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# The Art of Peer Pressure: Social Desires as Incentives to Join Students Protests in Jordan

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*SIT Study Abroad*

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SIT Jordan: Geopolitics, International Relations and the Future of the Middle East

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Social Desires as Incentives to Join Students Protests in Jordan

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## Abstract

Collective action and rational choice theory suggest that social movements suffer from a tragedy of the commons that incentivizes individuals against participation. The last several decades of increased youth-driven protests and demonstrations in the Middle East, however, suggest that these collective action barriers are being consistently overcome. I propose an addition to the rational choice basis of Olson's collective action theory which incorporates social desires, and specifically peer pressure, as an observable individual incentive. Using a combination of interviews and vignette-style factorial surveys, I test this hypothesis to measure the effect of perceived peer pressure on the intention of students at the University of Jordan to participate in a hypothetical protest. Results indicate that knowledge of friends' intention to participate creates an incentive unique from knowledge of the quantity of students attending. When University of Jordan students know they will have friends at a protest, their intended participation matches with their initial sympathy for the protest 20% more than scenarios in which they know that most or only a few students will attend. The greatest difference in sympathy and intended participation is observed when students are told very few people will attend. The results indicate that perceived peer pressure is not a strong enough incentive to convince students to join a protest that they do not sympathize with, and rather serves as an encouragement for students to act on their sympathies. Taken together, this data suggests that social desires offer some explanation for increasingly high participation rates of students and youth in the Middle East's ongoing social movements.



Key Words: Social Psychology, Social Sciences, Regional Studies: Middle East

# Introduction

On December 18, 2010, a revolutionary movement in Tunisia sparked months of protests and demonstrations across North Africa and the Middle East. This period of uprisings is popularly termed the Arab Spring. While only Tunisia experienced a transition to constitutional democracy, many of the conflicts throughout the Arab world are still ongoing. Countries that did not witness violent revolutionary movements, such as Morocco and Jordan, instead experienced a revival of civil society and the creation of new form of protest culture.

The rate of protests and demonstrations in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has only increased over the past decade. As the country slips further into economic crisis, labor strikes and demonstrations have become more common (up by 22% in 2016).[1] Polls demonstrate a decreasing confidence in the capabilities of Jordan's government, and protest movements have swept cities like Karak and Salt.[2][3] Demonstrations are held in cities calling for a stronger response to oppression in neighboring Palestine and Syria at the same time as farmers regularly protest new tax hikes on agriculture.[4]

A plethora of literature has been produced attempting to explain the reasons behind protest movements in Jordan and the Middle East. However, very little of the literature investigates these movements at the level of individual actors. Many academics seem to take for granted a critical mass of rebellious youth ready to protest at any moment, without asking why those youths join certain movements in the first place.

The research presented here is an attempt to solve that riddle – what causes an individual to join a movement. Framing ongoing protests as a form of collective social movement, my

[1] Hana Namrouqa, "Labour protests rise by 22% - Report." *Jordan Times,* April 9, 2017.
[2] Beverley Milton-Edwards, "Jordan's troubles in its own backyard." *Brookings,* February 22, 2017.
[3] "Poll: 45% believe Al-Mulqi's government is able to assume responsibilities…" *Petra,* January 2, 2017.
[4] Hana Namrouqa, "Farmers 'determined' to continue protests." *Jordan Times,* March 6, 2018.

research takes a social psychological approach to explain one aspect of the decision calculus behind protesting Jordanian college students. Using a theoretical framework of peer pressure as a social incentive that can weigh against the personal cost of joining a movement, my work seeks to understand the degree to which everyday social interactions influence ongoing participation in Jordanian civil society.

Augustus Norton writes in 1993 that "no understanding of the contemporary Middle East will be complete unless it takes into account the status of civil society in the region," a status he believes is growing and permeates all aspects of Middle Eastern life. Norton specifies as one example Jordanian civil society during the 1990-91 Gulf Crisis, during which demonstrations and protests were organized throughout the country that ran counter to the government's official position.[5] The relevance of civil society to understanding the region has only become more apparent in the following decades. Norton's writing and framework has received a significant amount of pushback from academics, particularly those in the camp of Frédéric Volpi, who call for a re-framing of the meaning of civil society in the Middle East. Volpi argues that civil society in the Middle East may not fit into Western notions derived from enlightenment era political thought.[6] Volpi makes an important critique of Western academia, claiming that it objectifies Middle Eastern society without adequately accounting for the actual constitution of the societies studied. However, as noted by Markham, this does not amount to a justification for withholding all academically informed perspectives on Middle Eastern civil society.[7] Social science research, including that reported here, inherently objectifies any aspect of society analyzed, and that objectification itself is morally neutral. Through the comparison of many overlapping and

