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# IS THE ARAB SPRING A NEW DIVIDING LINE? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM FOUR ARAB COUNTRIES

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
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**Is The Arab Spring A New Dividing Line?**

**Experimental Evidence from Four Arab Countries**

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## Abstract

In the Arab World – as much as in other regions – historical events have the potential of producing dividing lines that affect social dynamics for years beyond the triggering events. Being the most significant event in the Arab World in the past decade, we examine how far Arab Spring events have generated a new dividing line in the region that cuts across existing cleavages and whether such division depends on how violent Arab Spring events have been. We examine such question by conducting two lab-in-the-field experiments with subjects from four Arab countries (Syrian refugees in a refugee camp in Jordan, Jordanians, Tunisians and Egyptians). We trace whether subjects exhibit socio-economic behavioural biases depending on their game partner's views on the Arab Spring. The experimental manipulation is varying the game partner in a dictator game and a trust game, to be a fellow national who has the same or opposing view of the Arab Spring. Our significant results come mainly from our Syrian sample (who witnessed the most violent version of the Arab Spring); playing against a fellow Syrian who is on the other side of the Arab Spring dividing line reduced one's level of altruism and trust. We find no significant results in the Egyptian, Tunisian, and Jordanian samples.

*Keywords: Dividing Lines, Arab Spring, Experiments, Cleavages, Trust, Altruism.*

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## I. Introduction

Societies are in a constant process of change. As new issues arise and old ones become less salient, new fault lines are created (Carmines 1991). This is particularly true in response to momentous changes or earthquake events. The more divisive the event, and the more polarizing the views around it, the stronger the dividing line it produces. In Europe, major transformations towards nation-state building and democratisation processes have placed different social groups in opposition to one other (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). When environmental issues, disarmament, immigration and globalization rose to the fore as new issues, new dividing lines emerged (Hauss and Rayside 1978; Kitschelt 1988; Hug 2001; Tavits 2008; Kriesi et al. 2008).

The Arab World is no exception in this regard. The Shia-Sunni divide is a product of a 1,400-year-old event. The end of the Ottoman Caliphate – at least partly – contributed to the creation of the Islamist-secular divide (Ciftci 2013). When the Egyptian President Sadat made peace with Israel in the late 1970s, the seeds for two opposing camps regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict were sowed; the countries of resistance (*dewal al momana'aa*) and the countries of moderation (*dewal al i'tedal*).

One big story of the Arab World in the last decade has certainly been the Arab Spring. In terms of magnitude, it has brought about a bottom-up change in leadership in seven Arab countries. It has also challenged long-standing vested interests. Whereas Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar were actively seeking regime change – even by military means – in Syria and Libya, they were opposing such change in Bahrain and Yemen – also by military means. Egypt – surprisingly – wanted Sudan's *Al-Bashir* to stay in power at one point while having shifting attitudes towards Syria's Bashar Al-Assad from actively asking his removal to promoting his incumbency.[5] Hezbollah and Hamas moved from being looked at in the early 2000s with pride

[5] Before and after Mohamed Morsi's removal.

and envy by large segments of the Arab population to being described as traitors/murderers and even classified as official enemies by some states at later points. Hostilities – or cold peace – towards Israel have been replaced by 'closer than ever security cooperation' and lately peace accords. These are just but few examples of how the Arab Spring has triggered waves of change perhaps paralleled in Arab recent history.

In this paper, we explore how far opposing views towards Arab Spring events have produced a new dividing line affecting socio-economic attitudes and whether such dividing lines – if exist – differ in intensity depending on how violent Arab Spring events have been in each country. Indeed, whereas some Arab Spring countries have seen relatively more consolidated transitions (e.g. Tunisia), other have experienced muted protests (Jordan), turbulent transitions (Egypt), or civil wars (Syria).

We examine our hypothesis by conducting lab-in-the-field experiments with subjects from four Arab countries (Syrian refugees in Jordan, Jordanians, Tunisians and Egyptians) to trace whether subjects exhibit socio-economic behavioural biases depending on whether their partner has opposing views regarding the Arab Spring. We let our 1034 subjects play two modified, economic-style, incentivised games (trust game and dictator game) that measure two socio-economic traits (trust and altruism). The experimental manipulation is varying the game partner in each game to be either a fellow national (i.e. Syrian, Jordanian, Tunisian or Egyptian) who holds an opposite Arab Spring view or not. To examine whether such a dividing line also manifests itself on the pan-Arab level and not just the national level, we repeat the same design (with different subjects) while making the experimental manipulation playing against an Arab who has different Arab Spring view as opposed to not. All games adopted a cross-subject research design. We find supportive evidence only among the Syrian sample which indicates that only the more violent versions of divisive events (i.e. civil war) are capable of producing new dividing lines.

From this point, this paper is divided into four subsequent sections. The next section outlines our theory and hypotheses. The third and fourth sections explain our experimental design and show the results. The fifth section concludes.

## II. Theoretical Framework – How Dividing Lines Are Formed?

Dividing lines are deep and lasting divisions between groups based on some kind of conflict (Bartolini 2005; Bornschier 2009). They serve as criteria that divide members of a community into groups (Cox 1997; Deegan-Krause 2007). Whereas early literature has focused on dividing lines pertaining to class, religion, and language (e.g. Lijphart, 1979), subsequent studies have focused on non-sociological perspectives and issues like abortion, gender roles and democratic-authoritarian attitudes (Moreno 1999).

Zooming in on the Arab World, multiple views exist on what sort of dividing lines or cleavages exist post-2011 (e.g. Bayat, 2013; Chamkhi, 2014; Elsayyad, 2014; Esposito, Sonn, and Voll, 2015; Stepan and Linz, 2013). Whereas one view sees existing dividing lines as yet another wave of the Islamist-secular divide (Bakker and Rotondi, 2016; Benstead, 2015; Bradley, 2012; Ciftci, 2012), a second opinion sees ongoing divisions as more of issue-based ones which pertain to the economy, culture, and internal politics of individual countries (Campante and Chor 2012; Cesur and Mocan 2013; Gerges 2013; Roy 2012). A third view sees new kind of divisions emerging (Abduljaber 2018). Our argument is that – whereas multiple dividing lines could exist at the same time – Arab Spring events have generated a new dividing line of their own, that sometimes aligns – and at other times cuts across – existing divisions and cleavages.[6]

[6] Ever since Nietzsche and Hegel, the idea that social identities could change along one's lifetime and that new identities could emerge has been introduced and strengthened (for a review, see Strong 1992). Each individual could even have an infinite set of identity possibilities (Kateb 1990).

But how are new dividing lines formed? In general terms, the potential for generating new dividing lines exists on a regular basis. When people go through various events in their lives, they tend to react to – either in agreement or disagreement with – such events. The more salient the event, or the more socially divisive it is or becomes, the greater role it plays in forming and reshaping one's attitudes (Greenstein 1993; Buruma 1994). The idea that major historical events could trigger new dividing lines – or reshape existing ones – stems from the view that if identities are the products of history, they can be remade by history (Parekh 1994). The mechanism is that such earthquake events create path-dependent trajectories that transform culture and values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Pierson 2000; 2004; Sewell 1996).

