

Remembering the Counterrevolution: Disappointment, Denial, and Demobilization

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Abstract

While scholars carefully study when revolutions succeed and how they are overturned, far less attention has been paid to the public's experience of revolution and counterrevolution as well as their subsequent effect on political attitudes and behavior. We explore this question in Egypt, an important contemporary case of successful revolution in 2011 that was then reversed in a 2013 counterrevolution. We analyze data from an experiment embedded in a nationally-representative survey that randomly primed one third of respondents to remember the country's 2011 revolutionary uprising, another third to remember the 2013 counterrevolutionary coup, and a final third which serve as a pure control. Those asked to remember the coup report significantly lower levels of trust, feelings of voter efficacy, and participation in future elections and protest behaviors. Additional analyses demonstrate *how* people remember the revolution and its reversal matters. First, those who reported feeling most disappointed by the events they were asked to recall were most affected by the primes. In addition, those who frequently consume state media, where the revolution has been alternately demonized and erased, were most demobilized by the primes. Our findings contribute to growing literatures on the political effects of collective memory, emotions and state-controlled media on politics.

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Introduction

Studies of revolution largely focus analysis on the structural and contingent factors that predict when revolutions succeed¹ and when their gains are reversed.² When the contentious politics literature analyzes the effects revolutions on political attitudes and behaviors, it tends to focus on the activists who organize and execute revolutionary events³ and the participants who form the negative coalition necessary for successful revolutionary mobilization.⁴ Far less attention has been paid to how revolution and counterrevolution are experienced by and subsequently affects the mass public, composed of citizens who are not especially interested or involved in politics in normal times. These individuals are not the organizers or leaders of protests, and while they may contribute to revolutionary or counterrevolutionary success by following activists to the streets, the majority likely did not participate in the revolution. And yet revolutions—even reversed ones—are monumental occasions and singularly important events. They saturate social media, the news, and public discourse as they unfold, and later come to define generations regardless of individual participation.⁵ While witnessing an event likely does not have the same impact as active participation in it, it is difficult to imagine that individuals living through a revolution and its reversal would not be affected in some way.

In this article, we turn our attention to theorizing and measuring the effects of revolution and counterrevolution on mass political attitudes and behavior. We explore these effects in Egypt, an important contemporary case of a successful revolution that was subsequent reversed by a counterrevolution. In January 2011, the country witnessed unprecedented mobilization as part of the Arab uprisings. 18 days of sustained protests led to the resignation of president Hosni Mubarak, in power since 1981, and competitive presidential and legislative elections followed soon thereafter. However, a military coup on July 3, 2013 cut short Egypt’s democratic experiment, and the country has since witnessed a renewed authoritarianism that quickly surpassed the worst abuses of previous regimes

(the timeline of the revolution and its reversal is detailed in a later section). We conducted a nationally-representative survey of Egyptian citizens in November 2018 and included an embedded experiment which randomly assigned respondents to one of three treatment groups. One third of respondents were assigned to a pure control group. Another third of respondents were asked to remember the 2011 revolutionary uprising and to report their level of disappointment with subsequent events. The final third of respondents were asked to remember the 2013 counterrevolutionary coup and to report their level of disappointment with subsequent events. Post-treatment questions recorded respondents' trust in institutions; their feelings of voting efficacy and likelihood of participating in future elections; and their likelihood of attending a meeting or signing a petition.

We draw on central insights from the collective memory and contentious politics literatures to explore how the public remembers generation-defining events like revolution and counterrevolution through our primes and the questions that follow immediately after. We hypothesize that priming reminders of revolution will mobilize the general public by increasing generalized trust, feelings of voter efficacy, and the likelihood of undertaking voting and protest behaviors, while priming reminders of counterrevolution will demobilize the general public by reducing generalized trust, feelings of voter efficacy, and the likelihood of undertaking voting and protest behaviors. While our expectations about the average treatment effects of priming the revolution are not borne out (likely because it is difficult to disentangle the revolution and the counterrevolution, as we discuss in detail later in the paper), our expectations about priming the counterrevolution are confirmed in our results; those asked to remember the 2013 coup report significantly less trust, significantly lower levels of voting efficacy, and significantly lower likelihood of voting or protest behaviors. The contentious politics literature also suggests a primary mechanism through which memories of these events rooted in emotions, namely disappointment, and that those who were most disappointed by the outcome of the events of the revolution and its reversal will be most

demobilized. Our analyses confirm that those who reported being more disappointed by both the events of 2011 and 2013 are most affected by the treatments. In addition, we find that consumption of state-controlled media conditions treatment effects; those who report only consuming state media are the most negatively affected by both the 2011 and 2013 primes, significantly so in the case of the latter. The latter finding links the literature on collective memory with that on political control, demonstrating how state media may serve to indoctrinate citizens into certain understandings of major political events. The two proposed mechanisms are complementary in demonstrating that *how* people remember the revolution and its reversal, whether as a major disappointment or as dictated by state narratives, matters for its demobilizing effect.

Revolution and its Effects on Political Attitudes and Behaviors

In this article, we are interested in the effects of *political* revolution. We subscribe to the definition of political revolution as “any and all instances in which a state or political regime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional, and/or violent fashion.” A political revolution requires “the mobilization of large numbers of people against the existing state” as opposed to top-down political changes, such as *coups d’etat* or pacted transitions.⁶ Political revolutions differ from social ones, in which the structure and nature of society is changed.⁷ Successful political revolutions manifest in changes in regimes and institutions of governance.⁸

Existing studies of revolutions tend to cluster into two groups. Procedural explanations analyze the processes of revolutions and focus on the events, decisions, grievances, and mobilization that contribute to the creation of a revolutionary situation.⁹ In contrast, structural explanations assign significant explanatory value to a revolution’s structural predecessors, such as the institutional balance of power and the level and nature

of socioeconomic development, in explaining occurrence and outcome.¹⁰ More recent scholarship has begun to incorporate an understanding of revolution as emerging from interactions between multiple actors, identities, processes, and structures.¹¹ Revolutions rarely achieve their expressed goals,¹² but whether or not they are successful in ousting a leader or achieving lasting change, they do have demonstrable effects. Both successful and attempted revolutions have been found to influence the nature, form and democratic quality of state institutions,¹³ the structure of society,¹⁴ policies of welfare distribution and their outcomes,¹⁵ public discourse¹⁶ and cultural norms.¹⁷

The contentious politics literature investigates how active participation in revolution affects participants' subsequent political attitudes and behaviors. Participation in social movements is a consequential experience with long-lasting effects on participants' political attitudes and behaviors. Revolutions are "extreme cases of social movement cycles,"¹⁸ and so the effects may be similar in direction and larger in magnitude compared to participation in social movements. Longitudinal studies of former activists who participated in movements that dissipated either because of their success in achieving reform or due to idiosyncratic and life-cycle-related reasons¹⁹ find that they remain closer to the ideology of social movements.²⁰ and remain more interested and active in politics in comparison with those who never participated.²¹ In short, participation in a social movement is an important life experience that reverberates with participants long after its cessation.

What effects do revolutions have on the political attitudes and behaviors of the broader public? First, revolutions appear to negatively affect social trust but increase confidence in political institutions in cases as varied as post-countries that experienced the Colored Revolutions²² and Portugal.²³ Second, in terms of feelings of voter efficacy and participation in elections, revolutions have positive effects. In a revolutionary period, and particularly following a successful revolutionary outcome, individuals feel a heightened

sense of efficacy.²⁴ This is likely the combined product of the notion of “possibilism,” the idea that new developments are possible and which has defined the revolutionary nature of revolutions as different as the French and Iranian revolutions,²⁵ and feelings of invincibility after mass mobilization forces a government response. Finally, revolution increases participation in a host of political behaviors including voting and protest²⁶ by introducing individuals to social networks²⁷ and educational resources²⁸ that facilitate these behaviors. Taken together, these studies suggest that revolution politically mobilizes society by the interaction of building trust in political institutions, increasing feelings of hope and political efficacy, and creating resources for performing political behaviors.

Counterrevolution and its Political Effects

We are not only interested in revolution and its effects on political attitudes and behavior but also that of counterrevolution, or the reversal of revolutionary gains. Counterrevolution is a prevalent threat to regimes consolidating after achieving power through revolution.²⁹ However, despite its prevalence, its causes and consequences are far less studied than revolution.³⁰³¹ introduces a comprehensive dataset on counterrevolutions and finds that counterrevolutions tend to follow nonviolent revolutions. His analysis focuses attention on one particular type of counterrevolution, that of the “restorative counterrevolution,” in which actors seek to restore the former regime to power following a successful revolution.

If the phenomenon of counterrevolution is understudied in comparison to revolution, then the effects of counterrevolution on subsequent political attitudes and behavior is largely unasked and therefore unanswered. And as Clarke³² notes, only 22 restorative counterrevolutions have occurred since 1900. This is out of a total population of 345 revolutionary situations, 123 of which were successful. Of those 123 successful revolutions, 98 faced a counterrevolution of some sort. We are interested in the effects of

“restorative counterrevolutions,” or counterrevolutions that seek to restore a version of the regime that was just toppled by a democratic revolution. Other types of counterrevolution may mobilize to replace a revolutionary regime with another set of powerholders whether through violent or non-violent means. As such, due to similarities in conditions, we turn to the literature on democratic backsliding to theorize the effects of counterrevolution.

Broadly defined, democratic backsliding encompasses a decline in the quality of democracy spurred by either exogenous or endogenous factors, including military or foreign intervention, democratic encroachment by the incumbent, or mass mobilization.³³ Existing studies largely focus on measuring and explaining negative changes in the quality of democracy at the level of judicial, electoral, and security institutions.³⁴ While measured at an institutional level, a decline in democratic quality will also be experienced at the individual level as citizens experience the shifts in democratic quality of judicial decisions, elections, and state repression, similar to how we think of counterrevolution. Similar to democratic backsliding, counterrevolution may affect individuals’ levels of trust. Trust in government institutions and of other people has been found to be critical to the successful functioning of politics, particularly in democratic contexts.³⁵ Higher levels of trust are linked with higher levels of confidence in the political system,³⁶ and those with higher levels of trust more likely to support democratic values.³⁷ In addition, higher levels of trust correlate with effective democratic governance,³⁸ as strong communal bonds and support for institutions are an important basis for the functioning of democratic politics.³⁹ The aftermath of counterrevolution - the shutting down of NGOs, the strict regulation of collective gatherings, and other forms of repression,⁴⁰ as well as a fluid political situation producing rumors and disinformation - would likely decrease trust among citizens and between citizens and state institutions.

Counterrevolution may also influence public feelings of political efficacy in a manner similar to the shifting quality of democracy during backsliding. Existing research

finds that political efficacy is an important component of political behavior; whether one perceives their actions as making a difference conditions whether one undertakes behaviors like voting and protest.⁴¹ In democratic contexts, scholars have found that individuals are less likely to abstain or spoil their ballot when and where they feel efficacious, or perceive that their individual likelihood of casting a deciding vote is higher.⁴² In non-democratic contexts, people's individual decisions may matter differently for political outcomes, given the vast array of tools at regimes' disposal for controlling and manipulating elections and political mobilization.⁴³ However, complementary patterns hold in these contexts: voters with higher levels of internal efficacy are less likely to vote in China's semi-competitive elections,⁴⁴ knowing their vote will likely not matter, while in Russia, feelings of efficacy only increase political engagement when combined with a belief in the integrity of Russian elections and support for the incumbent.⁴⁵ Similar patterns and logic are present for protest behavior; those who feel that they or their group are more efficacious are more likely to protest in both democratic and non-democratic contexts.⁴⁶

Experiencing a decline in the democratic quality of a political system (or foreclosure of any improvement) like that which follows a restorative counterrevolution is likely to negatively alter voters' feelings of political efficacy, in turn lowering their likelihood of engaging in voting and protest behaviors. But once that revolution is reversed, and its gains undone, it is likely that individuals will feel less efficacious and less likely to cast votes in undemocratic elections or protest and attend political gatherings under the threat of an undemocratic use of force by the state.⁴⁷ As such, we hypothesize that counterrevolution demobilizes society politically, by reducing trust in political institutions, decreasing feelings of hope, possibility, and efficacy, and undermining the network and other resources needed to perform costly political behaviors.

