).[4]. Despite the uncertainty, the state continued to function and the respondents had a clear idea of their representatives and cabinet as the former had been in power for five years and the latter included most major political parties with a non-partisan prime minister as head. Thus, ascription to any political party held strong correlation to support for at least some members of either parliament or the prime minister's unity cabinet.

## Survey Design

The survey was conducted through questioning of 2,040[5] Lebanese adults during April and May of 2014. It was carried out by Information International S.A.L., a Lebanese survey firm based in Beirut in close coordination with the author. The survey was exclusively in the Lebanese dialect of Arabic.[6] The firm was employed because it offered the investigator unparalleled access to areas under control of Hizbollah within Lebanon.[7] As Hizbollah is a highly secretive political party and militia that operates parallel to the Lebanese government in parts of South Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley that is suspicious of activities on its territories by foreign organizations, an affiliation with Information International was obtained in the interest of enumerator safety.

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[4]Lebanese presidents must be elected with a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

[5]A total of 2,040 respondents answered questionnaires. 24 additional respondents were excluded because they identified themselves as Syrians and were thus ineligible based on the criteria of the survey. 301 additional individuals that were approached declined to be interviewed.

[6]Modern Standard Arabic – the written form of Arabic used across the Arab World – while likely known by many in the Lebanese public, is not universally spoken or understood. Thus, the more widely-spoken colloquial form was used to maximize survey question understanding by respondents.

[7]The vast majority of areas definitively occupied by Shia Muslims.

Given the outsized role that confession plays in Lebanese society, it is important to account for respondents' confession in aggregate responses. As a census has not been carried out since 1936, it would be difficult to draw a national sample that was perfectly representative. Moreover, direct questions on confessional affiliation are sensitive and may generate suspicion and non-responses in Lebanon. Thus, in the interest of correctly identifying respondents' confessions without direct questioning, a block sampling design was adopted across areas where confessional ascription is known to be highly concentrated within one group rather than in one representative sample.[8]Four evenly distributed samples of Christian, Druze, Sunni and Shia respondents were gathered from areas known to have extremely high concentrations of a particular sect. Areas with near-absolute or absolute concentrations of a particular confession were determined based on the results of the 2009 parliamentary elections, which report voter turnout according to confession at the third-level (municipal or nahiyah) level (Saad, 2009). Using the electoral results as a baseline, only municipalities where all voters belonged to the confession to be sampled were deemed eligible to be sampled in the survey.[9]. Enumerators were locally recruited and identified with the same confession as that of the respondents. While only nine of Lebanon's 26 districts were sampled, the

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[8]Understandably, this sacrifices sampling of residents of Lebanon's various mixed neighborhoods and towns – such as Zahle. Consequently, inferences can realistically be drawn for homogeneous parts of Lebanon, rather than every conceivable neighborhood.

[9]Of the 510 questionnaires distributed to Christian-concentrated areas, 170 were distributed to the city of Jdeideh and surrounding Christian areas of the Metn Governorate, 170 to the city of Jounieh and surrounding Christian areas of the Keserwan Governorate, and 170 to the Christian areas of the Achrafiyeh quarter of the city of Beirut and the neighboring municipality of Furn El-Chebbak. Of the 510 questionnaires distributed to Druze-concentrated areas, 256 went to the Druze areas of the district of Aley and 254 to the Druze district of the district of the Chouf. Of the 510 questionnaires distributed to Sunni Muslim-concentrated areas, 170 were distributed to the city of Saida (Sidon), 170 to the city of Tripoli and 170 to the Tareeq El Jdideh neighborhood in the Mazraa district of the city of Beirut. Of the 510 questionnaires distributed to Shia Muslim-concentrated areas, 418 were distributed to the Shia Muslim areas of the Dahieh El Janubieh of Beirut in the Qadaa of Baabda, 56 to the Shia Muslim areas of the city of Baalbek, and another 36 to Shia concentrated areas in Beirut.

districts represent approximately 60% of Lebanon's population. The excluded districts were either in mixed areas, such as Jbeil or Zahle or in areas that were difficult to access or dangerous due to suspicion or violence, such as Arsal, Akkar and Hermel in the North, or majority Shia districts in the South.

Once neighborhoods or towns were identified for sampling, several strategies were pursued to ensure randomization within those areas. First, streets were randomly selected from satellite maps. Canvassers then entered each house or apartment building on the street alternatively choosing odd or even apartment or house numbers. Once in the household, enumerators asked to speak to the individual with the most recent date of birth in a private area of the household to prevent selection into the survey. To avoid bias from convenience sampling at a particular time, enumerators made efforts to return to households where individuals that were selected were not present at times when those individuals were available.[10]

## Design of Survey Experiment

The intent of the survey experiment is to gauge individual attitudes toward attending a protest among individuals while varying the topic of the protest through random assignment. The vignette given to respondents (translated into English) along with the two possible topics for the hypothetical protest are reproduced below:[11]

Imagine this fictional situation. You're sitting outside of your home and see people from your neighborhood walking in a large group. One of them tells you that they are going to a demonstration in the center of your town.