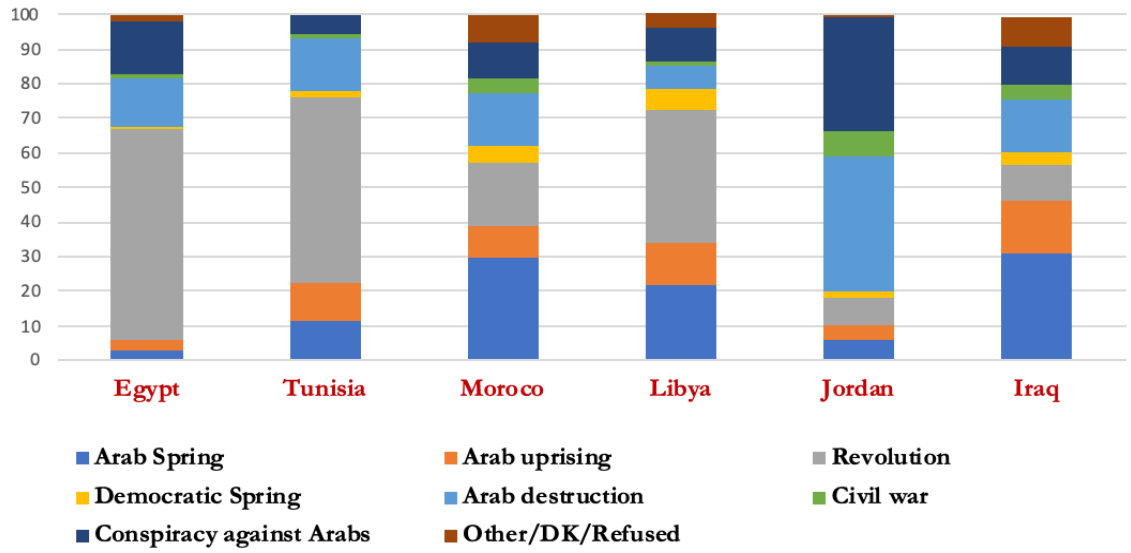
Polarizing – historical – events provide the narrative that tells us who we are and defines a trajectory that constructs group's identity (Liu and Hilton 2005). If salient enough, they lock actors into opposing camps based on their views, making it not only hard to change camps ex-post, but also generating confirmation biases (Gilovich, Griffin and Kahneman 2002) whereby a body of reasoning makes earlier views stick.[7] Evidence from different regions show how major events shape lasting dividing lines and cleavages. East-European post-communist experience shows that the cleavage triggered by fall of communism endured as a divide on its own (Whitefield 2002). Different views about the US constitution, the Civil War and New Deal have been embedded in American party competition.

At its core, the Arab Spring was a popular demand for change of unprecedented magnitude that swept not just the countries directly affected by the protests, but rather almost all Arab countries. It separated individuals who were affected by it – or those who are forced to make up their minds about the events – into opposing camps. Even characterizing the event till today stirs controversies. According to a mass survey conducted in six Arab Spring countries in 2014 (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Joran and Iraq), when representative

[7] As long as they are not challenged by equally powerful events

samples of the population were asked to characterize the Arab Spring events, in only two countries was there a majority behind a single label (described as 'revolution' in Egypt and Tunisia by 54% and 53.6% respectively). However even in these two countries, the polarization is manifest by the high percentages of respondents that chose to give the events a negative label (*Arab Destruction* supported by 13% of Egyptians and 15% of Tunisians; *Conspiracy against Arabs* supported by 13% of Egyptians and 5.7% of Tunisians). In the four other countries, there is no majority – either on the positive or negative – labels (figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Name for recent social, political events that happened in some Arab Countries (ArabTrans Surveys, 2014)**




In Egypt, even classifying the Arab Spring events in the draft of the 2014 constitution generated backlash. One MP famously – or rather infamously – refused to take the oath because the constitution referred to the 2011 uprising as a 'revolution'. Our first hypothesis therefore is as follows:

*H1: Disagreement over Arab Spring events have produced a division that affects socio-economic attitudes.*

Our second argument pertains to the intensity of events. We argue that more violent Arab Spring events (i.e. civil wars) are more likely to produce stronger dividing lines because of the magnitude of material losses they entail. The effect of violent conflicts on socio-economic attitudes has been the subject of recent but growing literature (e.g. Cassar et al, 2013; De Luca and Verpoorten 2011; Rohner et al 2013). Interestingly, however, the literature seems not to have settled on whether conflicts have uniform positive or negative effects on pro-social behaviour. Whereas some scholars have found that exposure to conflict could actually increase pro-sociality (Bauer et al. 2011; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009; Voors et al. 2012; Gilligan et al. 2011), others have pointed to negative effects (Rohner et al. 2011; Becchetti et al. 2011). We seek to contribute to this literature by examining not just exposure to violence but how exposure to violence affects attitudes towards individuals who are on the other side of the conflict.

We argue that the effects of dividing events in war-torn countries are much worse because of the devastating effects of civil wars. For example, in Syria – the country that has probably experienced the most violent of Arab Spring related conflicts – real growth slowed down by about 10 percentage points a year on average between 2011 and 2014 (Ianchovichina and Ivanic, 2016). In Yemen and Libya, economic contraction was by 38% in 2015 in the former and by 14% per year in the latter (Ianchovichina and Ivanic, 2014). The emotional and psychological consequences could also be more enduring than the material losses. In addition to the direct effect of conflict situations on communities and disruption of the social and economic fabric of nations, indirect negative effects include trauma, malnutrition and psychosocial illness, to mention only a few (Lopez-Ibor at al. 2005; Baingana at al. 2005; Green et al 2003; Mollica et al. 2004; Musisi 2005). Such effects do not require direct exposure to violence to take place, making direct death or injury as a result of a violent conflict only the tip of the iceberg. Watching events taking their toll on relatives and acquaintances could be enough

triggers of such effects (Jensen and Shaw 1993; see also Elbedour, Bensel, and Bastien 1993). Our second hypothesis therefore is as follows.

*H2: War-torn countries are more likely to exhibit stronger division that affects socio-economic attitudes.*

We aim to trace and measure our hypothesized dividing line by the traces it leaves on human behaviour and interaction. Indeed, if new dividing lines get formed, then they are likely to trigger biased socio-economic behaviour through the mechanisms argued by social identity theory (Tajfel 1975). According to this theory, people rely on social identity cues when interacting with others whereby even the socially meaningless cues could trigger social discrimination. The flipside of identifying with one's own in-group is a simultaneous out-group prejudice.[8] If reminding individuals with where they stand on the Arab Spring divide affects how they behave vis-à-vis individuals who are on the opposite side of that divide, then we could claim that evidence exists that such a divide is there and that a new aspect of identity has been created by this major historical event.

## III. Experimental Design.

We fielded our experiments in four Arab countries that represent varying outcomes of Arab Spring event; Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and among Syrian refugees. Whereas a transition was complete in Tunisia (at least with procedural definition of democratic transitions), Jordan experienced protests but no change of guard, and Egypt represents a case where there has been a change of incumbent followed by a turbulent transition. Syria represents the civil war outcome and therefore directly tests our second hypothesis.

[8] This process of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Chen and Li, 2009; Hoff and Pandey, 2006; Johnson et al. 2012; Anderson et al. 2006) has been used to explain a wide array of human behavior, ranging from voting (Campbell et al. 1960; Ben-Bassat and Dahan 2012), to collective action (van Zomeren, Postemos and Spears 2098), and attitudes towards foreigners (Lazarev and Sharma 2015).

We recruited a total of 1034 subjects to participate in the experiments. For our Syrian sample, we were able to recruit 326 Syrians from *Zataari* refugee camp in Jordan. It is one of the largest refugee camps for Syrians in Jordan, located about 10 km away from the closest Jordanian town (*Mafraq*) and 10 km from the Syrian/Jordanian border. It was first opened in July 2012 and was able to provide shelter for nearly 80 thousand Syrian refugees by 2018. For our Jordanian, Tunisian and Egyptian experiments, we conducted our experiments at three public universities in each country. The sample sizes were 231 in Jordan, 129 in Tunisia, and 348 in Egypt.[9] All experiments were run on tablets/computers.