How Revolutionary Events Affect Attitudes and Behavior

While the two previous sections lay out guidance for thinking about the direction of the effect of revolution and counterrevolution, the question of how these events condition subsequent political attitudes and behavior remains. We turn to existing literature on contentious politics and political control to posit two main mechanisms: one rooted in emotion, and one rooted in information, namely through the consumption of state-controlled media. We consider these mechanisms to be complementary, in that how an individual remembers counterrevolution matters for its demobilizing effect.

Research on emotions in politics, building on social and cognitive psychology, offers one potential mechanism. The emotions created by an experience condition its behavioral effects at the individual level. When individuals feel fear or sadness, they are more pessimistic in outlook, less persistent in tasks, and do not undertake risky behavior. In contrast, when individuals feel anger, they are more persistent and more willing to undertake costly action.⁴⁸ Disappointment is an emotion that tends to decrease persistence in basic tasks and the undertaking of risky behavior.⁴⁹ This relationship has negative implications for political behavior. Scholars have found that underperformance and unresponsiveness by political authorities can lead to increased passivity and decreased political behavior of all sorts, through the psychological mechanism of disappointment.⁵⁰ Emotional mechanisms help to explain the robust “U”-shaped relationship established between levels of repression and protest mobilization; when repression creates anger, it can have a mobilizing effect, but it has a different effect when it creates disappointment, which serves to demobilize.⁵¹ But a revolution and its aftermath are not politics as usual. In fact, the experience may invoke even higher levels of hope because the possibility of political, social, and economic change seems within reach, with a bigger letdown and deeper disappointment when these changes do not materialize. Revolution entails “articulating and practicing new horizons and possibilities in and against existing discursive frames and practices.”⁵² Central to the

experience of a counterrevolution is a dynamic combination of “creativity and foreclosure.”⁵³ After a revolution, as the emotions that spurred protest fade and disappointment sets in, the disappointed might be less likely to mobilize or participate in elections.⁵⁴

As such, disappointment likely links the experience of counterrevolution with subsequent political behavior. In conceptualizing and measuring disappointment, we follow established precedent from the psychology literature. Van Dijk and Zeelenberg⁵⁵ note that “theorists agree that disappointments stem from outcomes that are worse than expected.” Consequently, our measures aim to capture this outcome-related disappointment⁵⁶ by asking respondents whether the events of 2011 or 2013 met their expectations failed to meet their expectations. While other negative emotions are likely to cluster together with disappointment because negative emotions tend to be correlated with each other,⁵⁷ we believe that our chosen measures offer the most straightforward means to capture the phenomenon and approximate the feeling of disappointment in a survey setting.

The importance of emotion as the mechanism through which counterrevolution affects individual attitudes and behaviors is intuitive for those who participated in or witnessed it firsthand; when asked to recall revolution and its reversal, participants and witnesses can typically summon their own memories and experiences of what the revolution and counterrevolution felt like. But what of non-participants? Existing research suggests that while active participation in a social movement has the largest impact on subsequent political behavior,⁵⁸ members of the public who are attentive to a movement’s activities and causes and may support the movement morally experience other effects from the movement. Moreover, the collective experience of momentous events—like the Vietnam War, the Women’s Movement in the United States, or the French Revolution—creates generational consciousness that transcends individual participation.⁵⁹ Yet it remains unclear how these events affect non-participants, particularly in cases of counterrevolution

and in authoritarian contexts.

The idea that history is written by the victors is a well-known adage and implies that the winners' interpretation tends to prevail in collective memories of events. In the case of counterrevolution, the revitalized non-democratic regime is essentially the "winner." Authoritarian regimes rely on the indoctrination of populations into compliance with their control,⁶⁰ and often introduce or strengthen mass systems of indoctrination like education when they are rebounding from civil conflict.⁶¹ A similar mechanism exists for understanding the role of state-controlled media in authoritarian systems. Non-democratic regimes control the content and consumption of state-controlled media.⁶² Through state media, the regime indoctrinates individuals with a controlled political, social, and economic narrative, with the often successful intent of increasing regime legitimacy and effective rule.⁶³ Indoctrination through state-controlled media can create the appearance of state proficiency in governing⁶⁴ and displace anger at the national government to the state's rival powers.⁶⁵ In addition, the state's control of narratives through media may prevent collective action⁶⁶ and limit societal discontent⁶⁷ by censoring other narratives. In the staunchly authoritarian Middle East, state-controlled media have been notorious in controlling public narratives about major political events,⁶⁸ particularly following the challenges to and reemergence of authoritarianism following the 2011 uprisings.⁶⁹ When it comes to counterrevolution, state-controlled media can shape how the mass public comes to understand events and how citizens remember them. Similar to other kinds of threats, the state can demonize the revolution and even erase it. Thus, those who did not participate may internalize the state narrative and interpretation of events rather than their own experiences and emotions in remembering the revolution.

A Timeline of Revolution and Counterrevolution in Egypt

We explore the question of how revolution and counterrevolution affect political attitudes and behaviors in contemporary Egypt. In late December 2010, protests that later become known as the “Arab Spring” uprisings began in Tunisia and culminated in the ouster of long-serving president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011. In the following months, the region witnessed unprecedented mass uprisings against long-serving authoritarian presidents inspired by the success of the Tunisian protesters. Demonstrations began in Egypt on January 25, 2011, and the uprising would later be remembered as the January 25 Revolution. This date marked National Police Day, a national holiday established in 2009 to commemorate the role of police in maintaining Egypt’s security and stability. Activists reclaimed the holiday to protest against police brutality, the near-constant state-of-emergency law, economic corruption, and the lack of civil liberties and freedoms of speech. The successful event was followed by 18 days of sustained and growing protest by people from all ages, classes, walks of life, and political persuasions.⁷⁰ On February 11, president Hosni Mubarak resigned after nearly 30 years in office.

Mubarak’s resignation initiated a series of competitive political activity, resulting in an elected and civilian-led government for the first time in Egypt’s history. Elections were held between November 2011 and January 2012 for the National Constituent Assembly. The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party led the Democratic Alliance to victory with 37.5 percent of the vote. In June 2012, Mohamed Morsi, a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau and a parliamentarian under Mubarak, defeated former Prime Minister and Air Force commander Ahmed Shafiq with 51.7 percent of the vote in a two-man run-off, and was inaugurated as Egypt’s first democratically-elected civilian president. However, polarization between political elites, shaped by legacies of repression and competition during the Mubarak era, quickly resurfaced and deepened.⁷¹ The Brotherhood was exclusionary and heavy-handed

in its rule, while secular and leftist politicians were uncooperative. On the one-year anniversary of Morsi's inauguration, the youth group Tamarod (Arabic for "Rebellion") organized massive anti-Morsi protests with financial and logistical support from elements of Egypt's security apparatus. On July 3, 2013, the military announced Morsi's removal from power, also suspending the constitution and installing an interim government.

In the aftermath of the 2011-2013 instability, the regime has used two main tactics to reestablish control. First, current president of Egypt retired Field Marshall Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has overseen a deepening of authoritarianism that dwarfs the abuses of his predecessors. In May of 2014, el-Sisi garnered approximately 97 percent of the vote in a typical authoritarian presidential election. Between the July 3, 2013 coup and May 15, 2014, the number of individuals arrested and prosecuted reached 41,153, the majority accused of ties with the recently outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.⁷² We conducted our experiment in late 2018, when el-Sisi's rule appeared to be firmly entrenched. Earlier in the year, El-Sisi was reelected in a landslide victory against one hand-picked opponent. Following his reelection, constitutional amendments were pushed through the parliament that could allow him to stay in power through 2030. During 2019, the total number of political prisoners reached 60,000.⁷³ The regime has constructed at least 22 new prisons to house its burgeoning prisoner population. In addition to repression against mobilized opposition, the Sisi regime has employed rhetoric intended to minimize and erase memories, particularly good ones, of the 2011 revolution to the greatest extent possible. In 2018, the year in which our survey was conducted, Sisi remarked in a public speech that "That which happened seven or eight years ago will never happen again in Egypt. That which didn't succeed then will not succeed now."⁷⁴ That same year, the regime removed all references to the 2011 and 2013 uprisings from state textbooks.⁷⁵ The regime's efforts aiming at erasing the memory of the revolution even led a popular rock band to write a satirical song entitled "The Revolution Did Not Take Place."⁷⁶

Experimental Design

We analyze the results of an experiment embedded in a December 2018 survey of a nationally-representative sample of 2,000 Egyptian adult citizens.⁷⁷ The larger instrument included standard questions designed to measure respondents' emotions, personality, political behavior, political attitudes, and demographic information, and the experiment was embedded around the midpoint of the survey. The combination of a nationally-representative sample and an experimental manipulation provides a reliable test of causal propositions about the relationship between awareness of counterrevolution on the one hand, and the expression of particular political attitudes or the likelihood of adopting particular behaviors on the other.⁷⁸

An experiment was necessary for us to assess the plausibly causal relationship between counterrevolution and subsequent political behavior. Using observational data, researchers have found that districts that highly supported Morsi (thus being most likely to feel the democratic opening and closing) were more likely to witness anti-regime and sectarian violence and more likely to witness depressed turnout, higher spoilage rates, and higher support for opposition candidates in the authoritarian elections held after the 2013 coup.⁷⁹ However, because of the nature of the data, it is uncertain whether these relationships are causal or correlational. We chose an experimental approach that asked a random subset of respondents to remember and reflect on events they had experience, detailed in the following section. We could not, of course, randomize exposure to revolutionary events among respondents, so we chose to prime memories of specific parts of the revolution and the counterrevolution between 2011 and 2013. Our design choice renders the experiment a hard test of our hypotheses due to the subtle and short-lived nature of our intervention, and likely biases observed effects towards the null. However, it was important to us that we be as non-invasive as possible to limit the psychological stress induced by participation in our survey, and to realistically prime respondents with their

own memories of the revolution and the counterrevolution.