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[10]Approximately one-third of the total sample was drawn from these subsequent visits.

[11]Respondents would mostly not answer questions that lacked a topic in a pilot survey of the response, making it necessary to omit the category from the main implementation of the survey and proceed without a base case.

**Moderate:** *and demand more representation for the area from the state.*
**Radical:** *and demand the resignation of the government.*

Would you go to the demonstration with them?

- Yes

- No

The vignette emphasizes community participation in either protest in order to assure the respondent of the social acceptability of their participation so that respondents feel that the protest is a representation of sentiment within their community rather than some outside force. The two protest topics present a dichotomy between moderate and radical demands that was described in previous sections. The control demand only asks the government for more representation, while the radical demand directly demands the resignation of the government (synonymous with the prime minister). In absolute terms, 31% of respondents who answered the question expressed a desire to participate in a protest.

Table 1: Cross-tabs of Protest Question response by topic and confession

| Response: | Total | Moderate | Radical | Sunni | Shia | Druze | Christian |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | **571 (31%)** | 386 (42%) | 185 (21%) | 151 (34%) | 229 (56%) | 97 (20%) | 94 (19%) |
| No | **1,246 (69%)** | 537 (58%) | 709 (79%) | 296 (66%) | 181 (44%) | 380 (80%) | 389 (79%) |
| N | 1817 | 923 | 894 | 447 | 410 | 477 | 483 |

Table 1 shows percentage distributions of responses across both topic and confessions. Most notable is the, expected, higher propensity of individuals to participate in moderate rather than radical protests. Protest participation was also more likely among Sunni and especially among Shia respondents than Christians and Druze. Nevertheless, the 2:1 ratio in aggregate participation in moderate to radical protests did not substantially vary across confessions.

## Predictors of Differential Protest Participation

Based on the second hypothesis, the most likely predictor of political indoctrination should be support of a political party. Individuals who express support in any political party should have been exposed to political messages that indoctrinated them to have specific grievances and thus and less likely to demand regime change. Accordingly, respondents are asked which party they support the most in the Lebanese Parliament. The variable is captured dichotomously; respondents who name a party receive a one, those who do not, receive a zero. However, support for a political party is an imperfect predictor of the effect of indoctrination as many reasons could exist for why individuals join a political party and then correspondingly participate in more moderate protests, most notably closer ties to a government or better access to patronage. Thus, an experimental approach was taken to mirroring political messaging that hones individual grievances toward policies, rather than the government as a whole, as a way of isolating the effect of indoctrination on participation in moderate, rather than radical protests.

Reflecting the randomized component, a priming question, "What is the worst thing that the government has done for your community in the past few years?"[12] was asked of half of the respondents, with an even number of respondents who receiving the moderate/radical protest vignette included in each randomization category for the prime. The priming question is randomly assigned to half of the respondents with equal distribution across all confessions and the previously described protest topic randomization level. Balance tables for both levels of randomization are presented on Table 2 and show no imbalance across either level, thus

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[12]Responses to this question underscore grievance specificity, as rather than concrete calls for the fall of the regime, respondents focus on local issues, such as construction or bureaucratic corruption or economic problems in their answers.

Table 2: Balance Table of Random Assignments

|  | Protest Topic | Worst Policy Prime |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 0.007 | -0.000 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Female | 0.095 | 0.090 |
|  | (0.099) | (0.099) |
| Income | 0.054 | -0.002 |
|  | (0.048) | (0.048) |
| Education | -0.001 | -0.048 |
|  | (0.064) | (0.064) |
| Freq. of Participation | -0.011 | -0.012 |
|  | (0.033) | (0.033) |
| Variety of Participation | 0.045 | 0.024 |
|  | (0.064) | (0.064) |
| Residence | -0.054 | -0.080 |
|  | (0.115) | (0.115) |
| Druze | 0.164 | -0.005 |
|  | (0.165) | (0.164) |
| Sunni | -0.069 | 0.062 |
|  | (0.145) | (0.145) |
| Shia | -0.055 | -0.008 |
|  | (0.142) | (0.142) |
| Constant | -0.481 | -0.017 |
|  | (0.371) | (0.370) |
|  |  |  |
| Number of Respondents | 1726 | 1726 |

it can be plausibly assumed assignment of the treatment variable is uncorrelated with either observed or unobserved co-variates and that the treatment and control groups across both levels of randomization are largely equal.