To examine the impact of a partner's views of the Arab Spring on the dependent variable (pro-social behaviour of our subjects; altruism and trust), we had to label the Arab Spring events to our subjects. We used the term '**the events that the Arab World has seen in 2011**'. We preferred not to interpret or interfere in what our subjects understood under that broad concept. At the beginning of the experiment, subjects were asked the following question: *How do you evaluate the events the Arab World has seen in 2011?* Accordingly, subjects were then matched with another subject/partner who has either an opposing view or not. As we wanted to test how far our hypothesized dividing line affected behaviour *within* Arab countries as well as *across* the Arab World, we designed the treatments to take place on both levels. We therefore had four treatments (see table 1), with the views of the gaming partner being made very clearly at the beginning of each game and with subjects being informed that they will remain matched with the same partner throughout the whole experiment. The treatments are:

a. *playing versus fellow national*.
b. *playing versus fellow national with opposing views on the Arab Spring.*
c. *playing versus fellow Arab.*

[9] Whereas we recruited the Jordanian, Tunisian and Egyptian subjects ourselves, the Syrian refugees were recruited by a well-known global NGO in Jordan which also helped providing access to the camp.

d. *playing versus fellow Arab with opposing views on the Arab Spring*

**Table 1: Treatments and Subjects**

| Treatment | | No. of Subjects | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Egypt | | | Jordan | | | Tunisia | | | Syria | | | Total |
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | |
| 1 | **Same nationality** | 47 (54%) | 40 (46%) | **87** | 38 (63.3%) | 22 (36.7%) | **60** | 22 (75.9%) | 7 (24.1%) | **29** | 39 (50%) | 39 (50%) | **78** | 254 (24.6%) |
| 2 | **Same nationality, different view** | 16 (18.6%) | 70 (81.4%) | **86** | 30 (53.6%) | 26 (46.4%) | **56** | 19 (63.3%) | 11 (36.7%) | **30** | 49 (62%) | 30 (38%) | **79** | 251 (24.3%) |
| 3 | **Arab nationality** | 31 (35.2%) | 57 (64.8%) | **88** | 25 (43.1%) | 33 (56.9%) | **58** | 19 (55.9%) | 15 (44.1%) | **34** | 48 (56.5%) | 37 (43.5%) | **85** | 265 (25.6%) |
| 4 | **Arab nationality, different view** | 34 (39.1%) | 53 (60.9%) | **87** | 31 (54.4%) | 26 (45.6%) | **57** | 19 (52.8%) | 17 (47.2%) | **36** | 48 (57.1%) | 36 (42.9%) | **84** | 264 (25.5%) |
| **Total** | | 128 (36.8%) | 220 (63.2%) | 348 (33.7%) | 124 (53.7%) | 107 (46.3%) | 231 (22.3%) | 79 (61.3%) | 50 (38.7%) | 129 (12.5%) | 184 (56.5%) | 142 (43.5%) | 326 (31.5%) | 1034 |

All subjects then played two experimental games to measure their pro-social behaviour (dictator game to measure altruism and trust game to measure trust). The games were fielded relying on the strategy method to ensure sufficient statistical power for a wide variety of strategies. We used a between-subjects design in which each subject was exposed to one and only treatment. There was in-session randomization of treatments. Each subject was assigned randomly by the computer to one of the four treatments.[10]

[10] All subjects were informed loudly by the experimenter, to guarantee common knowledge, about the fact that other subjects are playing the same experiments at the same time, but at a different location, and that they will be matched randomly with them. It was also stressed in the instructions section that the gaming partner will remain fixed throughout the whole experiment. The experiment was programmed on lime survey. Instructions (in Arabic) appeared on the subjects' screens and were also read aloud by the same experimenter in all sessions. Subjects were informed by the experimenter at the beginning of the experiment that each subject's payoffs will be determined based on his/her choices and that of his/her partner in the experiment. Payments were done in a secure, private setting after each session.

The first game was the dictator game designed to measure altruism. It involved two players: player A and player B. Player A is asked to choose between two options (X and Y) that distribute a certain amount of points between himself/herself and player B (his/her partner). There are eight scenarios for this game varying the points at stake. Option "X" was always entailing an equal distribution of the points between the two players, while Option "Y" was always resulting in fewer points to the gaming partner. The number of times player A chooses option X measures the player's level of altruism. The outcomes could range from being completely altruistic (if player A always chooses option X), to completely egoistic (if he/she always chooses option Y). Each subject knows that the payoffs he/she will get from this game will be based on his/her choices and those of the partner they are matched randomly with.

The second game is a modified trust game (Berg at al. 1995) measuring interpersonal trust and trustworthiness. It also involves two players. Each of the two players, A and B, receives 150 points at the start of the game as an endowment. Player A (the sender, trustor or first mover) decides whether or not to trust the other by deciding to give away a share of his/her points to player B (between 0 and 150 points). Points sent get tripled. Player B (receiver, trustee or second mover) then can return nothing, any amount, or all the points he/she receives. Every subject plays the two roles. The amount sent is a measure of the extent that the first mover "trusts" the second mover and the amount returned is a measure of the extent that the second mover is "trustworthy" of the first mover's trust.

Points collected by each subject, from the two games, were transferred into cash payments at the end of the experimental session; 10 points were worth one Egyptian pound for Egyptians, 0.10 Dinars (10 piasters) for Syrians living in Jordan and Jordanians, and 0.3 Dinars for Tunisians. The number of points collected by each subject was determined after the partners

were matched randomly by the computer.[11] On average, Syrian participants received 5.3 Jordanian Dinars, the equivalent of US $7.5, Jordanian participants received 5.4 JD, the equivalent of US $7.7, Egyptian participants received 55 Egyptian pounds, the equivalent of US $4, and Tunisian participants received 17.5 Tunisian Dinars, the equivalent of US $6.4. Each of the 1034 subjects participated in the experiment only once but played all of the two games. At the end of the experiment, all subjects answered post-experiment questionnaires that traced demographics, and political attitudes. Screenshots of the games are available in Appendix A.

**IV. Results.**

Before looking at the results of our experimental games, table 2 gives an overview of the characteristics of our samples. Our Syrian and Jordanian samples had a relatively balanced gender representation, whereas the Egyptian sample had a female majority, and the Tunisian sample had a majority of males. Subjects were predominantly Muslims. The mean age was 30 years in the Syrian sample, 25 in the Egyptian sample and approximately 21 years in the Jordanian and Tunisian samples.[12] More than 80% of both the Syrian and Jordanian samples had negative views regarding the Arab Spring compared to approximately 60% of Egyptians

[11] At the end of the experiment, the points collected by each subject, and thus the payments to subjects were determined by matching subjects with their corresponding partners. For each treatment of each session, a separate file with the responses of the subjects of this treatment was recorded. Then according to the treatment and partner matching, a R-code that takes two data files as inputs did the random matching. For example, if one file input is Jordanians who were matched with Arab partners, the other input file is either Egyptians who were matched with Arab partners or Syrians matched with Arab partners. It would then randomly select a subject from the first input file and match it with another subject in the second input file. The R code was designed in a way that only one round of each game is randomly chosen for each matched pair of subjects, with an implied allocation of points to each of the two partners. For instance, given our dictator game, if the computer randomly chose the first scenario, the code will retrieve the chosen options for each of the paired subjects in that scenario and allocate the points accordingly (e.g. In scenario 1, player 1 chooses option X (180 oneself – 180 other) and player 2 chooses option Y (230 oneself – 130 other); player 1 will end up with 180 + 130 = 310 points, while player 2 ends up with 230 + 180 = 410 points) . For the ultimatum game, if player (1) decided to take away 250 points from the other player, the number of points that will be allocated will depend on the choice of the other player in response to this scenario of having 250 points being taken away from, etc.