[5] Augustus Richard Norton, "The Future of Civil Society in the Middle East." *The Middle East Journal*; Spring 1993; 47, 2: 205-216
[6] Frédéric Volpi, "Framing Civility in the Middle East: alternative perspectives on the state and civil society." *Third World Quarterly*; June 2011; 32, 5: 827-843
[7] Tim Markham, "Social Media, Protest Cultures and Political Subjectivities of the Arab Spring." *Media, Culture and Society*; 2014; 36, 1: 89-104.

contrasting societal objectifications in research, the literature reviewed and research presented here offer an academically informed account of one aspect of civil society in Jordan.

### A Note on Definitions

Research is only useful so far as its meaning is clear, so before moving forward some definitions are in order. *Peer pressure*, the major factor in this research, is examined as a socially created incentive to act in accordance with a norm, a norm essentially being something socially agreed upon as worth doing. *Collective action*, stemming from an economic theory developed by Mancur Olson, refers to any movement or action that relies on coordination between people in order to achieve its goal.

## Literature Review

### Overview

#### Ways to theorize social movements in the Middle East

The essential aim of my research is to shed light on one aspect of a fundamental question in the social sciences: *why do people protest?* Protests are a form of social movement whose goals are to resist or reject a form of institutional oppression. The Middle East has in recent years experienced what Sydney Tarrow describes as a *cycle of protests*.[8] During the past decade we have witnessed major social movements sweeping through nearly every country of the Middle East and North Africa, in some cases attempting to overthrow regimes and turning into full-fledged revolutions. Many disciplines across the social sciences offer explanations as to why social movements form – my aim is to demonstrate the necessity of applying a social

[8] Sydney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998: 142.

psychological framework to movements ongoing in the Middle East in order to understand why people join movements.

Within the disciplines of political science and sociology, the typical unit of analysis is the social movement itself. For some of the earliest theorists of social movements, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, contention and class struggle is built into the very fabric of society, and collective resistance will occur as classes are increasingly united and realize their sources of oppression.[9] This is the underlying fabric of *relative deprivation theory*, which defined social movement literature during the 1960s and 70s. Lenin expanded upon this theory with the assertion that successful collective action is in part dependent upon opportunity and resource organization, a belief that became formalized into *resource mobilization theory* during the 1970s and 80s.[10] This theory contradicts traditional knowledge that social movements form due to the realization of short-term grievances, suggesting that grievances are either constant or manufactured and therefore secondary to the availability of resources as a factor of movement formation.[11,12] Modern scientists build off of these early theories, albeit typically with more cultural or constructivist turns. Many incorporate Thompson's assertion of a "moral economy" – that protests rely on a widespread sense of injustice, rather than material deprivation.[13] A new theory of social movements as a response to the imposition of identity stems from the writings of Michel Foucault. Followers of Foucault in particular provide room for *culturalism* and agency of protesters in the literature, understanding social movements as a method to construct meaning and reject the imposition of truth from an outside source of power.[14]

[9] Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*. London: Workers Education Society, 1848.
[10] J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1983, 9: 527-553.
[11] J. D. McCarthy and M. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movement." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1977, 82: 1212-1241.
[12] Joan Gurney and Kathleen Tierney, "Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research." *The Sociological Quarterly*; January 1982; 23, 1: 33-47.
[13] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*. 1998, 25.
[14] Edward Said, *Power, Politics, and Culture*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001.

To an extent each of these theories has been employed as an answer to why the Middle East has been thrust into a period of political turmoil. Many point to the economic and material deprivation of Middle Eastern working class and the unemployment of youth. The resource mobilization camp reference the availability of social media and international coalition building as an impetus for movements. Historians point to the history of injustices and imposition of economic and political power from outside forces as a common motivation, while followers of Foucault and Edward Said suggest that protest and revolution are a means for Middle Easterners to protect their culture, reject influence of Western values, and find new collective agency.