Table 3: Analysis of effect of Policy Prime on Protest Participation

|  | Moderate Topic | | | Radical Topic | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Response: | No Prime | Prime | Total | No Prime | Prime | Total |
| Yes | 40.22% | 43.41% | 41.82% | 22.54% | 18.83% | 20.69% |
| No | 59.78% | 56.59% | 58.18% | 77.46% | 81.17% | 79.31% |
| Difference |  | +3.19% |  |  | -3.71% |  |
| Difference-in-differences |  |  |  |  | 6.90% |  |

The policy prime intended to activate specific policy grievances in respondents that then

Table 4: Logistic Regression on Protest Participation

| | Coefficient (1) | Standard Error | Coefficient (2) | Standard Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Radical Protest Topic | -0.292 | (0.293) | -0.157 | (0.310) |
| Worst Policy Prime | 0.143 | (0.105) | 0.181 | (0.118) |
| Difference-in-differences | -0.385^ | (0.193) | -0.441* | (0.200) |
| Party Support | | | 0.783* | (0.183) |
| Party Support 'Diff-n-diff' | | | -0.214 | (0.231) |
| | | | | |
| Constant | -1.216 | (0.215) | -1.661 | (0.257) |
| Number of Observations | 1817 | | 1817 | |

Note: Fixed effects for blocked confessions included. Standard errors clustered by sampling cluster (usually city/town). ^p<0.1, * p<0.05

channel their preferences toward more moderate policy-oriented protests against the government. In turn, this would reflect the indoctrination that opposition insiders would undergo after joining the group. Table 3 shows results from a raw percentage difference-in-differences, comparing the effects of the prime on the likelihood of both moderate and radical protest. As seen on the table, there is an over 3% increase in the likelihood of participating in a moderate protest upon receiving the prime and a corresponding nearly 4% decrease in the likelihood of participating in a radical protest, presenting a nearly 7% shift in protest participation as a result of indoctrination. Table 4 shows results from a logistic regression model that employs a difference-in-differences design. In accordance to the design of the survey, blocked confessions are included as fixed effects and standard errors are clustered in accordance to the sampling clusters within each block to reflect the design of the survey. The raw findings in model one show that the difference-in-differences estimator for the policy prime is significant only at the 0.1 level,[13] but that receiving the prime decreases the likelihood of participating in a radical protest versus a moderate protest by about 38.5%. The addition of covariates, despite the presence of balance between each level of randomization can account

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[13]0.057, to be exact.

for residual variance and improve treatment effect efficiency (Duflo et al., 2006). Adding the presence of the party support variable alone moves the difference-in-differences effect of the policy prime into significance and increases the magnitude substantially. To avoid the perception of specification searching, the justification for each covariate is justified for the remainder of the section. Finally, it should be noted that all of the survey questions that form the included covariates preceded the treatment on all administrations of the survey.

A particularly salient predictor of protest participation may be participation in other community activities: respondents that participate more in their community may also be more likely to join protests. Two questions are asked to assess community participation: one on the frequency with which individuals participate in communal activities and another on the number of specific activities that individuals take part in.[14] More frequent participation and participation in a greater number of communal activity should relate to a greater likelihood of protest participation. Deprivation sentiment, both relative to other individuals and to other sects in Lebanon could also drive protest participation. Individuals who feel more deprived or that their sect is more deprived should be more likely to participate in protests. Three different measures of deprivation are used to assess both differences in personal and fraternal deprivation (Runciman, 1966) and across issue dimensions.[15] To measure personal deprivation, respondents were asked to compare their economic well-being to others in Lebanon. Then, to measure fraternal deprivation respondents were asked to compare their community's economic well-being and respect for their community's religion

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[14]These activities were participation in a demonstration, a festival, a group prayer, a social event, organization of a festival and volunteering for children's activities.

[15]Individuals who compare themselves to others may not feel as deprived as when they compare their in-group to out-groups (Smith and Ortiz, 2002), accordingly, fraternal deprivation may be more likely to lead to collective action (Dube and Guimond, 1986).

by the government to other communities in Lebanon. Respondents were asked to rank their relative position of a 5-point Likert scale. The exact wording of each question, translated from Arabic, is shown in the appendix.

## Statistical Model and Results

In order to capture the effect of the treatment of radical protest topic, a difference-in-differences design is employed to measure the joint local average treatment effect (LATE) of protest topic and a set of covariates of interest.[16] In the design, the treatment is dichotomized and then interacted with each variable of interest, creating two estimators for each variable: one where the direct effect of the variable on the likelihood of the dependent variable is shown and another where the effect of the variable in the change in the likelihood of an outcome in moving from the control to the treatment is shown (Abadie, 2005; Ashenfelter and Card, 1985). In order to account for the variation in sampling, standard errors were clustered at the confession and city/town level. A little over 200 respondents did not answer the protest question that measures the outcome variable and a discussion of potential nonresponse bias is included in the appendix.

Table 5 shows results from the iterations of the statistical model. The direct effects are in the first and third columns, while the local average treatment effects are in the second and fourth columns. The direct effects are consistent with expectations for protest participation. Respondents that express support for a political party, younger respondents, men, more educated respondents, those that participate more frequently and in more community events

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[16]As some individuals chose not to answer the question altogether despite being assigned into a particular group.