[12] This is expected as our Syrian sample was a non-student sample whereas our Jordanian, Tunisian and Egyptian samples were mainly student samples.

and only 40% of Tunisians. The majority of Egyptians, Jordanians and Tunisians had grim evaluations of the current Arab region compared to less than 50% of the Syrian sample (taking into consideration that the Syrian sample consists of refugees currently residing in an asylum country, while the other samples are residing in their own countries). Most of the sample reported to have feelings of injustice in their countries.

**Table 2: Sample Descriptive Statistics**

| | **Egypt** | **Jordan** | **Tunisia** | **Syria** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Male** | 36.8% | 53.7% | 61.2% | 56.4% |
| **Muslims** | 94.5% | 99.1% | 93.8% | 99.4% |
| ***Education:*** | | | | |
| Primary or less | 0.5% | 1.7% | 0% | 24.2% |
| Secondary education | 6.9% | 6.1% | 3.9% | 40.8% |
| At university | 64.7% | 84.4% | 85.3% | 22.1% |
| University Degree or higher | 27.9% | 7.8% | 10.8% | 11% |
| **Mean Age (SD)** | 24.7 (7.46) | 21.4 (4.98) | 21.8 (4.6) | 30 (11.2) |
| **Negative View of Arab Spring** | 59.8% | 84.8% | 40.3% | 88.4% |
| **Negative Evaluation of Arab Region** | 69.2% | 74% | 82.9% | 34.1% |
| **Feeling of Injustice** | 65% | 66.7% | 62% | 73.6% |
| **Number of Observations** | 348 | 231 | 129 | 326 |

We now move to the analysis of our experimental games. We adopt a two-stage analysis where in stage I we start with the analysis of the trust game alone and then in stage II we analyze the behaviour of each subject in the trust game conditional on his/her behaviour in the dictator game. This conditionality should act as a robustness check to our results as we control for each subject's preferences (altruism vs. egoism in the dictator game) to make sure that the behaviour realized in the trust game is merely due to the intervention (i.e. the identity of the gaming partner and his/her views on the Arab Spring).

*Stage I: Unconditional Analysis of Trust Game*

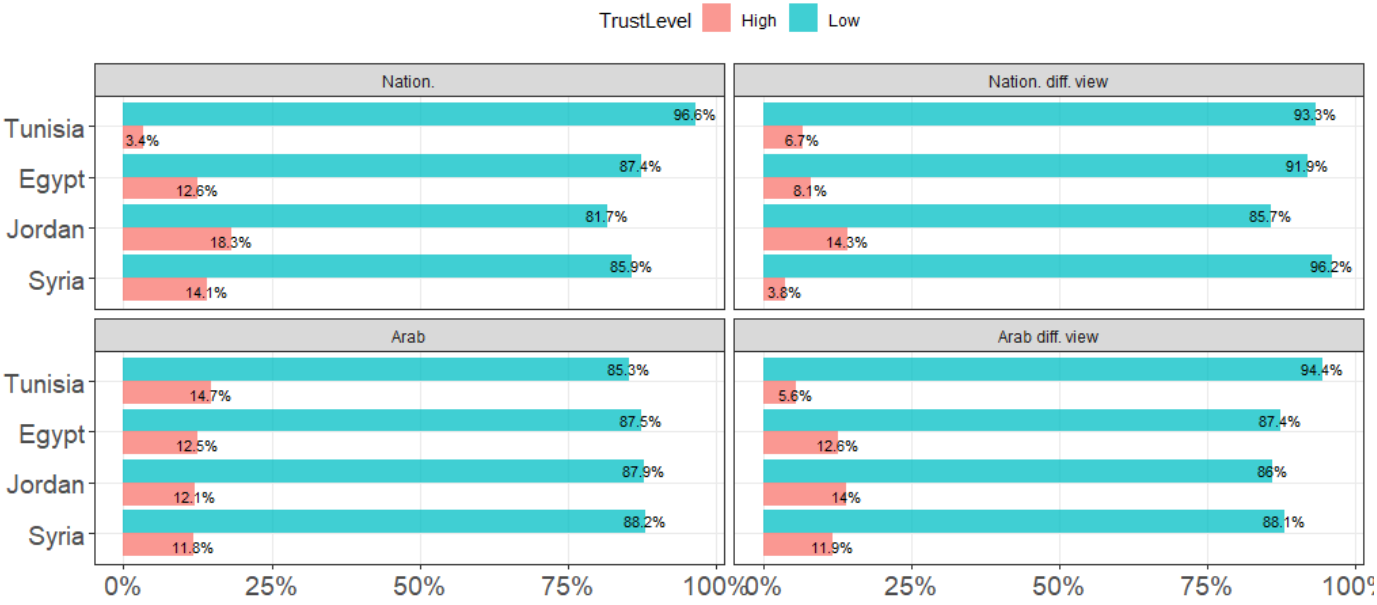
Starting with our trust game, the following is the trust specification we adopted:

$$Trust = \begin{cases} Low & \text{if No. of points sent } = 0 \text{ or } 50; \\ High & \text{if No. of points sent } = 100 \text{ or } 150. \end{cases}$$

Our dependent variable traces each subject's level of trust, be it high or low. A high level of trust is assigned to those subjects who chose to send 100 or 150 points to the gaming partner, while a low level of trust is assigned to subjects who chose to send 0 or 50 points to the gaming partner. Figure 2 shows that Syrians get *significantly less trusting* once differences in Arab Spring views are triggered – again in line with our hypothesis. Proportionality tests shows that the only significant result is for Syrians that have sent high trust points. The proportion of Syrians who send high trust points and are matched with a fellow national is significantly higher than the proportion of Syrians who send high trust points and are matched with a national with a different view.[13] There is no significant difference however in their trusting behavior when they play versus Arabs with no Arab Spring label or Arabs with opposing views on the Arab Spring. Regarding the Egyptian, Tunisian and Jordanian samples, the same trend continues of Arab Spring views having no effect on increasing or decreasing their trust behaviour, either when interacting with fellow nationals or Arabs.

[13] Proportionality test pvalue=0.0358.

**Figure 2: Proportions of High and Low Trustors Fixing Partner**




The same result of our Syrian sample continues to hold when controlling for our set of confounders. Table 3 shows the results of our Probit regressions for all of our four countries with the dependent variable being low trust.[14] It is clear from this table that the only significant result comes from the Syrian sample. Specifically, if a Syrian interacts with a Syrian adopting different views on the Arab Spring versus a Syrian whose views are not mentioned, the level of low trust increases significantly by 0.69 points, holding other variables constant. These results support our H2 but not our H1. They suggest that for socio-economic behaviour to be affected, dividing lines need to be coupled with violent conflict.

[14] Probit model is used because our outcome variable is binary. Our model will calculate a predicted probability of being cooperative based on our predictors.