Each of these theories of motivation makes sense and each bears relevance to current circumstances in the Middle East, however they fail to answer adequately an essential question: *why do individuals protest?* The motivation factors all point to reasons for Middle Easterners to be sympathetic with protest movements, and this is confirmed with regional polling and survey data, most notably from the Arab Barometer project.[15] However none answer the most basic challenge of collective action – how to overcome a free-rider collective action problem. As each theory focuses on the formation of a movement and its potential outcomes, none provides an incentive to join the movement rather than simply awaiting the result.

## Collective Action Theory and Peer Pressure

### Protests as a Collective Action Problem

*Collective action* occurs whenever a group of people coordinate to achieve a common objective. A protest, as a movement reliant on attendance and participation, is by definition a collective action, and is particularly vulnerable to free-riding or what is often described as a *collective action problem*.

[15] "Arab Barometer III," *Arabbarometer.org*, 2013.

The problem of collective action was pointed out classically in David Hume's 1740 *A Treatise in Human Nature*, and more recently popularized in Mancur Olson's 1965 *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*.[16,17] The problem assumes that rational people act on incentives. This problem stems from the same economic premises of the "Tragedy of the Commons" identified classically by William Lloyd and expanded upon by Garrett Hardin in 1968.[18] If a common objective is achieved by a movement, the benefits are dispersed. For example, if a demonstration demanding more accountability for police officers is successful, the entire community will enjoy the results, regardless of who joined the protest and who did not. However, each person might experience individual harm through the act of protest, perhaps through loss of time or through putting themselves in physical or emotional danger. In theory, then, even if every person in a community has the same complaint about policing and would like an action to take place, each person is individually incentivized to not participate. The result is that no action occurs.

Looking at the Middle East today, it is obvious that collective actions are occurring, suggesting most likely one of two things. One option is that the theory of collective action is built on a faulty assumption, because people are not measurably rational. This claim, as introduced by Margaret Somers, suggests that the basis of rational choice theory is not accountable enough to be useful.[19] A second explanation is that the collective action problem is being consistently overcome. Olson theorizes that in order to overcome a collective action problem there must exist individual incentives for participation. While keeping in mind the criticisms of the first camp, the following research assumes the utility of individualized

[16] David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*.1736, reprint: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896.
[17] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1965.
[18] Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*; December 13, 1968; 168, 3859: 1243-1248.
[19] Margaret Somers, "We're No Angels: Realism, Rational Choice, and Relationality in Social Science." *American Journal of Sociology*; November 1998; 104, 3: 722-784.

incentives. The purpose of my research is to investigate social incentives outside of Olson's initial structure, in order to better explain how and why collective actions are ongoing.

## Peer Pressure as a Solution to Collective Action Problems

Peer pressure as an individual motivator employs *social exchange theory*, an approach that facilitates observing interpersonal relationships through an economic lens of perceived cost-benefit assumptions. The basic hypothesis, that people gain benefit from relationships which motivates them to create and maintain relationships, is discussed classically in works by Bernard de Mandeville and Adam Smith, and more recently in George Homans' 1961 *Social Behavior*.[20] Homans posits that all large groups (communities, societies, classes) are really made up of small groups and are therefore subject to "elementary social behavior" – the influence of one or two individuals upon another.[21]

Peer pressure is pressure to conform or act in accordance with some established group norm. Homans defines a norm as a "description of behavior that many members find it valuable for the actual behavior of themselves and others to conform to."[22] In other words, peer pressure is pressure to act as others do or would like to. Many cases demonstrate the role of peer pressure in social interactions. In H.B. Gerard's 1954 "The Anchorage of Opinions in Face to Face Groups," participants display a propensity to change their opinions based on the perceived likelihood of group acceptance.[23] This wish for social approval is also further theorized in the works of Vernon Allen and J. C. Turner, among others.[24]

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[20] Heinz Höllander, "A Social Exchange Approach to Voluntary Cooperation." *The American Economic Review*; December 1990; 80, 5: 1157-1167.
[21] George Homans, "Social Behavior as Exchange." *American Journal of Sociology*; May 1958; 63, 6: 597-606.
[22] Homans, "Social Behavior." 600.
[23] Harold B. Gerard, 'The Anchorage of Opinions in Face to Face Groups." *Human Relations*; August 1, 1954; 7, 3: 313-325.
[24] J. C. Turner, *Mapping social psychology series: social influence*. Belmont: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1991.
Vernon L. Allen, "Situational Factors in Conformity." *Advances in Experimental Psychology*; 1965; 3: 133-175.