Table 5: Logistic Regression of Determinants of Protest Participation

| | (1) Protest | Demand Regime Change | (2) Protest | Demand Regime Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regime Change Demand Treatment | 0.982 | | -0.083 | |
| | (0.929) | | (0.715) | |
| Worst Policy Prime | 0.276 | -0.598* | 0.382* | -0.700* |
| | (0.273) | (0.273) | (0.269) | (0.269) |
| Party Support | 0.541* | -0.454 | 0.565* | -0.503 |
| | (0.198) | (0.281) | (0.237) | (0.256) |
| Frequency of Participation | 0.195*** | 0.041 | 0.164** | 0.065 |
| | (0.042) | (0.056) | (0.054) | (0.076) |
| Variety of Participation | 0.377*** | 0.017 | 0.456** | 0.046 |
| | (0.101) | (0.151) | (0.133) | (0.196) |
| Age | -0.022*** | 0.002 | -0.027** | 0.003 |
| | (0.006) | (0.013) | (0.008) | (0.016) |
| Female | -0.462* | 0.457 | -0.491* | 0.609 |
| | (0.170) | (0.322) | (0.189) | (0.362) |
| Education | 0.260* | -0.436* | 0.281* | -0.475* |
| | (0.105) | (0.165) | (0.127) | (0.184) |
| Income | -0.066 | -0.061 | -0.052 | 0.003 |
| | (0.073) | (0.144) | (0.071) | (0.179) |
| Personal Economic Deprivation | | | 0.239** | -0.171 |
| | | | (0.074) | (0.192) |
| Group Economic Deprivation | | | -0.129 | 0.132 |
| | | | (0.073) | (0.103) |
| Religious Deprivation | | | -0.126 | 0.320 |
| | | | (0.117) | (0.213) |
| | | | | |
| Number of Respondents | 1548 | | 1350 | |

Note: First column of models is direct prediction of protest participation. Second column is interaction of variable and treatment transforming into a difference between participation in moderate protest or protest that calls for regime change results. Standard errors clustered by sampling cluster (usually city/town) in both models. Confession fixed effects included in both models. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

and those that feel more personally economically deprived are more likely to participate in protests. The priming question increases in both significance and magnitude from the initial specification, coming into significantly predicting moderate protest participation in the second model. Given the lack of significance across interaction effects for many of the covariates, there is little difference in the effects of many variables across radical and moderate

protests. However, the results of interest maintain significance from Table 4. Receiving the policy prime makes respondents 70% less likely to participate in radical protests, while support for a political party, while only significant at the 0.1 level, offers a corresponding 50% decrease in the likelihood of participation.
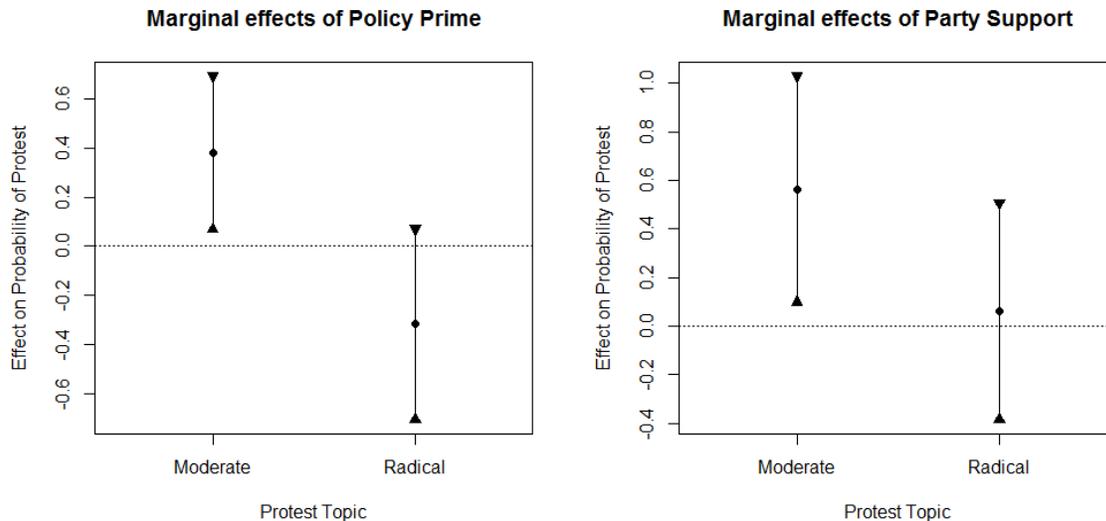


Figure 1: **Marginal Effects of Key Variables across Protest Types**

Figure 1 visualizes the marginal effects of both receiving the policy prime and support for a political party. The former makes individuals about 40% likely to participate in moderate protests while having nearly the reverse effect on radical protests, with a drop in support of about 30% after receiving the prime.[17] Nevertheless, the takeaway is consistent support for the mechanisms of the theory as individuals that are indoctrinated into party-sanctioned criticism of the government are more likely to moderate their protest participation. The fact that this support comes from Lebanon, a country that has experienced two recent regime-changing protests, only bolsters the validity of the findings. Having found support for the individual-level mechanism, the next section presents a large-N statistical analysis that tests

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[17]Again, at the 0.1 significance level only.

the group-level hypothesis shaped by the individual-level results.