Treatments

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups. In the first treatment, which serves as a control condition, respondents received no information or text, and immediately proceeded to answering the post-treatment questions outlined in the next section. In the two additional treatments, respondents answered two questions before answering the post-treatment questions. Each set of questions asked respondents to recall recent consequential political events. The first treatment, referred to throughout the article as “2011 Reminder,” asked respondents about expectations and experiences surrounding the 2011 revolution, while the second treatment, referred to henceforth as “2013 Reminder,” asked respondents about expectations and experiences surrounding the 2013 coup. The following text was used for both treatments, with only the reference year differing across treatments:

1. Thinking back to the events of [2011/2013], what were your expectations about positive changes for Egypt’s future?
 - A. High
 - B. No different than before
 - C. Low
 - D. *Don’t Know (not read)*
 - E. *Refuse (not read)*
2. How about today, in 2018? Would you say that subsequent events [...] your expectations for positive change?
 - A. Exceeded
 - B. Met
 - C. Did not meet
 - D. *Don’t Know (not read)*
 - E. *Refuse (not read)*

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents across treatment groups, in addition to respondents’ answers to the two questions included in each treatment.⁸⁰

Table 1: Treatment Assignment and Responses

Treatment Assignment	Control	2011 Reminder			2013 Reminder		
<i>N</i>	668	666			666		
Thinking back to the events of [year], what were your expectations about positive changes for Egypt's future?	–	<i>High</i> 368 (55.3%)	<i>No Different</i> 111 (16.7%)	<i>Low</i> 99 (14.9%)	<i>High</i> 343 (51.5%)	<i>No Different</i> 153 (23.0%)	<i>Low</i> 88 (13.2%)
How about today, in 2018? Would you say that subsequent events [...] your expectations for positive change?	–	<i>Exceeded</i> 21 (3.2%)	<i>Met</i> 140 (21.0%)	<i>Did Not Meet</i> 422 (63.4%)	<i>Exceeded</i> 28 (4.2%)	<i>Met</i> 170 (25.5%)	<i>Did Not Meet</i> 388 (58.3%)

Post-Treatment Questions

We asked three sets of post-treatment questions to measure political attitudes and behaviors that might be affected by counterrevolution. First, to measure generalized trust, we asked respondents to report their levels of trust in the following institutions and groups:

1. Government
2. Courts and legal system
3. The elected council of representatives (the parliament)
4. Local government
5. Civil society organizations
6. Religious leaders
7. Political parties
8. People of different political behavior and beliefs

Second, we asked questions related to voting attitudes and behaviors. We first asked about respondents' feelings of voter efficacy. Specifically, we asked respondents to report their level of agreement (on a Likert scale) with the statement that "Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things." In addition, we asked a question about future voting in parliamentary elections. Respondents were told, "It is likely that the country will hold parliamentary elections in 2020." They were then asked, "Do you think you will participate?"⁸¹

Third, to measure more costly protest behaviors, we asked how likely the respondent was to attend a meeting to discuss a subject or sign a petition, as well as how likely the respondent was to participate in a protest, march, or sit-in.

Hypotheses

We registered a pre-analysis plan on November 19, 2018, before data collection began for the pre-test of the instrument.⁸² We were interested primarily in whether disappointment with revolutionary outcomes contribute to political disengagement. Initially, we thought that a being asked to recall the 2011 revolutionary protests would be mobilizing while recalling the 2013 counterrevolution would be demobilizing. We hypothesized that those who were disappointed with developments during each of these crucial moments during Egypt’s potential democratic transition would report lower levels of political efficacy, lower levels of trust in political institutions of all types, and lower likelihoods of low-cost political behavior than those whose expectations were fulfilled.

In full transparency, our thinking on the nature of our primes, and what interpretation or narrative non-participants would “remember” about these events,⁸³ evolved from the pre-analysis plan as we developed the article. First, we assumed that the 2011 and 2013 treatments would be distinct. However, while the 2013 reminder clearly recalls the counterrevolutionary events, the 2011 treatment proved to be more ambiguous. While the prime was intended to conjure images of the revolutionary moment, it is plausible that respondents in this group were also inadvertently reminded of the events two years later that effectively undid the revolution. This treatment may therefore have countervailing effects: on the one hand, it invokes memories of a moment when Egyptian citizens brought down a seemingly invincible dictator; on the other, it may also give rise to a sense of futility since citizens know how the story ended. With regards to non-participants, we note that we did not initially anticipate that consumption of

state-controlled media would be an important factor in our analyses when formulating our pre-analysis plan. We discuss the complexity of our primes and the importance of state-controlled media in more detail in the discussion section.

Results

Average Treatment Effects

Figure 1 displays the average treatment effects (ATEs) of the 2011 and 2013 treatments on an index of trust (rescaled to range from 0 to 1) including eight survey questions.⁸⁴ This index was generated by a factor analysis of the constituent items.⁸⁵ The effects of each of these treatments are negative and highly statistically significant ($p = 0.001$ for 2011 and $p < 0.001$ for 2013). Thus, our reminders of either the 2011 revolution or the 2013 coup have similar⁸⁶ and significant negative effects on trust.

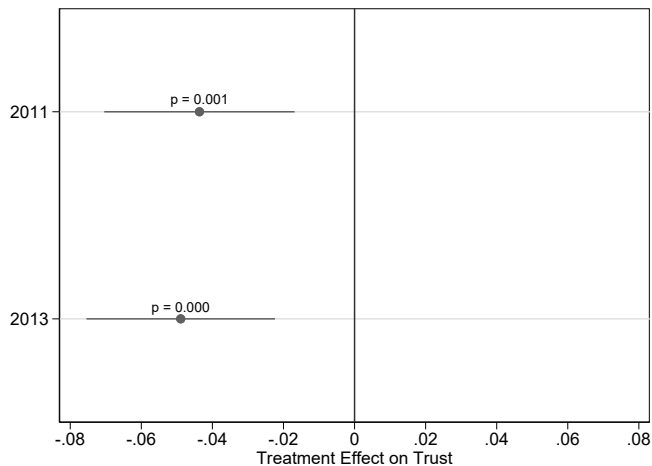


Figure 1: Treatment Effects on Trust

Results are similar when considering the effect of our treatments on two dependent variables related to voting, illustrated in Figure 2. The first voting item measures respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things." For this question, the 2011 treatment has no effect,

while the 2013 treatment decreases voting efficacy at a marginally significant level ($p = 0.061$). The second item asked respondents how likely they were to vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Once again, the 2011 treatment has no effect on this outcome. The 2013 treatment, however, significantly decreases respondents' likelihood of voting ($p = 0.029$).

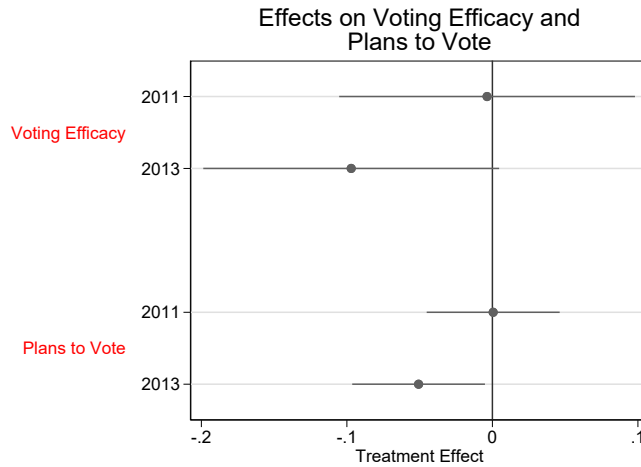


Figure 2: Treatment Effects on Voting Efficacy and Plans to Vote

Finally, we examine the effect of the treatments on future political mobilization. Here, we asked respondents in each group whether they were likely to participate in protests or political meetings.⁸⁷ Figure 3 presents the treatment effects of the 2011 and 2013 primes on each of these questions. Both treatments decrease respondents' likelihood of participating in protests or meetings/petitions, but for both outcome variables, only the 2013 treatment effect is statistically significant (at the $p < 0.05$ level), suggesting a uniquely demobilizing effect.

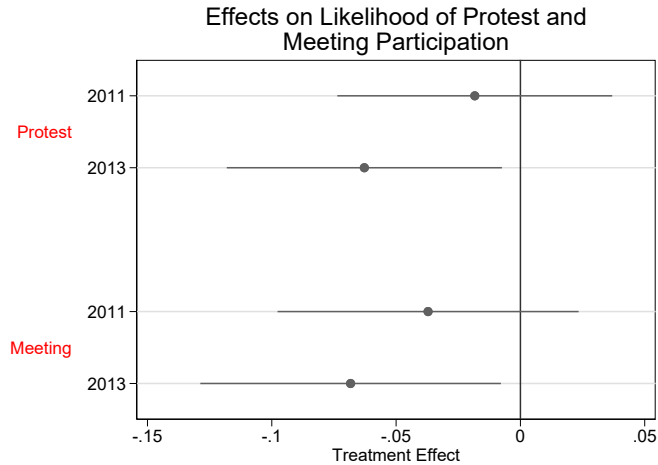


Figure 3: Treatment Effects on Likelihood of Protesting or Attending Meeting

Mechanism Test: Disappointment

So far, we have examined and presented average treatment effects among the entire sample. In alignment with our theory and pre-registered analyses, we also consider potential heterogeneity in the treatment effects between different subgroups within the sample, in an effort to shed light on the mechanisms through which our primes affect respondents’ attitudes and behaviors. Recall our experimental design, in which respondents were asked two sets of questions about their expectations and subsequent levels of disappointment in response to the events of either 2011 or 2013. We now focus on respondents’ answers to the second question included in the experimental treatments (i.e., whether they were disappointed by the events of either 2011 and 2013), the distribution of which is displayed in the final row of Table 1. In our analyses, we group those whose expectations were exceeded or met into one group to compare with those whose expectations were not met to construct a binary outcome of disappointment with the outcome of either the 2011 or 2013 events, depending on which treatment they received. This classification results in five groups: the control group (which, naturally, was not asked the disappointment question, as doing so would have “treated” them); those in the 2011 treatment group whose expectations were not met; those

in the 2011 group whose expectations were met or exceeded; those in the 2013 treatment group whose expectations were not met; and those in the 2013 group whose expectations were met or exceeded.

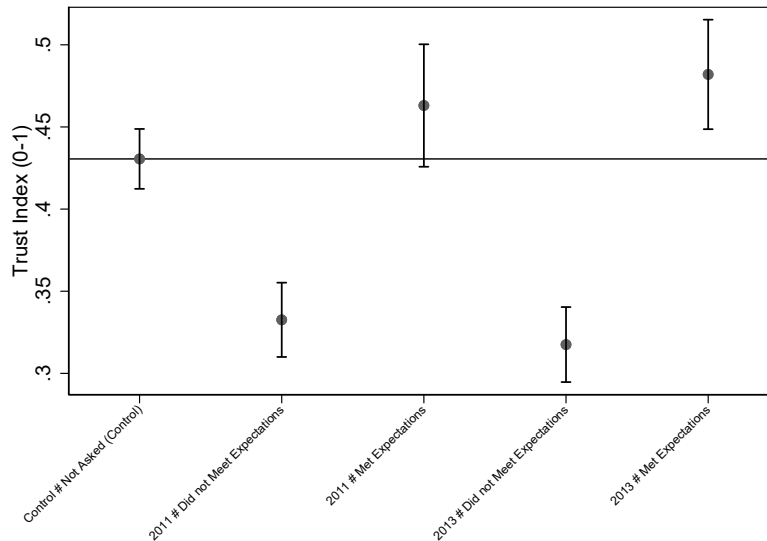


Figure 4: Trust, by Treatment Group and Disappointment

Our analyses support our expectations about heterogeneous treatment effects. Figure 4 presents levels of trust by response to the treatments (i.e., whether the respondent’s expectations were met) in comparison with the control. Using the 0-1 trust index described above, reminders of either the 2011 revolution or the 2013 coup significantly decreased levels of trust compared to the control group among those whose expectations were not met, while the opposite is true among those whose expectations were met or exceeded. These effects are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level or better with the exception of the “2011, Met Expectations” group, which is relatively small. In total, as expected, reminders of either 2011 or 2013 substantially reduce trust among those who were disappointed in their results, but increased trust among those who were pleased with their results.