A strong empirical effect of communication exists which is inconsistent with the traditional and typically accepted theory of collective action. While classic economics theory describes communication without enforceable commitments as cheap talk, face-to-face communication is consistently demonstrated to increase cooperation. Even more drastically, the act of seeing other participants in a study without communication increases cooperation over situations in which participants are completely anonymous.[25] These observances are social in nature, and suggest that the perceptions of others consistently influence our behavior.

Perceived potential for social approval, therefore, is a significant motivator for individual behavior. Concerned with the contrast between Olson's theory of coordination problems and the realized empirical history of human coordination, Holländer writes in 1990 that a social exchange approach might hold the reconciling solution.[26] Holländer's hypothesis is that "cooperative behavior is motivated by the expectation of emotionally prompted social approval." In other words, often people will prefer to do what they think other people want or expect them to do. Michael Laver further expands on this in his 1998 book *Private Desires, Political Actions*, where he notes that people hold social desires in addition to private desires and these need to be incorporated within rational choice theory as well.[27]

Eugene Kandel and Edward Lazear expand on Holländer's hypothesis in 1992 with a theoretical model of peer pressure as an explanation for why certain work environments are more work inducing than others.[28] The authors demonstrate how introducing a function $P(\ )$ to a collective action model of effort, where $P$ is socially induced pressure to work, increases equilibrium effort by counterbalancing the cost of effort. This simple model is the basis for how

[25] Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*; Summer 2000; 14, 3: 140
[26] Höllander, "Social Exchange."
[27] Michael Laver, *Private Desires, Political Actions: An Invitation to the Politics of Rational Choice*. Sage Publications, May 5, 1997. 18.
[28] Eugene Kandel and Edward Lazear, "Peer Pressure and Partnerships." *The Journal of Political Economy*; August 1992; 100, 4; 801-817.

peer pressure works as a solution to collective action problems. Florence Passy argues that an individual's perception of their social world is in a constant process of redefinition. Because "the definition of individual perceptions does not take place once and for all," the model for peer pressure as a motivator needs to be understood with a high degree of circumstantial nuance, with an ever-changing *P* value that is only sometimes great enough to counter the more constant value of perceived cost of participation.[29]

## Studies of Protests in Jordan and the Middle East

Jordan, like many of its neighboring countries, experienced what appeared to be a spark in its civil society in 2010 and early 2011. Thirteen of the nineteen political and social movements active in Jordan by 2014 were formed in 2011, as were three of Jordan's six major coalitions.[30] While no major power shift occurred (despite some global anticipation), civilians exercised their political rights with frequent non-violent protests and displays of civil disobedience.[31] In 2014, 58% of Jordanian's expressed dissatisfaction with the state of their democracy, and only 13% held a high degree of trust in their government to make the best decisions for Jordan.[32] By that year, 22% of Jordanian's had participated in organized, non-violent protests – 7% higher than the global median among developing states.[33]

Academics across the globe have published literature on the post-2010 uprisings within Arab states, bringing the events into the mainstream discourse of social science.[34] Many authors discuss the formations of social movements throughout the modern Arab world as a result of

[29] Florence Passy, "Social Networks Matter. But How?" *Social Movement Analysis: The Network Perspective*, Oxford University Press, 2002.
[30] "Map of Political Parties and Movements in Jordan: 2013-2014." *Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy*. 2014.
[31] Sarah Tobin, "Jordan's Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution." *Middle East Policy Council*; Spring 2017; xix, 1.
[32] "Many Unhappy with Current Political System." *Pew Research Center*, October 16, 2017.
[33] "Political Engagement." *Pew Research Center*, December 17, 2014.
[34] Nada AlMaghlouth et al. "Who Frames the Debate on the Arab Uprisings? Analysis of Arabic, English, and French Academic Scholarship." *International Sociology*; April 27, 2015; 30, 4.