# Evidence from Arab World Protests 1992-2014

While individual-level results validate the underlying assumption of the theory regarding preferences for protest participation contingent on topic, a large-N analysis is still necessary to uncover whether this effect translates to actual protest outcomes. In order to test the protest-level hypothesis, systematic data on not only protests, but protest demands in the Arab World is necessary. The Protests in the Arab World (PAW) dataset, currently under development by the author, provides such data along with a substantial improvement in news source inclusion, addressing duplicates and temporal coverage over competitor datasets Ash (2015). While data is currently available for only two of the expected 19 countries[18], Tunisia and Mauritania, it makes for a sufficient preliminary group-level test until coding is completed. For purposes of demonstration, only the Tunisia case from 1992 to May 2013 and all protests from Mauritania (as much as has been coded) is included in the preliminary models. The test serves as a demonstration of the design to be used once the full scope of the PAW dataset is available.

## Data Scope and Variables

Once completed, the PAW data will encompass all possible protests from the mentioned countries and time periods, except if the country begins to experience a civil conflict that

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[18]Somalia was omitted due to conflict, while Palestine was omitted due to foreign occupation.

presents the government with an existential threat,[19] as such a threat also changes the dynamics of protest and opposition behavior too much to be equated with peacetime protests. Protests are defined as all gatherings of greater than 10 individuals in a public place in a country that make demands of the government. Protests are assumed to be anti-government in some capacity, unless the target is explicitly a foreign power or protests are explicitly pro-government (joined by members of the incumbent regime, etc.). Protests are coded at the article level (Weidmann and Rød, 2015) to avoid aggregation within coding. In other words, information from each relevant article is entered as a separate observation into the data-set.

Articles are obtained from LexisNexis Academic Search and then reviewed by human coders. The search is constrained to four categories within the larger 'All News' category: Newspapers, Major World Publications, Wire Services and Blogs. The search is further constrained by country of focus at any given point in time and time period, in order to return more no more than the allotted 1000 search results in the LexisNexis domain. Finally, a search term, "demonstration OR protest OR rally OR picket OR riot AND NOT sport" is used to isolate particular anti-government protests of interest for the analysis.

In the interest of this study, the protest is the unit of analysis. Several aspects of the protest are coded from articles including: number of participants, whether repression took place, number arrested, number wounded, number killed, protest topic, main actors, whether a concession was made and what type of concession was made. The outcome variable is

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[19] Algeria from 1992 to disbanding of AIS on January 11, 2000, Libya from the fall of Benghazi to rebel forces on February 20, 2011 to Qadaffi's death on October 23, 2011 and again from May 16, 2014, Iraq from the Fall of Fallujah to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant on December 30, 2013, Syria from the creation of the Free Syrian Army on July 29, 2011 and Yemen after the seizure of the capital by rebels on September 21, 2014.

whether, during the protest, the crowd demanded the resignation of a country's executive/head of state (whether that is the president, the prime minister or monarch, depending on the country.). This variable is coded dichotomously from the topic of each protest.

The independent variables of interest are whether the primary protest actor was an organized political actor, whether labor union, political party or NGO and whether that actor has seats within the country's legislature at the time of the protest. Both variables are coded dichotomously, based on the actor recorded as participating in the protest in the dataset. It is expected that protests by non-organized actors should be more likely to call for regime change. Several control variables are also included to account for competing explanations: trailing lags of both instances of the number of demonstrators killed in the past seven days, to account for the likelihood of extreme repression to escalate protests, another trailing lag for concessions made in the last seven days, to account for potential deescalation, a dummy variable for protests that take place in the capital city and controls for the number of demonstrators,[20], and for the monthly inflation rate compared to the same month in the previous year, derived from monthly indicators of the Tunisian Consumer Price Index (CPI) (Central Bank of Tunisia, 2015) and World Bank statistics on Mauritania.[21] Fixed effects were also included to separate the two countries in the analysis and for protests in the year of 2011, to account for the temporal effects of the Arab Spring.