**Table 3: Probit regressions[15] for low trust for each country separately**

| | Dependent Variable Low Trust | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Syria | Egypt | Jordan | Tunisia |
| (Intercept) | 1.27 *** | 1.03 *** | 0.83 * | 1.91 *** |
| | (0.36) | (0.21) | (0.33) | (0.55) |
| NationDiff | 0.69 * | 0.24 | 0.10 | -0.15 |
| | (0.32) | (0.28) | (0.29) | (0.68) |
| Arab | 0.11 | -0.00 | 0.15 | -1.07 |
| | (0.26) | (0.25) | (0.30) | (0.62) |
| ArabDiff | 0.13 | 0.00 | 0.10 | -0.37 |
| | (0.26) | (0.25) | (0.29) | (0.65) |
| EconStatus | -0.07 | -0.05 | 0.02 | -0.79 * |
| | (0.10) | (0.09) | (0.11) | (0.36) |
| Age | 0.07 | -0.18 * | -0.14 | -0.06 |
| | (0.11) | (0.09) | (0.10) | (0.22) |
| Female | -0.13 | 0.19 | 0.30 | 0.93 |
| | (0.20) | (0.19) | (0.22) | (0.53) |
| Education | -0.02 | 0.16 | 0.13 | 0.12 |
| | (0.10) | (0.09) | (0.10) | (0.23) |
| FeelInjustice | -0.15 | 0.00 | -0.05 | 0.35 |
| | (0.10) | (0.09) | (0.11) | (0.23) |
| NegativeArabSpring | -0.15 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.35 |
| | (0.33) | (0.18) | (0.30) | (0.42) |
| N | 320 | 347 | 231 | 129 |
| AIC | 226.05 | 259.50 | 206.52 | 73.86 |
| BIC | 263.74 | 297.99 | 240.94 | 102.46 |
| Pseudo R2 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.29 |

Notes: All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. Low trust = 1 if TrustLevel = "Low", Low trust = 0 if TrustLevel = "High". Reference treatment: vs. Nation. Reference country: Syria

Figure 2 shows serious trust issues with Arabs in general; irrespective of the view of the partner or the country, the proportion of low trustors is significantly higher than the proportion of high trustors in all four countries. This shows a norm of not trusting despite treatment. That is why to see if treatment does really have an effect, we have to account for preferences as we do next in stage II. If someone who is expected to behave in a certain way (i.e. altruists are trustful, egoists are not trustful) does not conform to the norm, this might be due to the treatment effect.

*Stage II: Analysis of Trust Game Conditional on Preferences*

To get insights into the preferences of our subjects, we first start with analyzing their behaviour in the dictator game in a way that elicits proportions of extreme altruists and extreme

[15] The probit regression coefficients give the change in the z-score

egoists. Our dependent variable traces those subjects who chose the altruistic option (option X) three times (out of 3 choices) and those subjects who chose the egoistic option (option Y) three times (out of 3 choices).[16] We label this group "*Extreme Altruists"*. It is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 for extreme altruists and the value of zero for extreme egoists.

Our data show that the majority of the Syrian, Egyptian and Tunisian samples are egoists independent of the treatment (figure 3). When controlling for the treatment, in figure 4, we observe that in the national treatments, Syrians chose altruism more than egoism. This preference is reversed when matched with a national of an opposing Arab Spring view. The proportion of Syrians choosing egoism increases significantly when matched with another Syrian of an opposing view. This significant switch in behavior is only observed for the Syrian sample[17].

Based on the above, there seems to be strong evidence that Syrians are *significantly less altruistic* vis-à-vis Syrians with opposing Arab Spring views than with fellow Syrians with no Arab Spring label - confirming our hypothesis[18]. Interestingly, we also find that Syrians are less altruistic towards fellow Syrians with opposing Arab Spring views than towards Arabs with opposing Arab Spring views, a finding that is consistent with our trust game[19]. On the other hand, our data show no significant differences in Syrians' altruistic behavior when they play versus Arabs with no Arab Spring label compared to Arabs with opposing views. It seems

[16] This version of the Dictator game is structured to measure pro-social behavior at different costs.
In the first bloc (the first 3 scenarios) the cost of choosing the prosocial option (option X) increases as the incentive to switch to Y increases from scenario 1 to 3. This is why the first bloc really elicts altruism. A subject that keeps choosing X although Y becomes more and more tempting has a strong altruistic preference.

The second bloc (scenarios 4 to 6) downscales the prosocial option to check how robust preferences are and whether subjects are tempted to switch or not when the base incentive changes from 180 to 150.

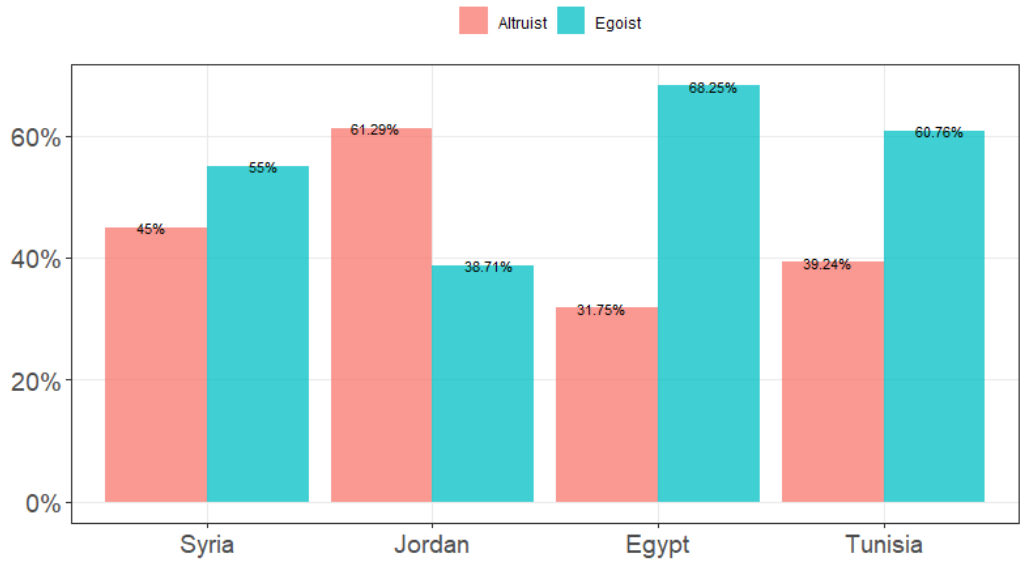
The third bloc (scenarios 7 and 8) is intended to compare preferences to efficiency. Scenarios 7 and 8 are replicas of scenario 1 changing only the points allocated to the other person in case Y is chosen. In case a person selects option X in the first and seventh scenario but switches to Y in the eighth scenario, this means that this person prefers efficiency to prosociality.

[17] The same switch is observed for the Tunisian sample but the difference is insignificant.
[18] Proportionality test p-value = 0.0173
[19] Proportionality test p-value=0.0072

therefore that the divide is more salient on the national level than on the pan-Arab level as far as Syrians are concerned. In other words, the proportion of Syrians selecting altruism when matched with a national of different views is significantly less than the proportion of Syrians selecting altruism when matched with any other treatment. Also, the proportion of Syrian egoists matched with a national of a different view is significantly higher than when matched with a national.

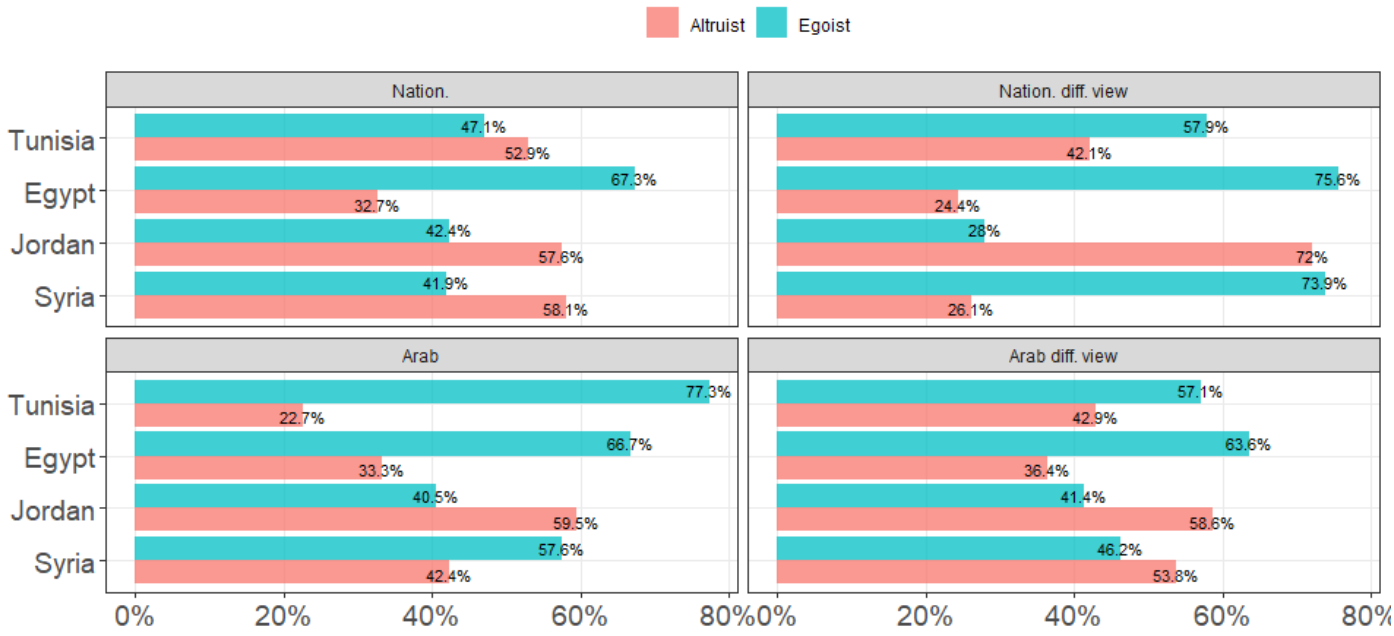
As for the Jordanian, Tunisian and Egyptian samples, proportionality tests do not show any significant treatment effects of Arab Spring views of the partner on altruistic attitudes towards that partner (running against our hypothesis)[20]. Together with the results of the Syrian sample outlined above, the results seem to support H2 but not H1.