class struggle, in line with traditional relative deprivation theory.[35] Tobin goes so far as to suggest that an emerging middle class is the reason that Jordan did not see protests turn revolutionary in the likes of Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria.[36] More culturally centered researchers argue that unique features of the Arab world itself are responsible for its contemporary protest culture. Bamyeh, for example, argues that long standing civic traditions with anarchist values in the Arab world have always been present and have simply moved to the foreground in the current state of Middle Eastern politics.[37]

One important feature of protests across the Middle East has been the role of youth in protest movements. This is not a distinctly Middle Eastern trait – as reported by Jack Shenker for the Guardian, 2011 saw protest movements led by teenagers in every region of the world.[38] Even in the United States social movements rely on youth involvement, as noted by historic protesters from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Tupac Shakur.[39,40] Despite this, academics studying the protests in the Middle East have largely ignored the youth demographic as a separate force. Anderson notes that Middle Eastern youths are typically studied under a "reductive statistical and economically deterministic lens." Academics, Anderson argues, are too quick to presume that youths lack some capacity for independent agency and action.[41]

Before moving forward, the implications of the term *youth* need to be explored. Youth as a stage of life can be conceptualized as a condition of entering adult society, a nebulous and circumstantially dependent age transition. Youth are often additionally conceptualized as a future

[35] Jamie Allison, "Class forces, transition and the Arab uprisings: a comparison of Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria." *Democratization*; 2015; 22, 2: 294-314.
[36] Tobin, "Jordan's Arab Spring."
[37] Mohammed Bamyeh, "Anarchist Philosophy, Civic Traditions and the Culture of the Arab Revolutions." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*; 2012; 5, 1: 32-41.
[38] Jack Shenker, "How Youth Led Revolts Shook Elites Around the World." *The Guardian,* August 12, 2011.
[39] Martin Luther King, Jr. "Shaw." Speech, Shaw University, April 15, 1960.
[40] Tupac Shakur, "Interview." Interview with P3, November 1994.
[41] Charles Anders, "Youth, the "Arab Spring," and Social Movements." *Review of Middle East Studies*; Winter 2013; 47, 2; 150-156.

to society. Henze comments that the political participation of a "young generation" is thus determined, more so than adults in society, by experiences of dissatisfaction and injustice as well as by social interdependencies.[42] Considering Henze's reflections on theories of youth, it is clear that any study of Middle Eastern social movements must incorporate the movement of youths as an independent phenomenon from greater social movements.

Contrary to presumptions that youth populations in Arab protests are the result of political and economical dissatisfaction, data from the Arab Barometer suggests that Middle Eastern youths are *more* satisfied with their governments than older generations.[43] Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the motivations of Middle Eastern youths to engage in protest outside of a relative deprivation theory framework. A theory of opportunity and resource mobilization has received a significant amount of attention as a determinant of youth collective action in the Middle East.[44] The other determinant of youth participation as theorized by Henze – social interdependencies – has yet to be studied in depth as it applies to Middle Eastern youth in protest.

In one of the few empirical studies of factors influencing participation in movements during the "Arab Spring," Steinart-Threlkeld finds that periphery actors have a greater effect on protest level than do core actors.[45] In other words, interpersonal connections do more to mobilize people in the Middle East than did the work of activists and organizers. This study focuses on the role of social media on coordination, supporting recent literature highlighting the role of digital

[42] Valeska Henze, "On the Concept of Youth – Some Reflections on Theory." In *Youth, Revolt, Recognition: The Young Generation during and after the "Arab Spring,"* ed. Isabel Schäfer, Berlin, 2015.
[43] Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, "The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities." *Middle East Law and Governance*; 2012; 4: 168-188.
[44] Anita Breuer, Todd Landman, Dorothea Farquhar, "Social Media and Protest Mobilization: Evidence from the Tunisian Revolution." *Democratization*; 2014; 22, 4: 764-792.
[45] Zachary Steinert-Threlkeld, "Spontaneous Collective Action: Peripheral Mobilization During the Arab Spring." University of California – San Diego.

media in improving the execution of contemporary protests globally.[46] However, the study does little to explain individual decision factors for participation in one coordinated protest versus another.

A gap in the literature exists between proposed solutions for dilemmas of collective action and proposed explanations for why youth protests in the Middle East have so consistently overcome collective action problems. One solution in particular, a model of peer pressure like that of Kandel and Lazear, has yet to be explored in the context of a young generation of protesters in the Middle East. The research presented here is a first attempt to fill this gap, in an effort to examine why individual youths do or do not participate in the ongoing protests around them.