Table 6: Preliminary Results of Determinants of Demand for Regime Change

| | (1) | (2) | Tunisia Only | Mauritania Only |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organized Protest Group | 0.648** | 0.633* | -0.106 | 1.859*** |
| | (0.251) | (0.254) | (0.346) | (0.517) |
| Protest Group Represented in Government | -2.395* | -2.376* | -1.829 | |
| | (1.033) | (1.036) | (1.064) | |
| Number Killed Last 7 Days | 0.004 | 0.005 | -0.005 | 0.767 |
| | (0.011) | (0.011) | (0.011) | (1.366) |
| Located in Capital City | 0.042 | 0.053 | 0.153 | -0.488 |
| | (0.243) | (0.245) | (0.296) | (0.504) |
| Concession in last 7 days | 0.342 | 0.360 | 0.513 | |
| | (0.316) | (0.319) | (0.340) | |
| Number of Protesters | 0.000* | 0.000* | 0.000* | -0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Inflation Rate (to previous year) | | -0.016 | 0.880** | 0.057 |
| | | (0.086) | (0.285) | (0.105) |
| Mauritania | 0.505 | 0.688* | | |
| | (0.283) | (0.303) | | |
| Arab Spring (Year 2011) | 0.464 | 0.389 | 2.315*** | -1.662* |
| | (0.266) | (0.289) | (0.654) | (0.831) |
| Constant | -2.107*** | -2.022*** | -6.843*** | -1.931* |
| | (0.258) | (0.502) | (1.620) | (0.815) |
| | | | | |
| Protests | 553 | 537 | 413 | 124 |

Note: Only includes protests in Mauritania and in Tunisia between 1992 and January 2013. Represented protest groups were dropped for Mauritania as they never called for regime change. * p<0.5, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

## Protest-level Results

While there are legitimate possibilities for both temporal and selection effects that will be considered in future, more complete iterations of the statistical design, the current design employs a basic logistic regression approximately 550 unique protests observed in Tunisia between 1992 and May of 2013 and in Mauritania. The logistic regression results are shown in Table 6. To an extent, the results go against expectations. Organized protest groups are

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[20]The maximum number of demonstrators reported by any article was used in this model. While there was considerable missing data, the median of protest attendees for available data (300) was used as a replacement for the missing observations.

[21]Leading to missing data on inflation for Mauritania before 2003.

actually more likely to call for regime change when including both countries in the data-set, while groups represented in the legislature are less likely. Nevertheless, when disaggregating the results, it is clear that the effect is driven by Mauritania, likely as a result of anti-government protests by the political opposition as a result of the country's 2008 coup. Other variables find mixed or no effects. Neither economic nor repression-related factors show any consistent effects on fostering either more radical or more moderate demands. Inflation rate has a positive effect on more demands for regime change in Tunisia, consistent with expectations, while larger protests are also more likely to lead to calls for regime change.

# Discussion

While the ideas behind demands for regime change have been broached by previous authors, no systematic study has analyzed why some protests are more likely to make absolutist demands for regime change. This study links demands made by protest groups to the composition of those groups. If groups are not organized or *ad hoc*, they will find it difficult to filter protest participants and they will be more likely to demand regime change as a result of being composed primarily of politically disaffected individuals. Results from a survey experiment conducted in Lebanon, where the executive was removed after protests on two separate occasions (in 1992 and 2005), indicate that politically disconnected individuals and those unexposed to messaging that hones their political grievances to specific policies are more likely to join protests that demand regime change. While the protest-level finding is mixed and confined to two countries, there is also support for the group-level hypothesis from the lack of regime-changing calls by groups represented in a country's legislature from

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the limited data that is available.

Put together, the finding can be applied to both study of the Middle East and Arab Spring and beyond. The dynamics of group-level behavior reveals that demands for regime change are likely to coincide with protests by less politically represented and possibly more spontaneous actors, tying closely to the polarization of outcomes in many countries that experienced protests during the Arab Spring between regime change and extreme repression. Thus, outcomes are linked to the activation of previously politically inactive actors rather than the empowerment of existing political forces. The results have broad implications for the study of politics in developing and particularly authoritarian countries, as a lack of political mobilization on the part of much of the populace, due to the autocratic policies of co-optation, would seem to leave regimes more susceptible to spontaneous eruptions of radical protest rather than a steady stream of moderate demands. This suggests that the regimes that were challenged during the Arab Spring were victims of their own system of political competition, where moderate opposition movements were so marginalized that most citizens had little political socialization or alternatives except to join radical protests in the wake of mass triggering events. Nevertheless, more research is needed on the triggers for protests themselves according to this dichotomy before a firm conclusion is made.

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# Appendix

## Accounting for Nonresponse Bias

While asking respondents about protest participation yielded responses from a majority of survey participants, 223 respondents, or approximately 10% of the sample did not respond to the question on protest participation. Systematic rates of nonresponse in surveys can bias findings toward or against a certain outcome and are especially problematic when introduced by the treatment variable (Groves and Peytcheva, 2008). Thus, in order to assess systematic nonresponse in the question on survey participation, a dichotomous variable on response to the question on protest participation is coded and analyzed using the identical specification to that of the responses of the question itself. Results are presented on Table 8.

The results from the analysis reveal no substantial nonresponse effect from most of the variables of interest, but a significant and negative effect on response from receiving a prompt to attend a protest demanding regime change. There are also significant effects from several other variables, such as age, gender and personal deprivation sentiment, which are shown on Figure 2. The differential effects are present across moderate and radical prompts with older respondents more likely to answer the moderate prompt, female respondents less likely to answer the radical prompt, male respondents less likely to answer the moderate prompt and those feeling more personal economic deprivation less likely to answer the radical prompt. Overall, the presence of some non-response bias on the observed variables signals a need to address the bias in some capacity.