**Figure 3: The proportions of altruists and egoists in each country**




[20] Proportionality tests comparing preference type for different pairs of treatments for each country p-values>0.05

**Figure 4: Fixing treatment, the proportion of preferences within each country**




Having got insights into the preferences of our subjects, from their behaviour in the dictator game, we now move to examining their behaviour in the trust game given their preferences. Figure 5 shows the behaviour of extreme altruists in the trust game. Tunisian, Egyptian, and Syrian altruists, when matched with a national different view, always chose low trust (100% proportion). Theoretically speaking, extreme altruists are usually also trusting unless there is an external factor in play (i.e. treatment effect or dividing line). On the behaviour of extreme egoists in the trust game, figure 6 shows the results. Low trust is the norm for all treatments for egoists, which is justified. To investigate our hypothesis of the existence of a dividing line when controlling for preferences, as evidenced by the dictator game, we conduct a probit regression controlling also for a number of possible confounders like age, gender, financial status, and education level (see table 4).

**Figure 5: Behaviour of altruists in the trust game fixing treatment**

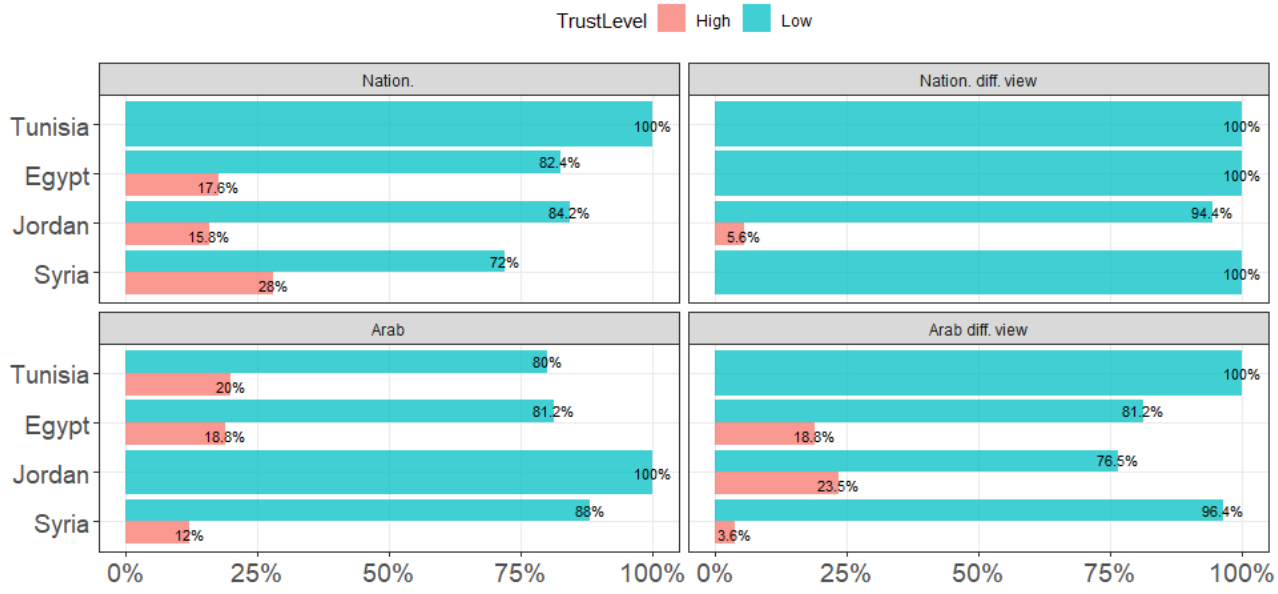



**Figure 6: Behaviour of egoists in the trust game fixing treatment**

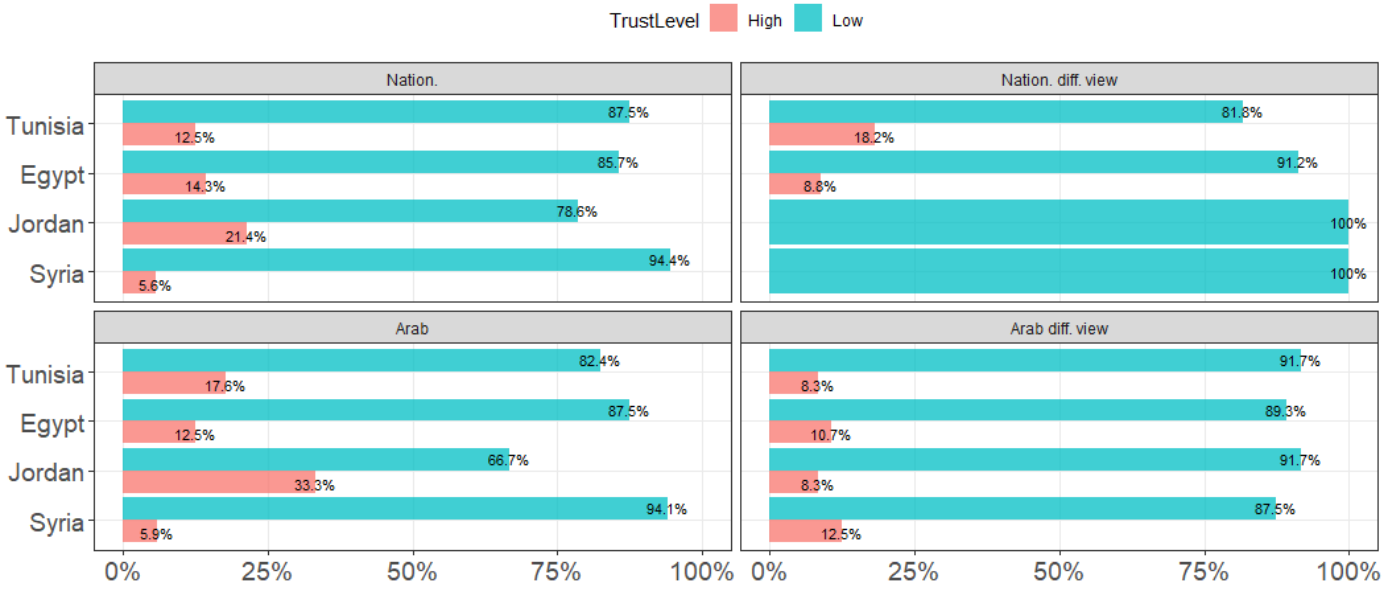


Table 4 shows that the proportion of low trust is significantly higher when matched with a national of an opposing view, compared to being matched with a national without a label. This could be evidence for the presence of a dividing line when controlling for preferences. Another interesting perplexing result is the insignificance of preferences (i.e. altruism or egoism) in predicting low trust. To disentangle these results, we perform probit regressions for altruists and egoists separately (table 5 and table 6).