## Theoretical Framework

The goal of my research is to investigate the role that social perceptions play in motivating Jordanian youth to participate in social movements. Without accounting for social perceptions, a contemporary theory of individual participation in a social movement might look like the below formula. By assessing an individual's initial attitude toward a movement's cause (sympathy) and the individual's perception of personal risk, resource availability, and accessibility of participating, social scientists hope to predict that individual's actual intention of participation.

Sympathy + Opportunity = Participation

My study will isolate the factor of peer pressure as a separate entity, changing it across three groups:

[46] W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, "The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics." *Information, Communication & Society*; 2012; 15, 5: 739-768.

Sympathy A + Opportunity + Peer Pressure A = Participation A

Sympathy B + Opportunity + Peer Pressure B = Participation B

Sympathy C + Opportunity + Peer Pressure C = Participation C

The opportunity is given in the survey and should remain constant across each group. A null hypothesis suggests that the factor of peer pressure within this equation should be 0. If peer pressure is 0, each group's sympathy to participation ratio should be equal (Sympathy A: Participation A = Sympathy B: Participation B = Sympathy C: Participation C). In other words, regardless of what individual sympathy levels are, they should correlate to similar participation levels without between group variation.

Collective action and rational choice theory suggest that an individual's intention to participate in an action should differ from their sympathy toward that action, especially when the action involves a large group. Therefore, a null hypothesis – that peer pressure bears no effect on participation intention – would have an equally low individual correlation between sympathy and participation across all groups. This study examines a new and under-tested theory – that peer pressure alone is sufficient to create incentives that overcome a dilemma of collective action. If peer pressure *is* sufficient as the theory suggests, a stronger correlation between sympathy and participation levels should appear in the groups with increased peer pressure.

The results of this study should demonstrate intended participation rates much higher than empirical evidence of student participation in protests would suggest. Such a result would coincide with a large body of research that suggests a basic notion – people do not always do what they plan to.[47] The purpose of my research is not to observe or predict actual protest

[47] Icek Ajzen, "The Theory of Planned Behavior." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*; 1991; 50: 179-211.

participation, but to examine the decision calculus behind an individual student's *intention* to protest.

## Methodology

A mixed methods approach, combining in-depth interviews with factorial survey results, was employed in this research. The mixed-methods approach allows for relevant perspectives to be incorporated into the analysis of survey data, giving more voice to research participants. The combination also helps compensate for necessarily small sample sizes (see Limitations) by corroborating findings across methods and perspectives.

### Interviews

Seven interviews were conducted over the course of this study. The interviews attempted to cover a range of knowledge bases around the role of peer pressure in student activism and social movement participation. Formal and semi-formal interviews were conducted with university students, psychology professors and experts, local protest organizers, and a reporter who specializes in covering Jordanian student and youth protests. Interviewees were mixed genders. Students interviewed were college-aged, as were the protest organizers and the reporter, in order to provide more first-hand insight from the surveyed population. The psychology professors were middle-aged and experienced in working with the surveyed population. Participants in the country of Jordan were interviewed face to face; for one outside of Jordan, a combination of internet communication methods was used to conduct a remote interview. To keep the interviews as ethical as possible, participants were advised of their rights to any data provided by them, and each signaled their consent to be included in the research (see Appendix A).

The interviews served both as original data sources and to explain survey data. Interviewees responded to a set of questions based on their own experiences and their perceptions of interactions between students. Interviewees were asked what they would expect from a scenario like the one featured in the survey vignettes. They were additionally asked to provide perspectives on student social dynamics and on student activism and political engagement (see Appendix B). After responding to the standardized formal questions, interviewees were asked to discuss their own unique perspectives on the social dynamics of student protest. All interviews were primarily conducted in English.

## Surveys

A vignette style (factorial) survey was distributed among 63 university students. The first set of 32 students was enrolled in a general elective psychology class together. The remaining 31 students, from various university departments, each volunteered to take the survey after individually connecting with me during the period of research. Each survey participant was enrolled as a full time undergraduate or graduate student at the University of Jordan at the time of the survey. A single factor – perceived social desirability of participating in a protest – was targeted with this survey, at three levels – high, medium, and low – for a vignette universe of three. Each participant responded to one of these three vignettes. After eliminating three surveys for insufficient completion, 60 surveys in total were collected. Each survey was conducted in Arabic (see Appendix C for English translation).