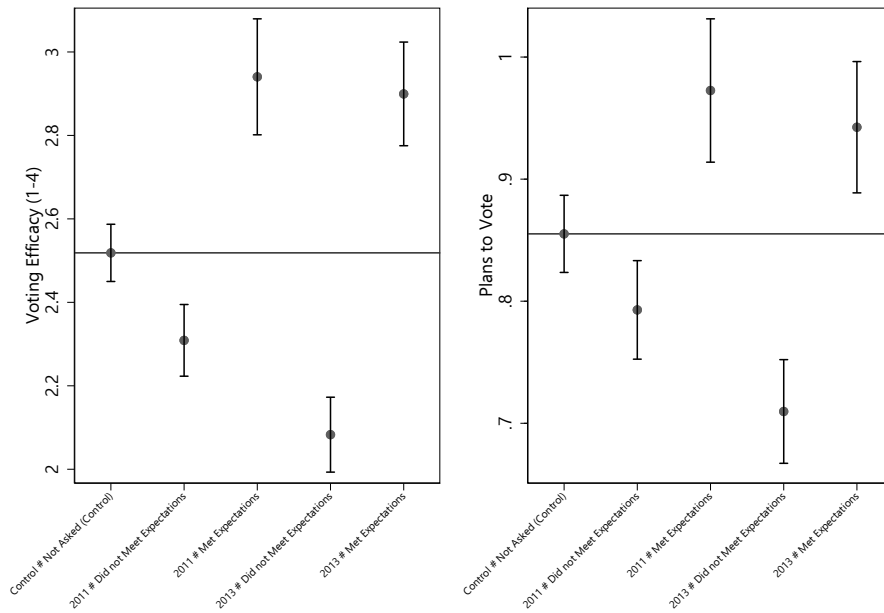


Figure 5: Voting, by Treatment Group and Disappointment

Figure 5 displays corresponding effects on levels of voting efficacy (on the 1-4 scale outlined above) and likelihood of future voting across treatment groups and levels of disappointment. Compared to the control group, those whose expectations were met by the events of 2011 or 2013 report much higher levels of efficacy and voting intentions. Among those whose expectations were *not* met, the 2011 treatment reduced both voting efficacy and voting intentions, and the 2013 treatment had an even more dramatic demobilizing effect than the 2011 treatment. All of the differences from the control group reported here are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level or (more often) better.

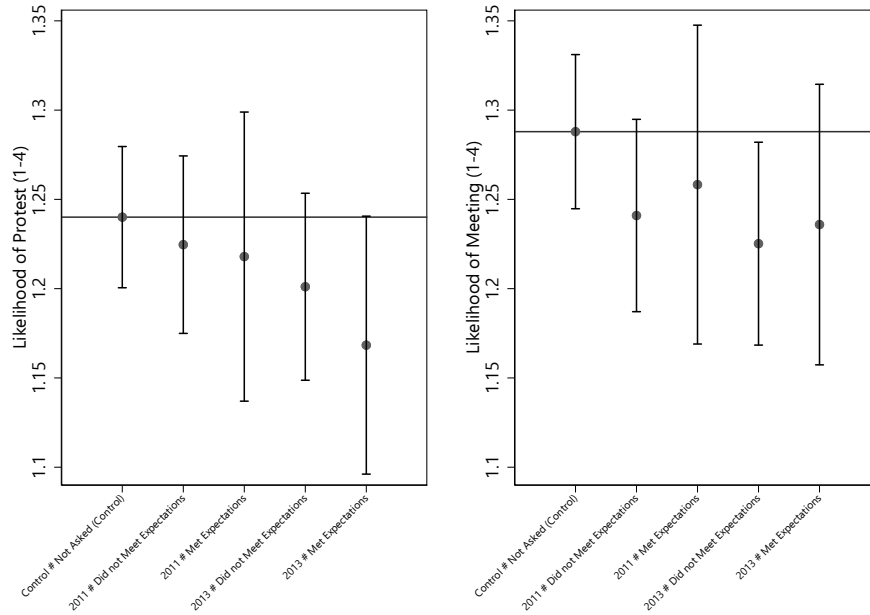


Figure 6: Protest and Meeting Likelihood, by Treatment Group and Disappointment

Finally, Figure 6 presents the likelihood of attending a meeting or protest by response to the treatments in comparison with the control. Results of treatment effects by level of disappointment provide suggestive evidence that those disappointed by the events of 2013 are significantly less likely to attend a meeting, but most of the differences are not statistically significant. It is worth noting that these estimates may have encountered a floor effect: for both the protest and meeting likelihood questions, over 95% of respondents indicated that they were either unlikely to engage in these behaviors, with 80-83% of respondents stating that they were “very unlikely” to do so.

Mechanism Test: Exposure to State-Controlled Media

A key unresolved question in our analysis is *which* memories, exactly, our primes are triggering. These memories are not directly observable, but we use state media exposure to infer the types of messages that individuals are likely to have received and, by extension, their retrospective understandings of the events of 2011 and 2013. Specifically, we expect that

individuals who only obtain news from state sources will be the most negatively affected by our primes, as the state media narrative largely attempts to demonize and erase the revolution of 2011 and the political opening that temporarily followed it. As we noted above, the regime has actively worked to shape the narrative around the 2011 uprising. While it is surely not possible for the regime to eliminate memories of the revolution entirely, it is nevertheless likely that its strong grip on state media will have an effect on the way that its viewers process memories of these events. Thus, reminding state media consumers of the revolution (2011) or its undoing (2013) will likely reduce perceived political efficacy because the narrative to which they are regularly exposed implies that participation is largely futile.

We should note that this hypothesis was not included in our original pre-analysis plan, and should thus be considered exploratory. The remarkably similar effects of the 2011 and 2013 primes—which we did not anticipate—necessitated a closer look at *what* the primes were actually activating. Consequently, we hypothesized that regular consumers of state media would be affected especially strongly by the primes, as the messaging they receive on an everyday basis is likely to underscore (perhaps subtly and indirectly) the inefficacy of participation.

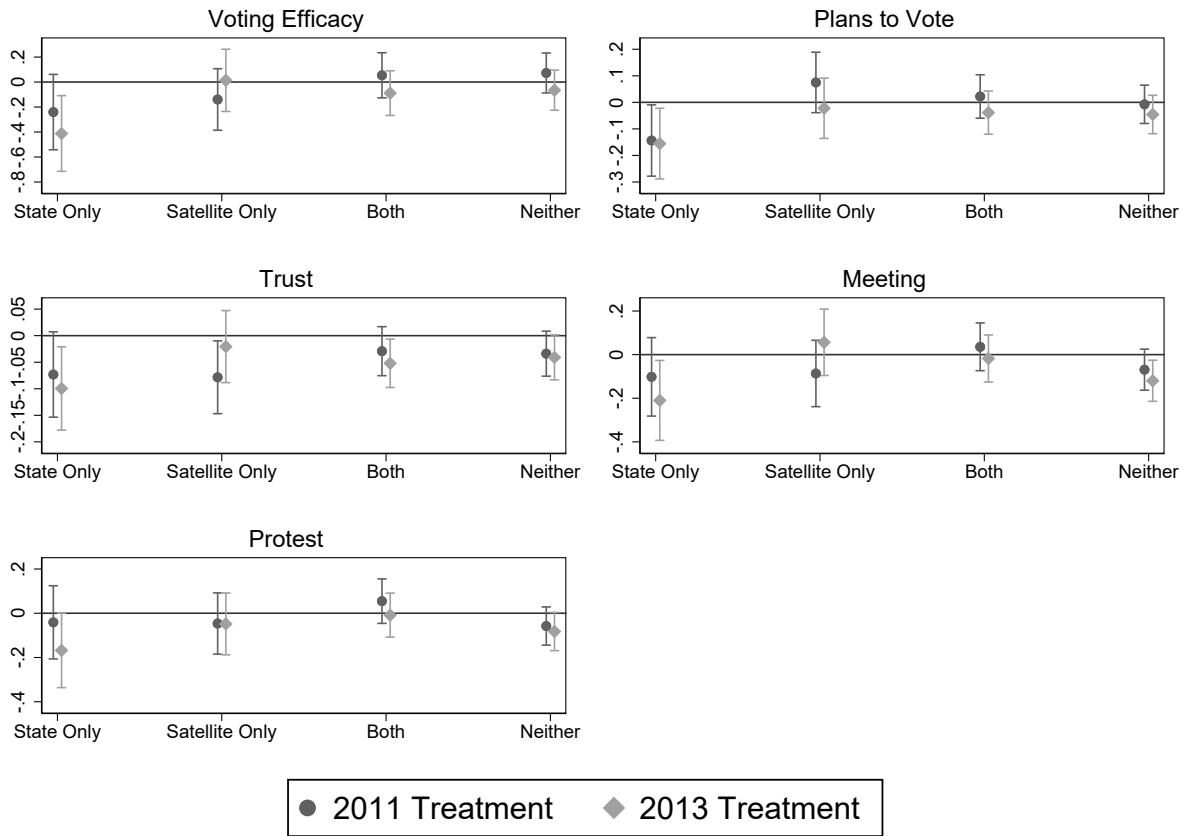


Figure 7: Average Treatment Effects by News Source

Figure 7 provides support for this hypothesis. This figure displays the average treatment effects for four separate groups: those who reported that they watch state news exclusively ($n = 217$); those that report watching satellite news exclusively ($n = 319$); those who watch both ($n = 616$); and those who watch neither ($n = 828$). For each of the dependent variables explored above, the dampening effects of our primes are largest among respondents who consume only state-run media; indeed, for some outcomes, these respondents are the *only* ones who were significantly affected by the treatment(s).

Importantly, we do not presume a strict distinction wherein state media outlets present a pro-regime narrative and non-state media outlets do the opposite. However, it is clear that the non-state media environment offers a more diverse array of opinions in their

programming, and as such, it is plausible that consumers of non-state media are exposed to less uniformly pro-regime material. Abdulla⁸⁸ notes that the post-coup media landscape has consisted of “a state media apparatus that has for all intents and purposes supported whatever regime is in power, non-state media outlets influenced by wealthy owners with ties to the Mubarak regime, and severe polarization between Islamist and non-Islamist media outlets.” While the media market in Egypt at the time of our survey did not provide the vibrant set of opposition-oriented sources it once had, it nevertheless contained some variety in terms of political narratives through satellite programming. Satellite television in Egypt consists of two kinds of offerings. First, international television like the Qatar-based *al-Jazeera* provides a narrative that champions the Muslim Brotherhood in line with dynamics of the “Arab Cold War”⁸⁹ that has defined the regional politics since 2011. In the wake of the coup and an attack on its headquarters in Cairo, al-Jazeera has closed its Egypt-based office. Since the 2013 coup, Egypt arrested a number of the news company’s employees and broadcasters and blocked access to its website because of its criticism of the government. Second, satellite television in Egypt also includes what might be termed opposition television, namely *Mekamaleen TV* and *El Sharq*. These companies have ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian opposition, and politicians like Ayman Nour exiled in Turkey and the United Kingdom. They similarly put forward a narrative that is both critical of the regime and which champions the 2011 uprising, and demonizes the regime put in place by the 2013 coup. Some of the consequences of these different narratives are evident in our data: for instance, less than 13% of satellite news viewers were unable to correctly identify the presidential term limit, compared to more than 20% of state news viewers ($p = 0.016$).