Corroborating our dividing line hypothesis, table 5 shows that there is a significant increase in low trust for extreme altruists when being matched with a national of an opposing view than when being matched with a national. This finding is even confirmed by table 6 which examines the same relationships for extreme egoists only. As per this table, there is no significant difference in the low levels of trust of extremely egoistic subjects when facing fellow nationals with opposing views. This confirms the theoretical claim that extreme egoists are untrusting of others, no matter who they are.

**Table 4: Probit regressions for low trust given preferences**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Low Trust | |
|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) |
| (Intercept) | 0.81 *** | 0.99 *** |
| | (0.18) | (0.26) |
| Altruist | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| | (0.14) | (0.15) |
| NationDiff | 0.71 ** | 0.71 ** |
| | (0.23) | (0.23) |
| Arab | 0.14 | 0.12 |
| | (0.18) | (0.18) |
| ArabDiff | 0.24 | 0.23 |
| | (0.19) | (0.19) |
| EconStatus | -0.13 | -0.10 |
| | (0.08) | (0.09) |
| Age | -0.03 | -0.06 |
| | (0.08) | (0.08) |
| Female | 0.14 | 0.14 |
| | (0.14) | (0.15) |
| Education | 0.05 | 0.09 |
| | (0.08) | (0.09) |
| FeelInjustice | 0.00 | -0.00 |
| | (0.07) | (0.07) |
| NegativeArabSpring | 0.17 | 0.16 |
| | (0.15) | (0.16) |
| Egypt | | -0.25 |
| | | (0.24) |
| Jordan | | -0.30 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (0.24) |
| Tunisia | | -0.09 |
| | | (0.29) |
| N | 590 | 590 |
| AIC | 418.99 | 422.79 |
| BIC | 467.17 | 484.11 |
| Pseudo R2 | 0.05 | 0.06 |

Notes: All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. Only altruists and egoists are considered, "other" type is dropped. Low trust = 1 if TrustLevel = "Low", Low trust = 0 if TrustLevel = "High". Reference treatment: vs. Nation. Reference country: Syria. Reference preference: Egoist

## Table 5: Probit regressions for low trust given altruists only

| | Dependent Variable<br>Low Trust for Altruists | |
|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) |
| (Intercept) | 0.75 ** | 0.67 |
| | (0.26) | (0.37) |
| NationDiff | 1.17 ** | 1.20 ** |
| | (0.45) | (0.46) |
| Arab | 0.41 | 0.45 |
| | (0.28) | (0.28) |
| ArabDiff | 0.32 | 0.34 |
| | (0.27) | (0.27) |
| EconStatus | 0.02 | 0.05 |
| | (0.12) | (0.13) |
| Age | -0.01 | 0.00 |
| | (0.11) | (0.12) |
| Female | -0.08 | -0.02 |
| | (0.22) | (0.23) |
| Education | 0.09 | 0.12 |
| | (0.12) | (0.13) |
| FeelInjustice | -0.02 | 0.00 |
| | (0.11) | (0.11) |
| NegativeArabSpring | 0.22 | 0.36 |
| | (0.24) | (0.27) |
| Egypt | | -0.30 |
| | | (0.35) |
| Jordan | | -0.13 |
| | | (0.32) |
| Tunisia | | 0.70 |
| | | (0.56) |
| N | 257 | 257 |
| AIC | 189.90 | 191.18 |
| BIC | 225.39 | 237.32 |
| Pseudo R2 | 0.08 | 0.12 |

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation.
*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

**Table 6: Probit regressions for low trust given egoists only**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Low Trust for Egoists | |
|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) |
| (Intercept) | 0.93 *** | 1.34 *** |
| | (0.24) | (0.37) |
| NationDiff | 0.45 | 0.42 |
| | (0.30) | (0.31) |
| Arab | -0.10 | -0.11 |
| | (0.25) | (0.26) |
| ArabDiff | 0.22 | 0.18 |
| | (0.28) | (0.28) |
| EconStatus | -0.26 * | -0.22 |
| | (0.12) | (0.12) |
| Age | 0.00 | -0.08 |
| | (0.11) | (0.12) |
| Female | 0.35 | 0.34 |
| | (0.20) | (0.20) |
| Education | 0.02 | 0.11 |
| | (0.11) | (0.12) |
| FeelInjustice | 0.04 | 0.02 |
| | (0.10) | (0.10) |
| NegativeArabSpring | 0.09 | 0.05 |
| | (0.20) | (0.21) |
| Egypt | | -0.43 |
| | | (0.36) |
| Jordan | | -0.69 |
| | | (0.39) |
| Tunisia | | -0.48 |
| | | (0.41) |
| N | 333 | 333 |
| AIC | 238.28 | 240.87 |
| BIC | 276.37 | 290.38 |
| Pseudo R2 | 0.08 | 0.10 |

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

To further check the robustness of our finding that there is in fact a dividing line that crowds out trust when being matched with a fellow national of an opposing view (compared to being matched with a fellow national without a label) even when the subject is inherently altruistic, we conduct pairwise proportionality tests for altruists within each country separately.

As expected, the main driving force of the significant treatment effect observed in the regressions is the Syrian sample (proportionality test p-value < 0.05). Even if this person is inheritably an altruist, Syrians matched with Syrians of a different view are significantly less

trusting than if matched with a fellow Syrian with no view disclosed. Although, the dividing line is not very evident for other countries, it is a robust finding for the Syrian sample – confirming H2 but disproving H1.

## V. Conclusion.

Understanding how politics is structured by social divisions is 'arguably one of the most important issues to be addressed in the social sciences' (Evans and De Graaf 2013). Particularly in the Arab World, dividing lines assume increased importance for two additional reasons. *First*, because of factors that have to do with history, culture and daily subsistence, Arabs tend to view themselves more as members of groups rather than as independent individuals who lead private lives. Well-being is therefore viewed in terms of affiliation rather than an individual achievement (Barakat 1993) making dividing lines along which group membership highly consequential for welfare and sometimes protection. *Second*, competition among ideological camps in the Arab World usually pave the way for exclusionary politics. Elites on different sides of competing ideologies have often used dividing lines to exclude certain groups from full-fledged membership of the political community (Ibrahim 1998). New dividing lines therefore do not only affect social interactions but define how far one is allowed to be included in the state, treated as equal citizen or excluded from its services.

The purpose of this paper was to understand how much Arab Spring events have affected the current fault lines of the Arab World. Our assumption was that events of huge scale are likely to affect politics and social relations for extended periods. Our results point to mixed evidence for the existence of a new dividing line generated by the Arab Spring. Whereas there is strong evidence to suggest that such dividing line exists among our Syrians sample (which represents the most violent version of the Arab Spring), in the Jordanian, Tunisian and Egyptian

samples we find inconclusive evidence (significance in some games but no such significance in others).