A vignette design is only effective if the scenario presented to participants is believable enough to elicit honest and generalizable reactions. For this research, I designed a controversial scenario in which the government wants to build a hotel and casino combination in Ajloun. The legality and ethics of casino building – which might attract tourist dollars but at the expense of

Islamic and traditional values – has been an ongoing controversy in Jordan. Protests sparked throughout Jordan over the recent decade in response to casino project proposals in Aqaba and by the Dead Sea. At the same time, many Jordanians believe the casinos will soon be legal. I chose the controversy to target youth because it highlights a sense of conflict between traditional and western influences on life in Jordan – a conflict that especially urban Jordanian youth deal with on a consistent basis. The scenario for each group mentioned costs and benefits of the project and a call for a student protest. The groups differed only in who each participant was told would be attending (either most classmates, some friends, or very few classmates). Students in each survey group were asked to indicate their initial sympathy for the protest, and their own predicted likelihood of participating.

The vignette survey approach offers methodological and ethical advantages for the study of social movements. Vignettes, which employ hypothetical scenarios, highlight specific features of a context to which participants are invited to respond. A vignette universe, when distributed among a large enough sample, allows for the isolation of factors by holding the rest of the context constant among all participants, an impossible feat using traditional polling methods.[48] Because perceived social pressure could have subconscious effects on individual decision-making, I determined that providing a scenario for participants to react to would provide a better measure of social pressure's effect size than would a poll. Discussing participation in social movements, particularly oppositional protest movements, could be a sensitive or even risky subject for certain individuals. This survey design offers an improved ethics in that not only is all

[48] For more on vignette research in social sciences, see:
Janet Finch, "The Vignette Technique in Survey Research." *Sociology*; 1987; 21, 1: 105-114.
Lisa Wallander, "25 years of factorial surveys in sociology: A review." *Social Science Research*; 2009; 38; 505-520.

data anonymous, but no participant is asked to respond with information about their own past activities or experiences.

# Results

## Interview Results

### Vignette Scenario Questions: Development Projects, Casinos, and Resistance

Participants agreed that the government of Jordan has the legal right to take land for development, and there is no effective legal avenue to resist a development project. One interviewee mentioned it is common to hear people say "if it's the government, you can never win." Historic examples including the development of Abdali Boulevard in Amman were brought up several times to illustrate this point. No interviewed participant can imagine a time that the government lost a case in court.

Interviewees disagreed some on what the social responses to a casino would look like. Generally, people agreed that there would be protests, with disagreement on the form and longevity of those. A couple interviewed participants believed that even for a casino built nearby, people would only protest until a larger issue arose, and would not be driven to leave the neighborhood. By contrast, one participant recalled the fury that swept the country during a casino project by the Dead Sea, and how the people of Birqish had burned land to keep the king from building a palace there. In this participant's opinion, if a casino were built in Ajloun despite resistance it would be destroyed.

### Student Questions: Student Political Tendencies and Cultural Affiliations

Generally, interviewees were in consensus that cultural affiliations, particularly Islamic values, play a large role in the everyday lives of students and youth in Jordan. A sense of conflict

was noted by many, however – interviewees point out a dilemma for youth who are raised conservatively and yet are increasingly influenced by progressive and Western values. Of course nothing is universal, and it was pointed out by one interviewee that just as in every culture some youth are more conservative while others are more progressive.

Interviewees noted that, while students (especially at the University of Jordan) regularly participate in on-campus politics and demonstrations, broader political activism of students is rarer. One reason offered is that students have a long history of successful protest on campus, but they see protests of the federal government fail regularly and so don't attend. A professor, reporter, and multiple students commented on a social trend that discourages greater political engagement – even if students do not like what is happening, it is more fashionable to appear uninterested. Multiple people commented on a chilling effect for involvement in greater protests, and suggested that certain topics are off-limits to protest. While some issues, such as the Palestinian cause and the price of bread, are okay to protest and generally met with calm and restrained policing, students are likely to worry about the fallout of expressing dissent on more controversial issues. One organizer commented on how students along with organizers had been warned by the government not to attend certain demonstrations, and that severe consequences would ensue for anyone who did. Interviewees also note that students fear immediate violence during protests. While students may want to join protests they sympathize with, rare past instances of police violence during demonstrations are enough to keep many students away.