There are several ways of addressing nonresponse bias, however, the most conservative and thus convincing approach comes from Horowitz and Manski (1998), who suggest im-

Table 7: Logistic Regression of Determinants of Protest Question Nonresponse

| | (1) Protest | Demand Regime Change | (2) Protest | Demand Regime Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regime Change Demand Treatment | 0.260 | | -5.354** | |
| | (0.182) | | (1.595) | |
| Worst Policy Prime | 0.096 | -0.061 | 0.080 | 0.209 |
| | (0.197) | (0.227) | (0.299) | (0.286) |
| Party Support | -0.147 | 0.255 | -0.378 | 0.203 |
| | (0.147) | (0.185) | (0.190) | (0.275) |
| Frequency of Participation | | | -0.043 | -0.186 |
| | | | (0.065) | (0.146) |
| Variety of Participation | | | 0.256* | 0.275 |
| | | | (0.107) | (0.211) |
| Age | | | -0.032** | 0.022 |
| | | | (0.010) | (0.014) |
| Female | | | -0.282 | 0.738* |
| | | | (0.170) | (0.287) |
| Education | | | -0.169 | 0.295 |
| | | | (0.127) | (0.226) |
| Income | | | -0.289 | 0.254 |
| | | | (0.159) | (0.157) |
| Personal Economic Deprivation | | | 0.545** | 0.006 |
| | | | (0.195) | (0.153) |
| Group Economic Deprivation | | | -0.310* | -0.178 |
| | | | (0.135) | (0.130) |
| Religious Deprivation | | | 0.072 | -0.100 |
| | | | (0.122) | (0.737) |
| Number of Respondents | 2040 | | 1492 | |

Note: First column of models is direct prediction of protest nonresponse. Second column is interaction of variable and treatment transforming into a difference between nonresponse to moderate protest treatment or protest that calls for regime change. Standard errors clustered by sampling cluster (usually city/town) in both models. Confession fixed effects included in both models. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

puting the missing values and then estimating a model using the inverse of the produced

imputations, representing the extreme values of the predicted values as a way of testing for

the greatest outlying ordering of answers withheld by nonresponders. The method is applied

to the variables utilized in the observed model, imputing the missing responses to the protest

question and then reversing the predicted values (essentially, if the imputation predicts zero,
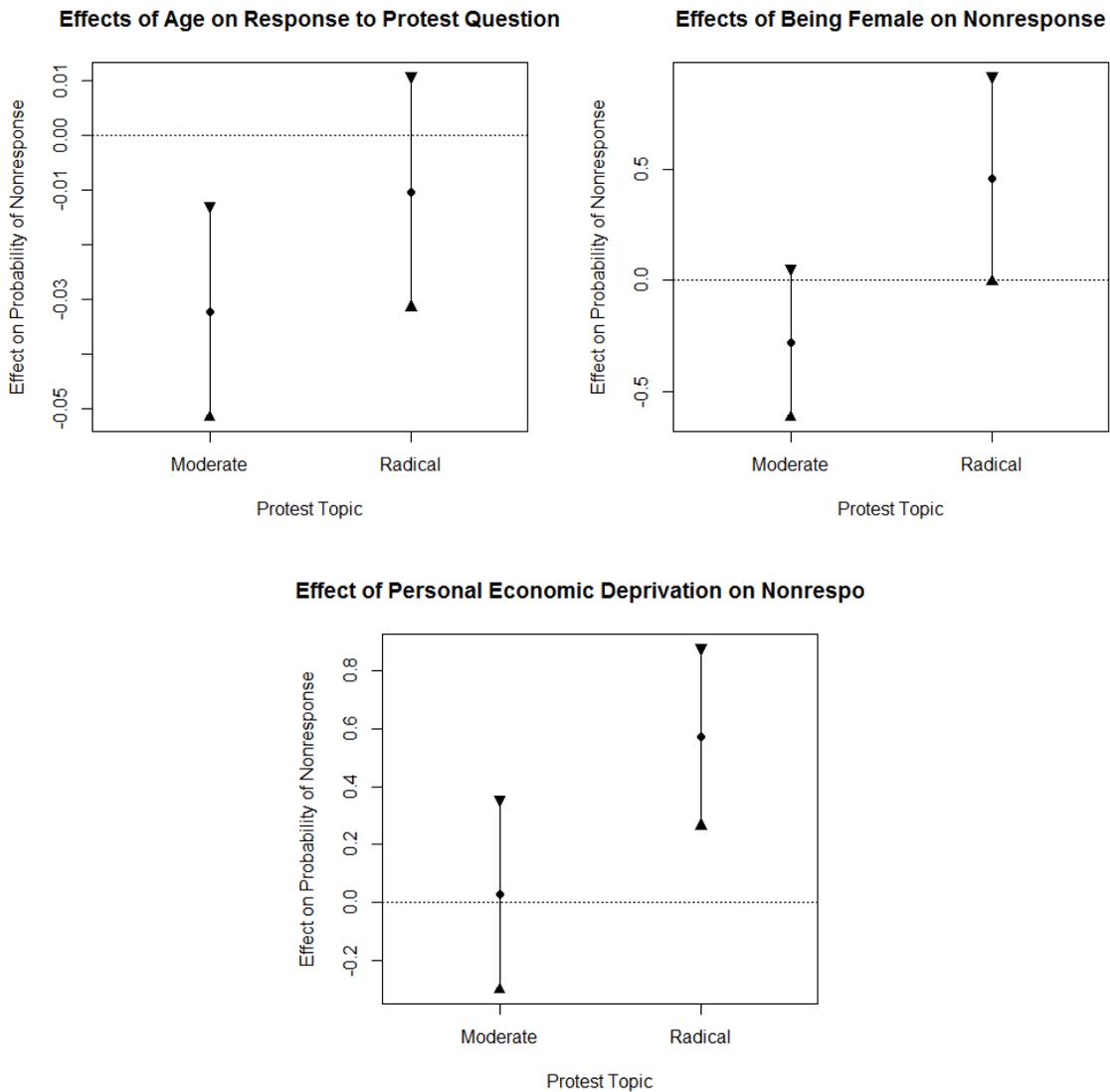
Figure 2: **Marginal Effects of of Significant Predictors of Protest Question Non-response**