It is also important to recognize that the heavy-handedness of the regime’s control over the media in the post-coup era could create conditions in which citizens simply believe the state’s narrative about the revolution uncritically. If this were the case, then our

explanation regarding expectations and disappointment would not hold. However, if citizens broadly accepted the state's narrative about the revolution and its aftermath, then our experimental primes would have, at most, a neutral effect on political mobilization, and would more likely actually *enhance* feelings of efficacy and planned political participation. Since we observe exactly the *opposite*, we are confident that citizens are not naively internalizing the regime's messaging across the board.⁹⁰

However, selection into news consumption categories is not random, and in an authoritarian context, may very well reflect pre-existing preferences for the regime; citizens who support the regime might be more likely to watch state-sponsored news. Monitoring and social desirability bias would suggest the same relationship, in which respondents would be more likely to report both high levels of support for the government and higher frequency of state news viewing. It might also be the case that state media consumers were more satisfied by the outcomes of the 2013 coup; any of these possibilities would suggest that the negative effects among state media viewers could be driven by *satisfaction* rather than by disappointment or demobilization. However, none of these concerns are supported by the data. Figure 8 demonstrates that state-only viewers are no more supportive of the government than are other citizens, and that, despite their already low expectations going into the events of 2011 and 2013, they are actually the *least* likely to be satisfied with the outcome.⁹¹ It is not the case, therefore, that state media consumers are happy with the outcome of 2013; they have simply internalized the message that opposition is unlikely to succeed, making them more susceptible to the demobilizing effects provided by our experimental primes. State news consumers are also at least as supportive of democracy as other citizens, and are at least as likely to believe that democracy is suitable for Egypt as others (see Figures A5 and A6).

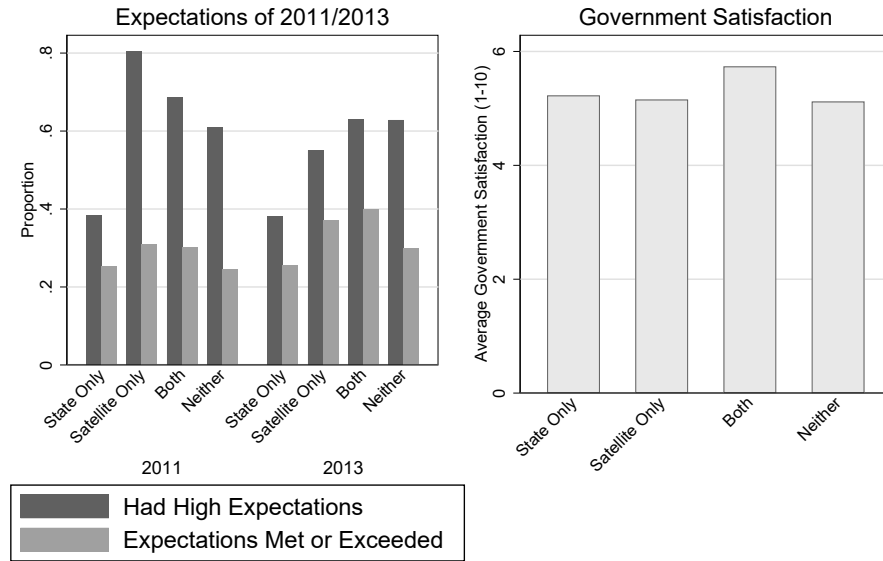


Figure 8: Expectations and Government Satisfaction, by News Source

Discussion

Our results most consistently demonstrate that priming memories of the 2013 coup had a significantly demobilizing effect on a variety of political attitudes and behaviors. Respondents randomly assigned to the 2013 prime reported lower levels of trust in government institutions and non-governmental institutions alike. The 2013 prime also has a significant effect on reported voting intentions, which is quite striking considering the well-established tendency for respondents to overstate both past and planned voting behavior.⁹² The incentives to overstate one’s likelihood of voting are likely even stronger in electoral authoritarian contexts like Egypt, where turning out to vote is incentivized under the best of circumstances and pressured in more dire situations. For instance, in the 2014 election, the regime extended the voting period to a third day at the last minute, and announced to the media that previously-ignored fines for not voting would be enforced this

time around.⁹³ In addition, the demobilizing effect of the 2013 treatment extends to voting in addition to rarer, higher-cost political behaviors like protest and meeting attendance. We believe this consistent demobilizing effect reveals a great deal about what was being primed by our reminders of 2013 for respondents. The 2013 prime was intended to serve as a reminder of an event that effectively reversed any changes initiated by the 2011 revolution. In addition, it is possible that the 2013 prime brought military rule to respondents' minds, in which some protest behaviors are not tolerated while voting is less effective in comparison with democratic or democratizing contexts.

Less straightforward in our results is an explanation for the significant negative effect of priming 2011 on trust, and the null effect of the same prime on voting and protest behaviors. To be frank, we were surprised to observe that the effects of the 2011 and 2013 primes on levels of trust were often identical. We had theorized that the 2011 prime would have a pro-trust effect in the opposite direction of the 2013 effect, and similarly significant positive effects on voting and protest attitudes behaviors. The fact that such effects were not present points to two potential explanations. Unfortunately, our data do not permit us to unpack these two potential mechanisms as much as we would like, but each of them may play a role in explaining why the 2011 prime produced inconclusive results, so we outline them here.

First, it is difficult—more difficult than we anticipated—to prime memories of the 2011 revolution without also invoking the experience of its unraveling in 2013. We had anticipated that while the 2013 prime would remind individuals of the negatives of the undoing of the revolution, the 2011 prime would remind individuals of the positive aspects of the revolution in its heyday. However, like any well known story, it is possible that respondents are unable to disentangle the start of the revolution from its disastrous demise (for example, it would be nearly impossible to prime the love story of Romeo and Juliet without also priming its tragic ending for both readers and non-readers who are aware of the

story, engrained as it is in global popular culture). Without specifying the positive attributes we hoped to prime through recollection of 2011, respondents may not have been able to get there on their own. As a result, the two treatments might not be truly distinct for some respondents, and may be confusing to others.

Second, revolutionary (or counter-revolutionary) moments are periods of high uncertainty; as Kurzman⁹⁴ observes, “the experience of revolution is dominated by confusion.” In environments like Egypt (particularly during its authoritarian eras), preference falsification may make it difficult for citizens to know how other people feel about the regime,⁹⁵ and therefore, make it more difficult to trust others, to think one’s vote matters and cast it, and to undertake potentially risky protest behaviors. Both 2011 and 2013 provided these types of conditions, in which it was difficult for citizens to know who was on their “side” and could thus be trusted.

Finally, our results speak to the core mechanisms through which our primes operate. First, we find that the emotion of disappointment is important in conditioning our treatment effects. While we did not directly manipulate the mechanism, and thus cannot measure the size of the effect, the design of our primes permitted us to disentangle whether those who were more and less disappointed by the outcomes of the 2011 and 2013 events report different political attitudes and behaviors. Reminders of either 2011 or 2013 substantially reduced trust among those who were disappointed in their results, but increased trust among those who were pleased with their results. Feelings of voter efficacy and reported voting intentions were significantly lower among disappointed respondents, and the lowest in the “2013, Did Not Meet Expectations” group. Those who were reminded of the coup and who were disappointed with its consequences were substantially less mobilized than any other group. For these respondents, the 2013 treatment was a sobering reminder of the failed revolution and the solidification of authoritarian rule in the form of the current regime. Memories of the coup, then, could plausibly lead disappointed respondents to view voting as

futile in the present environment. As we noted above, a host of negative emotions tend to cluster together.⁹⁶ While we cannot rule out that other emotions were similarly primed due to the nature of our post-treatment batteries, we can clearly measure disappointment and demonstrate its demobilizing effect.

Second, we find that exposure to state-controlled media is also important in conditioning our treatment effects. We find that the significant average treatment effects we reported in the above results section are only present among *non-participants*, demonstrated visually in figures 9 through 11 in the appendix. As we noted above, the mass public overwhelmingly did not participate in the revolution or the counterrevolution, a fact borne out in our sample: about 5% of our sample reported participating in 2011 or 2013.⁹⁷ We believe that reminders did not affect participants because they were essentially already primed, having lived through these experiences themselves, and perhaps because they were able to recall both positive and negative aspects of their experiences. In contrast, members of the general public who did not participate in protests were asked by our primes to recall events they were likely aware of but did not experience personally, and may have been unable to distinguish the positive of the revolution's onset without also remembering its demise. Moreover, when asked about events in which they did not directly participate, many respondents were likely to draw on narratives of the revolution as perpetuated through state-controlled media, particularly if they themselves consume state media more than other sources.

Conclusion

As the people of Egypt have witnessed, revolutions do not always lead to the kind of lasting change that their supporters envision. In many cases, even large-scale social movements are unable to prevent a return to the status quo ante or even something worse. Through a nationally-representative survey experiment of adult Egyptian citizens, we have

demonstrated that priming participants with memories of counterrevolution can have a chilling effect on political mobilization, reducing citizens' trust in other people and government institutions, their sense of political efficacy, and their likelihood of participating in politics, whether voting or costlier behaviors like political meetings and protest.

We also find suggestive evidence of how this process might work. Our motivation for the analysis emphasized the role of *disappointment* in the observable effects of counterrevolution. Citizens who were disappointed by the developments following 2011 and (especially) 2013 reported markedly lower levels of trust and voting efficacy and were substantially less likely to say that they planned to vote in the next elections when compared to the control group, who was not reminded of these events. For those whose expectations of the 2011 or 2013 developments were met, the exact opposite relationship is present: compared to the control group, these respondents reported greater trust and voting efficacy along with a higher likelihood of planning to vote. These findings are consistent with a mechanism of disappointment driving the link between experiences of counterrevolution and political demobilization.

In addition, we find that *consumption of state-controlled media* conditions treatment effects; those who report only consuming state media are significantly and most negatively affected by the 2013 prime. This finding is consistent with the literature on political control in authoritarian contexts, and highlights how state-controlled media can indoctrinate citizens into certain—and in this case, demobilizing—understandings of major political events. For the vast majority of our sample who did not participate in the revolution our primes may cause them to recall the state narrative and interpretation of events rather than their own experiences and emotions in remembering the revolution. Taken together, we believe our findings on the emotional and news consumption mechanisms speak to the process of how the public remembers revolution and its reversal, and the importance of incorporating this understanding into the interpretation of our results.

It is important to note some limitations of the present study that are worthy of future scholarly attention, particularly with respect to causal mechanisms. First, a survey experiment at best approximates witnessing and participating in revolution, but is a very weak treatment compared to the actual experience itself. We were heartened to see any effects but believe that in real life effects will be much larger. Relatedly, the design of this study is not able to capture the mechanism of disappointment perfectly. Because of the nature of the priming experiment, respondents who were in the control group could not be asked about their levels of disappointment in the events of 2011 and/or 2013 because doing so would clearly *prime* them. Future studies should pursue alternative methods to probe this mechanism as well as other potential channels. In addition, future studies should explore whether primes of the 2011 and 2013 events primed other emotions, such as fear or anger, of relevance for political attitudes and behaviors. Such studies can shed more light on the conditions under which counterrevolutions can have lasting demobilizing effects on citizens, potentially undermining future revolutionary potential and strengthening the regimes threatened by them. Finally, future studies should better parse the content of state-controlled media, particularly in comparison with independent and foreign media to better understand its effects on how non-participants remember the revolution and its undoing.

Notes

¹Dix, “Why Revolutions Succeed & Fail.”

²Clarke, *Return of the Tyrant: Why Counterrevolutions Emerge and Succeed*.

³Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; Kuran, “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989”; Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*.