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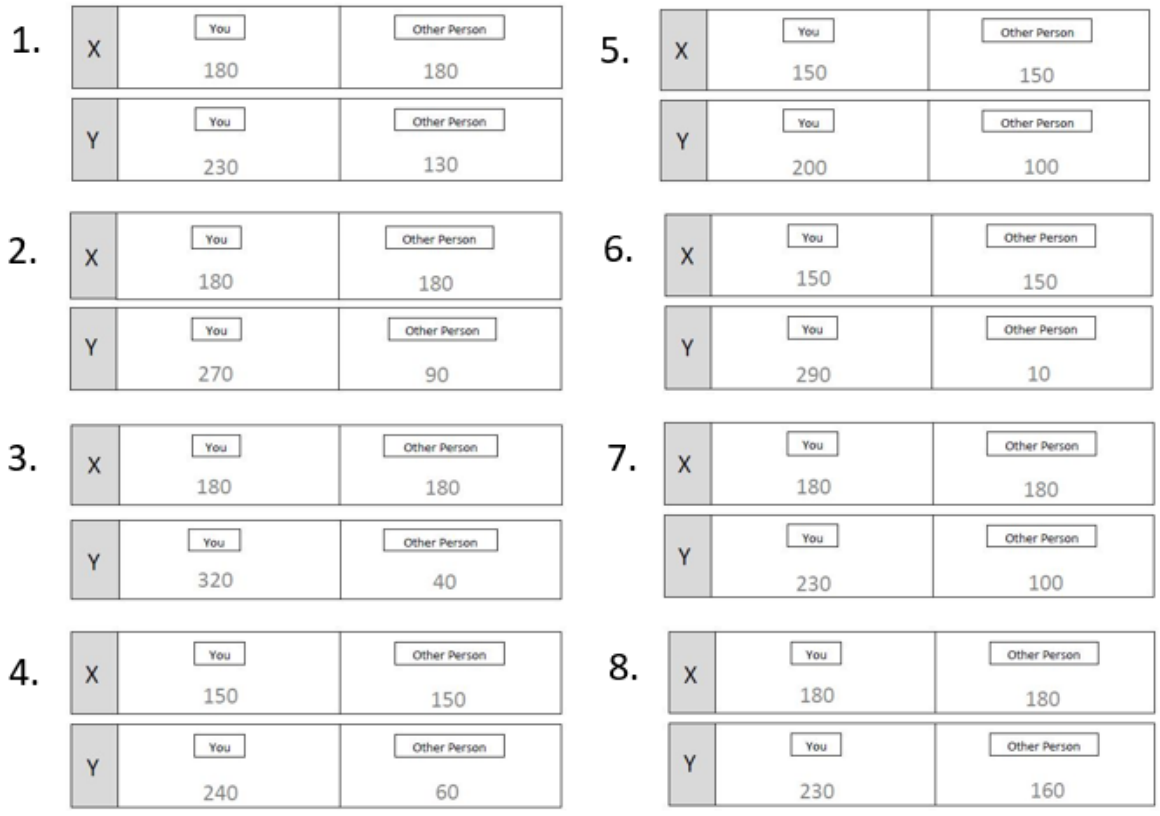
## Appendix A

## Experimental Games

### Game 1: Dictator's Game

**Figure A.1:** Eight scenarios where subject chooses to distribute an amount of points according to alternative "X" or "Y"



**Game 2: Modified Trust Game**

Here are the rules:

- Each person (A and B) receives 150 points to start with.
- Person A can give away a share of his points to person B (between 0 and 150 points).
- WE will triple each point sent from person A and then give it to person B (hence if A gives 1 point to B, we will triple it and B receives 3 points).
- Person B then can decide to return any part or all the points he receives.

Have a look at this example:

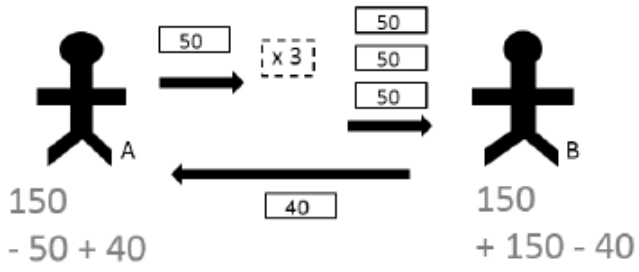


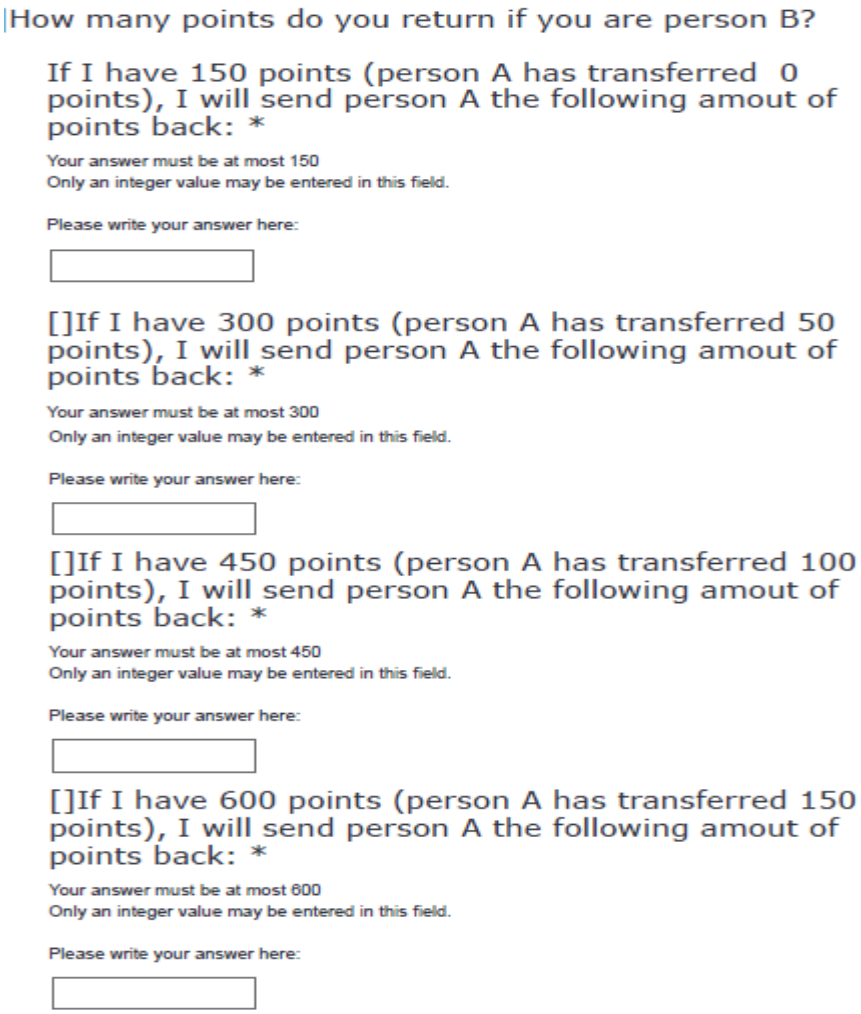

**Figure A.2:** Decision options for Player A measuring trust

How many points do you send if you are person A?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- 0 points (I then keep 150 points, person B has 150 points)
- 50 points (I then keep 100 points, person B has 300 points)
- 100 points (I then keep 50 points, person B has 450 points)
- 150 points (I then keep 0 points, person B has 600 points)

**Figure A.3:** Four scenarios for Player B to decide the amount to send back to Player A measuring trustworthiness



## Appendix B

### Definition of Variables

| Variable | Description/Question asked | Measurement |
|---|---|---|
| Econ Status | Economic status | Numeric<br>(1: lowest to 5:highest) |
| Age | Age in years | Numeric |
| Female | Subject is a female | Dummy variable |
| Education | Education level | Numeric<br>(1: lowest to 6:highest) |
| Feel Injustice | How far do you feel injustice in your life in general? | Numeric<br>1: I do not feel any injustice<br>2: To some extent<br>3: To a great extent |
| Negative Arab Spring | Negative view on Arab spring | Dummy<br>1: Has negative view<br>0: Has positive view |