the outcome is changed to one, and vise versa). An alternative set of models is then specified

using the Horowitz and Manski technique. The findings are presented on Table **??**.

The results from accounting for the worst possible outcome from nonresponse bias essen-

tially show the resilience of the findings. The effect of party support on both protest and

support for moderate protests in particular is strengthened. While the effect of the policy

Table 8: Logistic Regression of Determinants of Protest Participation Accounting for Nonresponse Bias

| | (1) Protest | Demand Regime Change | (2) Protest | Demand Regime Change | (3) Protest | Demand Regime Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regime Change Demand Treatment | -0.164 | | 0.114 | | -0.221 | |
| | (0.256) | | (0.265) | | (0.791) | |
| Worst Policy Prime | 0.146 | -0.273 | 0.178* | -0.309 | 0.293* | -0.435 |
| | (0.081) | (0.156) | (0.086) | (0.158) | (0.112) | (0.215) |
| Party Support | | | 0.701*** | -0.487* | 0.481* | -0.702* |
| | | | (0.168) | (0.185) | (0.228) | (0.276) |
| Frequency of Participation | | | | | 0.286 | 0.110 |
| | | | | | (0.141) | (0.136) |
| Variety of Participation | | | | | 0.286 | 0.110 |
| | | | | | (0.141) | (0.136) |
| Age | | | | | -0.021** | -0.002 |
| | | | | | (0.006) | (0.010) |
| Female | | | | | -0.495** | 0.516 |
| | | | | | (0.155) | (0.269) |
| Education | | | | | 0.336** | -0.370 |
| | | | | | (0.116) | (0.197) |
| Income | | | | | -0.074 | -0.003 |
| | | | | | (0.070) | (0.127) |
| Personal Economic Deprivation | | | | | 0.173** | -0.032 |
| | | | | | (0.054) | (0.140) |
| Group Economic Deprivation | | | | | -0.116 | 0.033 |
| | | | | | (0.079) | (0.108) |
| Religious Deprivation | | | | | -0.120 | 0.258 |
| | | | | | (0.090) | (0.147) |
| Number of Respondents | 2040 | | 2040 | | 1492 | |

Note: Horowitz and Manski (1998) technique for nonresponse bias applied to fill missing observations in outcome variable. First column of models is direct prediction of protest nonresponse. Second column is interaction of variable and treatment transforming into a difference between nonresponse to moderate protest treatment or protest that calls for regime change. Standard errors clustered by sampling cluster (usually city/town) in both models. Confession fixed effects included in both models. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

prime on decreasing participation in radical protests is not significant at the 0.05 level, it is consistently significant at the 0.1 level, approaching 0.53 in the third model. The remainder of the findings, other than the effect of community participation, do not change at all, indicating that even the most extreme case of nonresponse bias would not take away from the findings gathered from the observed responses.

# Wording of Relative Deprivation Questions

The full text of each of the three relative deprivation question and their subject area is reproduced below, as appeared before being translated to Lebanese Arabic:

### Relative Personal Economic Situation
Comparing yourself to other individuals in Lebanon, do you think your economic situation is:

- Very Good

- Good

- Average

- Below Average

- Poor

### Relative Fraternal Economic Situation
Comparing your community to other communities in Lebanon, do you think your community's economic situation is:

- Very Good

- Good

- Average

- Below Average

- Poor

### Relative Fraternal Government Value for Religion
Do you think that the Lebanese government's level of importance for your community's religious beliefs compared to the religious beliefs of other communities is:

- Very High

- High

- Average

- Not very much

- None