⁴Goldstone, “Is Revolution Individually Rational? Groups and Individuals in Revolutionary Collective Action”; Goldstone, “Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory”; Goldstone, “Cross-class Coalitions and the Making of the Arab Revolts of 2011”; Beissinger, “The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution.”

⁵Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*; Stewart, Settles, and Winter, “Women and the Social Movements of the 1960s: Activists, Engaged Observers, and Nonparticipants.”

⁶Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*, 11. See also Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* and Gross, *The Seizure of Political Power in a Century of Revolutions*.

⁷Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*.

⁸Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Goldstone, “Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory”; Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*; Lawson, *Anatomies of Revolution*; Beissinger, *The Revolutionary City: Urbanization and the Global Transformation of Rebellion*. How and why revolutions do not achieve lasting change is beyond the scope of this article but has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Here, we are simply interested in the fact that the revolution happened and then was reversed by a counterrevolution. For understanding the lack of major change following the Arab uprisings, see Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds (*The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*), Nugent (*After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition*) and Clarke (*Return of the Tyrant: Why Counterrevolutions Emerge and Succeed*).

⁹Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; Kuran, “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989”; Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*.

¹⁰Dix, “Why Revolutions Succeed & Fail.”

¹¹Goldstone, “Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory.”

¹²Goldstone, “You Can’t Always Get What You Want: Why Revolutionary Outcomes So Often Diverge from Revolutionary Goals.”

¹³Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*; Tilly,

European Revolutions, 1492-1992; Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*; Goldstone, “Rethinking Revolutions: Integrating Origins, Processes, and Outcomes”; Kalandadze and Orenstein, “Electoral Protests and Democratization Beyond the Color Revolutions”; Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*; Lawson, *Anatomies of Revolution*; Lachapelle et al., “Social Revolution and Authoritarian Durability”; Beissinger, *The Revolutionary City: Urbanization and the Global Transformation of Rebellion*; Goldstone, Grinin, and Korotayev, “Changing Yet Persistent: Revolutions and Revolutionary Events”; Levitsky and Way, *Revolution and Dictatorship: The Violent Origins of Durable Authoritarianism*.

¹⁴Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*; De Mesquita and Smith, “Political Survival and Endogenous Institutional Change.”

¹⁵Burstein, “Social Movements and Public Policy”; Amenta and Young, “Making an Impact: Conceptual and Methodological Implications of the Collective Goods Criterion”; Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*; Berman, *Protest, Social Policy, and Political Regimes in the Middle East*.

¹⁶Porta, “Protest, Protesters, and Protest Policing: Public Discourse in Italy and Germany from the 1960s to the 1980s.”

¹⁷Fishman and Lizardo, “How Macro-Historical Change Shapes Cultural Taste: Legacies of Democratization in Spain and Portugal”; Fishman, “Democratic Practice after the Revolution: The Case of Portugal and Beyond”; Fishman, *Democratic Practice: Origins of the Iberian Divide in Political Inclusion*.

¹⁸Goldstone, “Social Movements or Revolutions? On the Evolution and Outcomes of Collective Action.”

¹⁹Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*; Osa, *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Oppositions*; Fillieule, “Demobilization and Disengagement in a Life Course Perspective.”

²⁰In the cases under consideration here, this means more ideologically left as defined in the American context.

²¹Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken, *Dynamics of Idealism: White Activists in a Black Movement*; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*; Whalen, *Beyond the Barricades: The Sixties Generation Grows Up*; Braungart and Braungart, “The Life-Course Development of Left-and Right-Wing Youth Activist Leaders from the 1960s”; Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*; Neveu and Fillieule, *Activists Forever? Long-Term Impacts of Political Activism*.

²²Ishiyama and Pechenina, “Colored Revolutions, Interpersonal Trust, and Confidence in Institutions: The Consequences of Mass Uprisings.”

²³Fernandes, “Rethinking Pathways to Democracy: Civil Society in Portugal and Spain, 1960s–2000s,” 1075.

²⁴Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and Van Dijk, “Combining Motivations and Emotion: The Motivational Dynamics of Protest Participation”; Troost, Stekelenburg, and Klandermans, “Emotions of Protest.”

²⁵Selbin, “What Was Revolutionary About the Iranian Revolution?: The Power of Possibility,” 39.

²⁶Fishman, “Democratic Practice after the Revolution: The Case of Portugal and Beyond”; Fishman and Lizardo, “How Macro-Historical Change Shapes Cultural Taste: Legacies of Democratization in Spain and Portugal”; Fishman and Cabral, “Socio-Historical Foundations of Citizenship Practice: After Social Revolution in Portugal”; Pop-Eleches, Robertson, and Rosenfeld, “Protest Participation and Attitude Change: Evidence from Ukraine’s Euromaidan Revolution.”

²⁷Opp, “Does Antiregime Action Under Communist Rule Affect Political Protest After the Fall?: Results of a Panel Study in East Germany.”

²⁸Bursztyń et al., “Persistent Political Engagement: Social Interactions and the Dynamics of Protest Movements.”

²⁹Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*; Levitsky and Way, “The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes.”

³⁰Though see Tilly, “The Analysis of a Counter-Revolution”; Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*; Slater and Smith, “The Power of Counterrevolution: Elitist Origins of Political Order in Postcolonial Asia and Africa”; Weyland, “Crafting Counterrevolution: How Reactionaries Learned to Combat Change in 1848” for important contributions on this subject.

³¹Clarke, *Return of the Tyrant: Why Counterrevolutions Emerge and Succeed*.

³²Clarke, 1350.

³³Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model.”

³⁴Schumpeter, *Socialism, Capitalism and Democracy*; Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*; Kopstein, “Postcommunist Democracy: Legacies and Outcomes”; Serra, “Mexico’s Electoral Reform of 2007: A Case of De-Democratization and Partyarchy”; Ágh, “The Triple Crisis in Hungary: The “Backsliding” of Hungarian Democracy after Twenty Years”; Greskovits, “The Hollowing and Backsliding of Democracy in East Central Europe”; Waldner and Lust, “Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding”; Bermeo, “On Democratic Backsliding.”

³⁵Verba and Almond, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*; Putnam,

Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy.

³⁶Leighninger, “Enlisting Citizens: Building Political Legitimacy”; Hetherington, “The Political Relevance of Political Trust”; Levi and Stoker, “Political Trust and Trustworthiness.”

³⁷Norris, *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government.*

³⁸Inglehart, “The renaissance of political culture”; Verba and Almond, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations.*

³⁹Though see Jamal and Nooruddin, “The Democratic Utility of Trust: A Cross-national Analysis” for potential differences in how trust functions in authoritarian contexts.

⁴⁰Davenport, *How Social Movements Die.*

⁴¹Tyler and McGraw, “The Threat of Nuclear War: Risk Interpretation and Behavioral Response”; Ennis and Schreuer, “Mobilizing Weak Support for Social Movements: The Role of Grievance, Efficacy, and Cost”; Paulsen, “Education, Social class, and Participation in Collective Action”; Schussman and Soule, “Process and Protest: Accounting for Individual Protest Participation.”

⁴²Levine and Palfrey, “The Paradox of Voter Participation? A Laboratory Study”; Duffy and Tavits, “Beliefs and Voting Decisions: A Test of the Pivotal Voter Model”; Karp and Banducci, “Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour.”

⁴³Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes.*

⁴⁴Chen and Zhong, “Why Do People Vote in Semicompetitive Elections in China?”

⁴⁵McAllister and White, “Demobilizing Voters: Election Turnout in the 2016 Russian Election.”

⁴⁶Begley and Alker, “Anti-busing Protest: Attitudes and Actions”; Pollock, “The Participatory Consequences of Internal and External Political Efficacy: A Research Note”; Lee, “The Perceptual Bases of Collective Efficacy and Protest Participation: The Case of Pro-democracy Protests in Hong Kong”; Bäck, Bäck, and Sivén, “Why Engage in Collective Action? The Conditional Effect of Social Support and Efficacy on Protest Participation.”

⁴⁷We note that this prediction mirrors findings in Booth and Richard (“Revolution’s Legacy: Residual Effects on Nicaraguan Participation and Attitudes in Comparative Context,” 118–119); the authors find that that revolution initially buoyed political participation in Nicaragua, but the effects decayed rapidly once revolutionary gains were largely reversed by mass and elite decisions.

⁴⁸Pearlman, “Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings.”

⁴⁹Zeelenberg et al., “On Bad Decisions and Disconfirmed Expectancies: The Psychology of Regret and Disappointment.”

⁵⁰Levine, “The Anatomy of Disappointment: A Naturalistic Test of Appraisal Models of Sadness, Anger, and Hope”; Sleat, “Hope and Disappointment in Politics”; Mierina, “The Vicious Circle: Does Disappointment with Political Authorities Contribute to Political Passivity in Latvia?”; Seyd, “Exploring Political Disappointment.”

⁵¹Davenport, *How Social Movements Die*.

⁵²Greenberg, *After the Revolution: Youth, Democracy, and the Politics of Disappointment in Serbia*, 7.

⁵³Greenberg, 7.

⁵⁴Jasper, “The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements”; Abadeer, Blackman, and Williamson, “Voting in Transition: Participation and Alienation in Egypt’s 2012 Presidential Election.”

⁵⁵Van Dijk and Zeelenberg, “What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Disappointment? Distinguishing Outcome-related Disappointment from Person-related Disappointment,” p. 788.

⁵⁶Zeelenberg et al., “The Experience of Regret and Disappointment.”

⁵⁷Diener et al., “Intensity and Frequency: Dimensions Underlying Positive and Negative Affect.”

⁵⁸Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken, *Dynamics of Idealism: White Activists in a Black Movement*; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*; Whalen, *Beyond the Barricades: The Sixties Generation Grows Up*; Braungart and Braungart, “The Life-Course Development of Left-and Right-Wing Youth Activist Leaders from the 1960s”; Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*; Fillieule, “Demobilization and Disengagement in a Life Course Perspective”; Neveu and Fillieule, *Activists Forever? Long-Term Impacts of Political Activism*.

⁵⁹Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*; Stewart, Settles, and Winter, “Women and the Social Movements of the 1960s: Activists, Engaged Observers, and Nonparticipants.”

⁶⁰Paglayan, “The Non-Democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years.”

⁶¹Paglayan, “Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of Statebuilding.”

⁶²Schedler, “The New Institutionalism in the Study of Authoritarian Regimes.”

⁶³Stockmann and Gallagher, “Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China.”

⁶⁴Rozenas and Stukal, “How Autocrats Manipulate Economic News: Evidence from Russia’s State-controlled Television.”

⁶⁵Mattingly and Yao, “How Soft Propaganda Persuades.”

⁶⁶King, Pan, and Roberts, “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.”

⁶⁷Lorentzen, “China’s Strategic Censorship.”

⁶⁸Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East politics today*.

⁶⁹Lynch, “After the Arab Spring: How the Media Trashed the Transitions.”

⁷⁰Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur, “Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions: Regime Strategies and the Structuring of Participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions.”

⁷¹Nugent, *After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition*.

⁷²As detailed by independent statistical database Wiki Thawra in a report titled “Report on the Detained and Prosecuted during the Sisi/Adly Mansour Period.” Available in Arabic at <https://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2014/01/09/sisi-mansour-detainees/>.

⁷³Joe Stork. “Egyptian Prisons As Islamic State Recruitment Centers.” *Lobe Log*, February 27, 2019. <https://lobelog.com/egyptian-prisons-as-islamic-state-recruitment-centers/>

⁷⁴Mohamad Elmasry, “Egypt: Why Sisi’s survival depends on erasing memories of the 2011 revolution,” *Middle East Eye*, January 24, 2022.

⁷⁵Amir-Hussein Radjy, “How to Save the Memories of the Egyptian Revolution,” *The Atlantic*, January 25, 2018.

⁷⁶Ramzy, “‘The Revolution Did Not Take Place’: Hidden Transcripts of Cairo’s Post-Revolution Rock Music.”

⁷⁷Details of the survey and a discussion of research ethics are available in the appendix.

⁷⁸Mutz, *Population-based Survey Experiments*.

⁷⁹Brooke and Nugent, “Exclusion and Violence after the Egyptian Coup”; Nugent and Brooke, “Who Votes After a Coup? Theory and Evidence from Egypt.”

⁸⁰We note that we conducted analyses to determine whether partisanship, along the axis of pro- and anti-Muslim Brotherhood, predicted disappointment responses, thus shedding light on *who* was disappointed by the events of 2011 and 2013. Pre-treatment questions asked respondents’ preferences around religion and politics, serving as imperfect proxy for affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood or at least some level of support for it. These included preferences around the identity of the Egyptian State (religious or secular) and levels of agreement with two statements: “the government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with Islamic law” and “your country is better off if religious people hold public positions in the state.” We did not find a statistically significant relationship between these variables and reporting disappointment.

⁸¹We did not originally consider this a post-treatment question; it appeared five questions after our post-treatment batteries. We included it in our results only after exploratory analyses revealed responses to the question were affected by the primes.

⁸²Pre-analysis plan available through OSF.

⁸³Many thanks to Christian Davenport for this insight.

⁸⁴These questions asked respondents to indicate their levels of trust in the government, the courts, parliament, local government, civil society organizations, religious leaders, political parties, and people of different political behavior and beliefs. See Figure A1 in the appendix for the effects of the primes on each individual trust measure (all effects are negative, and are generally similar in size).

⁸⁵These eight items demonstrate a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$) with the factor analysis producing one factor with an eigenvalue of 3.21 and no other factors exceeding 0.56.

⁸⁶There is no significant difference between the two treatment effects; $p = 0.70$.

⁸⁷The protest and meeting questions are correlated, but far from identical ($r = 0.69$), indicating that they are capturing related but distinct concepts.

⁸⁸Abdulla, "Egypt's Media in the Midst of Revolution," p. 1.

⁸⁹Gause, "Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the New Middle East Cold War."

⁹⁰Other evidence from our survey likewise suggests that citizens are not Pollyannaish about the state of the regime. A majority of respondents said that the country was going in the wrong direction in terms of human rights. When asked to describe "the extent to which Egyptians can express their views truthfully at the current moment" on a scale from 0 to 10, the average response was 4.3 (SD = 2.7). Sixty-two percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that "In general, the Egyptian political system operates as it should."

⁹¹Recall that the 2011 and 2013 primes had largely similar effects, indicating that when we asked respondents if their expectations from 2011 were met, they were not only thinking about the removal of Mubarak, but rather the entire political history of the country since 2011 (including the coup).

⁹²E.g., Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, "Who Overreports Voting?"

⁹³*European Union Election Observation Mission*, "Arab Republic of Egypt Final Report", May 26/27, 2014. URL: https://www.eods.eu/library/eueom-egypt2014-final-report_en.pdf.

⁹⁴Kurzban, "Can Understanding Undermine Explanation? The Confused Experience of Revolution," p. 333.

⁹⁵Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989."

⁹⁶Diener et al., “Intensity and Frequency: Dimensions Underlying Positive and Negative Affect.”

⁹⁷To measure participation, we included a pre-treatment measurement of participation in the 2011 and 2013 protests.

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Appendix

Additional Information on Survey Experiment and Research Ethics

The experiment analyzed in this article was administered to a nationally-representative sample of 2,000 Egyptian citizens 18 years and older between November 21 and December 5, 2018. 30 enumerators employed and trained on the instrument by the Egyptian Research and Training Center (*al-Markaz al-Misri lil-Buhuth wa al-Tadrib*), a survey research firm headquartered in Cairo, Egypt, conducted the face-to-face interviews.

Households were selected from the master sample of households maintained by the Central Agency of Public Mobilization and Statistics (*al-Jihaz al-Markazi lil-Ta'bi'a al-'Amma waal-Ihsa*, or CAPMAS) and drawn from the country's most recent census, conducted in 2017. The sample is drawn from 22 of Egypt's 27 governorates. The excluded five districts (New Valley, North Sinai, Matrouh, Red Sea, and South Sinai) are extremely rural, contain only 1.8 percent of the country's population, and its representatives comprised less than 6 percent of the most recently elected representative Egyptian parliament. In addition, the North and South Sinai districts present unique and costly security challenges due to recent turmoil in the area. These governorates were excluded from the sample due to safety and feasibility concerns, as is standard practice for ERTC and other reputable Egyptian survey firms.

The sampling employed a multi-stage stratified random probability approach so that every member of the 98.2 percentage of the Egyptian population living in the 22 included governorates had an equal chance of being included. The sample was weighted by governorate population (percent of population living within a given governorate per the 2017 census) and stratified by urbanization (45 percent urban and 55 percent rural per the 2017 census). In Egypt's urban governorates, the district is the smallest local governing unit. Within rural governorates, there exist *marakez* (singular: *markaz*), which are local governing units over groups of villages, and which are equivalent to districts with the difference in name denoting only its rural characteristic. These governorate sub-units are further divided into primary sampling units (PSUs), which each contain 12 households. 200 PSUs were randomly selected to cover the target sample of 2000 plus twenty percent more in the case of expected respondents who were unavailable or refused to participate. Within each household, the interviewers employed a standard Kish grid method to select individual participants of alternating genders. The final response rate for the survey was 68.26 percent of those approached as a potential respondent.

Table A1 presents key demographic variables by treatment assignment, demonstrating that randomization largely succeeded and did not impact inferences made in the above analyses.

Table A1: Balance Table

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	T-test		
	Control Mean/SE	2011 Mean/SE	2013 Mean/SE	(1)-(2)	(1)-(3)	(2)-(3)
Year of Birth	1978.60 (0.52)	1978.62 (0.54)	1978.74 (0.52)	-0.01	-0.14	-0.12
Female	1.49 (0.02)	1.49 (0.02)	1.48 (0.02)	0.00	0.01	0.00
Education Level	3.80 (0.07)	3.64 (0.07)	3.70 (0.07)	0.16	0.10	-0.06
Unemployed	1.55 (0.02)	1.52 (0.02)	1.52 (0.02)	0.03	0.03	0.00
Income	37.12 (0.92)	34.90 (0.88)	36.89 (0.88)	2.23*	0.23	-1.99
N	668	666	666			

Notes: The values displayed for the t-tests are the differences in the means across the groups. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

In designing and conducting our research, we weighted a number of considerations as outlined in the the American Political Science Associations' Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. In our view, the most important aspect of conducting a survey is respecting the autonomy of the respondent through the right to refuse. Informed consent occurred at the beginning of the survey, and was agreed to verbally in order to not leave any identifiable information or paper trail of respondents' identities, an important consideration in an authoritarian setting like Egypt. All selected respondents were advised during the informed consent process that they could refuse to participate in the entire survey, refuse to answer a specific question, and could end the survey at any time. During enumerator training, we emphasized the importance of the right to refuse participation or a specific answer at any time to the staff conducting the interviews. In addition, we did not offer compensation to respondents as this is not the norm for social science research in the country, and would have perhaps incentivized participation among a relatively poor population despite an underlying desire to refuse participation or specific questions. We received approval from Yale University's Human Research Protection Program Institutional Review Board (protocol number 2000024060) confirming that our protocol presented no more than minimal risk to participants.

Detailed Effects on Trust

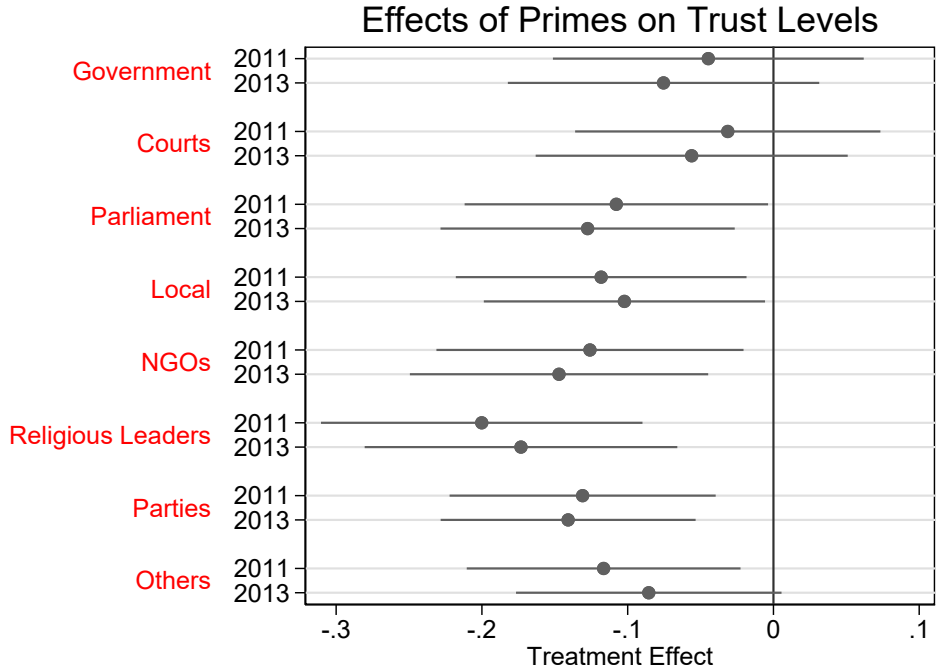


Figure A1: Treatment Effects on Various Forms of Trust

Additional Analyses by Protest Participation

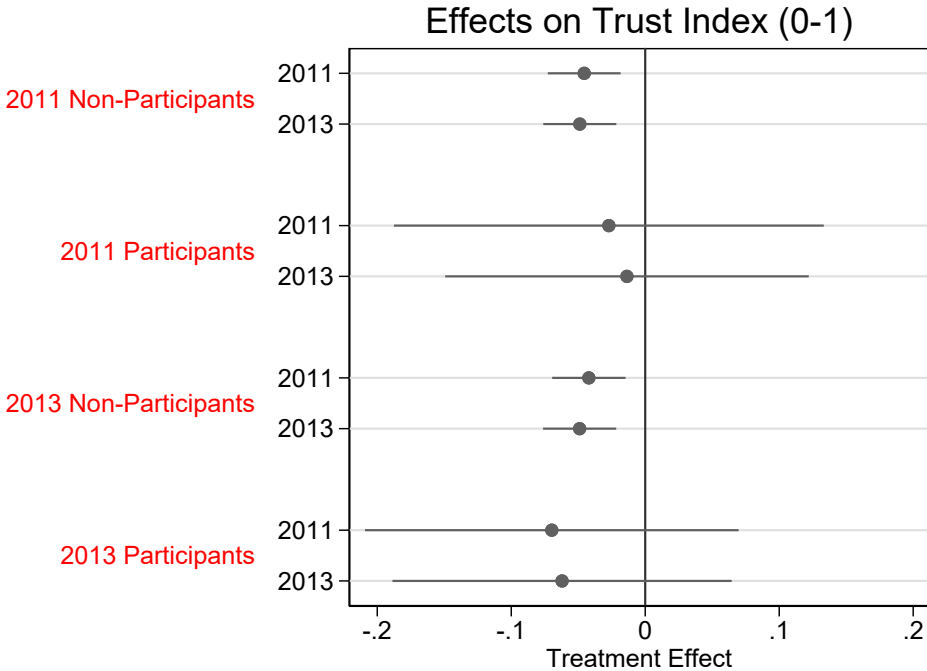


Figure A2: Treatment Effects on Trust, by Participation

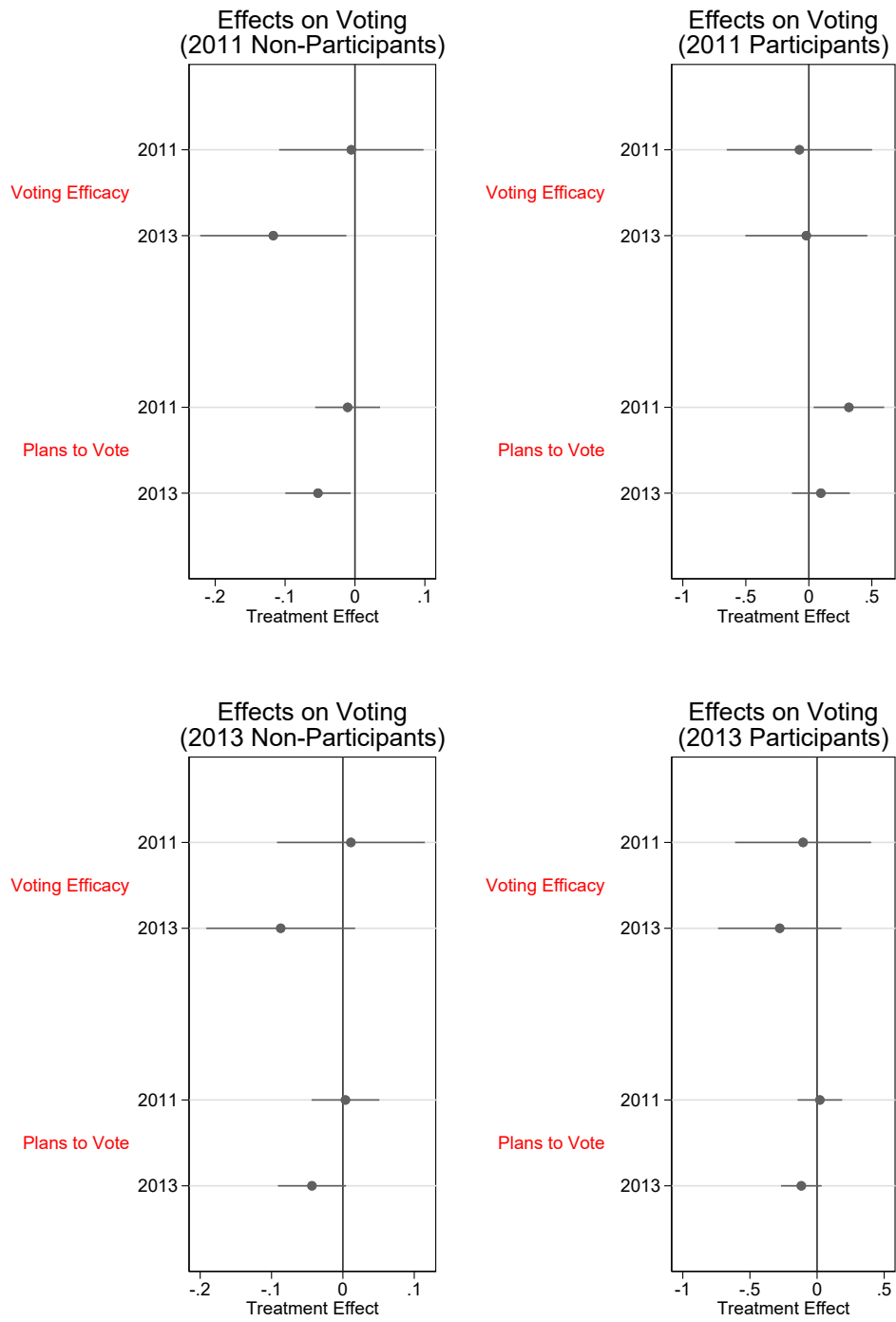


Figure A3: Treatment Effects on Voting Efficacy and Plans to Vote, by Participation

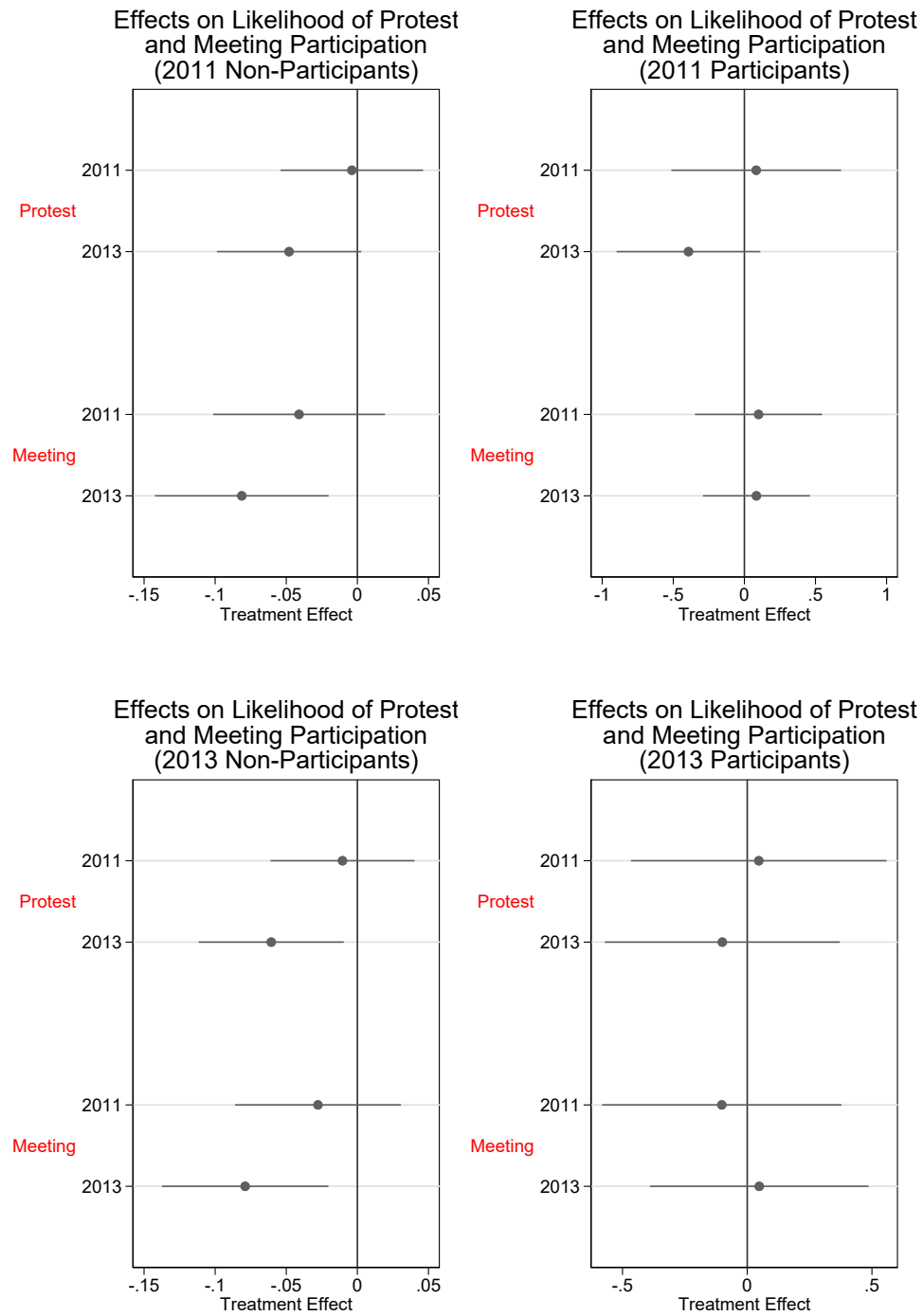


Figure A4: Treatment Effects on Likelihood of Protest or Attending Meeting, by Participation

Attitudes Towards Democracy, by News Consumption

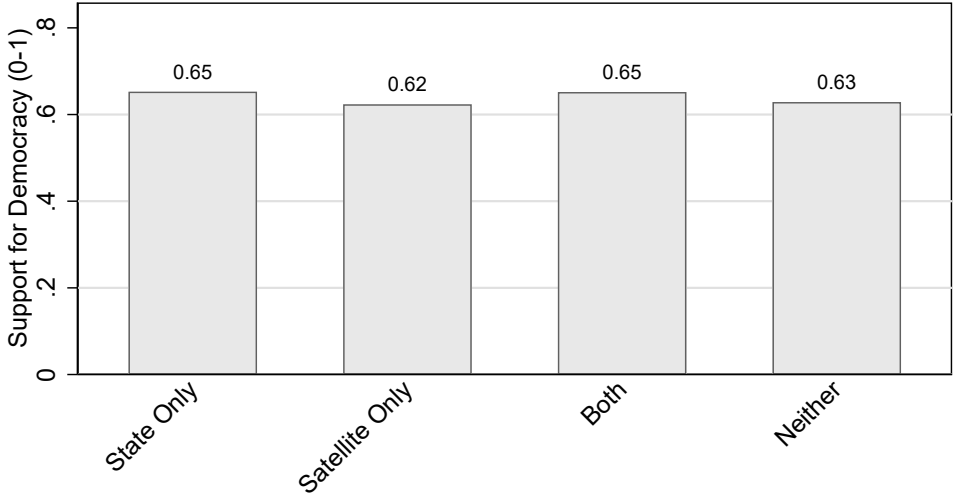


Figure A5: Support for Democracy, by News Consumption

The support for democracy measure is derived from a factor analysis (rescaled to range from 0 to 1) of five items measuring support for democracy (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$). The first factor had an eigenvalue of 1.73, while none of the others exceeded 0.02.

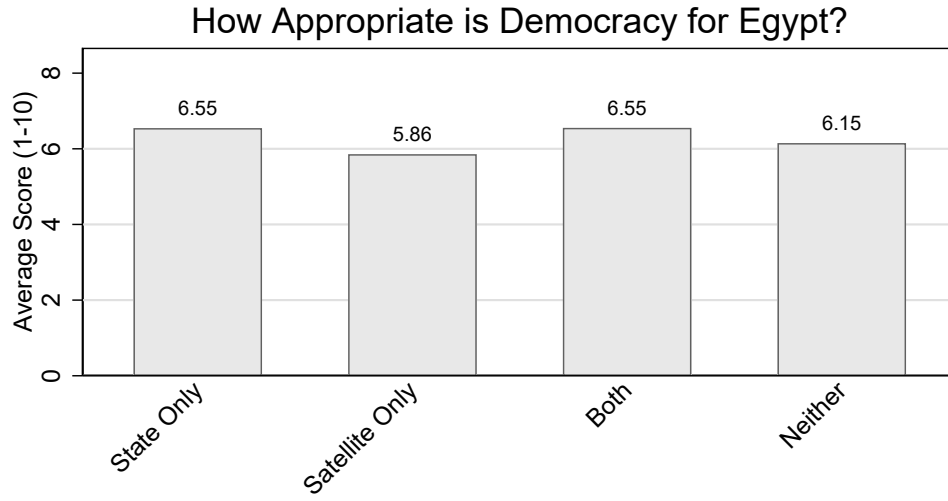


Figure A6: Suitability of Democracy, by News Consumption