### Peer Pressure Questions: Role of Student Relationships and Group Behavior

Interviewees found consensus in the significant role that student relationships play on student political behavior. One psychology professor claimed that relationships and friend groups tend to affect behavior on campus more strongly than personal preference. Interviewed students

supported this claim, citing instances of conforming to pressure to join group events and suggesting that this is the main reason on campus student election rallies have such high attendance. Another psychology professor suggests that personal preference may have greater pernicious effects due to initial friend-group selection and self-segregation of students, but agrees that those groups define most interactions observed.

An organizer stated that some students will tag along with friends to go to protests even if they do not care, however the reverse occurs more often. They remark that even when students want to attend a protest, if they cannot find other people to go with they likely will not go. The students interviewed agreed with this observation. According to the organizer, there are logical reasons for this. “There is a perception of safety in numbers,” the organizer comments, and students are more likely to perceive a chance of success when they know people attending. For some students, protests even outside of school are social events, and while they may sympathize with many they are most likely to attend the ones where they can go and return with a group of friends.

An organizer commented that while most adult Jordanians protest as individuals, students by and large protest in groups. It was mentioned by multiple interviewees that the government is aware of this dynamic and will seek at times to manipulate it. Students are heavily discouraged from attending major protests outside of their universities, with occasional threats of penalties imposed. One young activist and organizer explained how the government had targeted their friend group before one protest, warning their friends not to attend and having them followed until the actions were over.

## Survey Results

The vignette-universe of three created three groups of randomly assigned survey participants, hereafter referred to as groups A, B, and C. Participants in group A responded to a scenario in which a majority of their classmates planned to attend a protest. Participants in group B responded to a scenario in which some of their friends planned to attend. The participants of group C were faced with a scenario in which very few students planned to attend or participate.

**Table 1: Group Makeups**

| Group | N | Year in University | Gender | % Urban | % Amman | % Muslim | <7 FH | 7-15 FH | >15 FH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 21 | 7 1yr<br>7 2yr<br>6 3yr<br>1 4yr | 9 M<br>12 F | 86 | 86 | 95 | 11 | 6 | 4 |
| B | 20 | 5 1yr<br>9 2yr<br>2 3yr<br>3 4yr<br>1 + | 5 M<br>15 F | 95 | 75 | 100 | 12 | 2 | 6 |
| C | 19 | 5 1yr<br>9 2yr<br>5 3yr | 10 M<br>9 F | 95 | 79 | 95 | 10 | 3 | 6 |
| Total | 60 | 17 1yr<br>25 2yr<br>13 3yr<br>4 4yr<br>1 + | 26 M<br>34 F | 92 | 80 | 97 | 33 | 11 | 16 |

Table 1 describes the distribution of demographic factors among the survey participants. “FH” refers to the number of hours per week that participants spend time with friends outside of class. The table displays the distribution of demographics within each randomly assigned survey group, as well as the total distribution.

**Table 2: Group Responses**

| Group | *u* Sympathy | *ssd* Sympathy | *u* Participate | *ssd* Participate | *R* | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3.33 | 1.65 | 3.00 | 1.73 | 0.85 | 0.72 |
| B | 3.45 | 1.67 | 3.20 | 1.79 | 0.53 | 0.28 |
| C | 3.42 | 1.54 | 2.84 | 1.64 | 0.71 | 0.50 |
| Total | 3.40 | 1.60 | 3.01 | 1.70 | | |

Table 2 indicates the average, sample standard deviation, Pearson's *R* and *R*-squared correlations for each survey group. The correlation factor is an indication on average of how well the data for each group corresponds to a 1:1 sympathy to participation ratio, where sympathy indicates a participant's sympathy toward a hypothetical protest and where participation indicates a participants self-predicted likelihood of joining said protest. A higher *R* and *R*-squared value is indicative of a strong correlation between the self-predicted sympathy and behavior of participants. This data is visualized in Figure 1 below, demonstrating a relative decrease in correlation strength from group A to group C, and a comparable decrease from group C to group B.

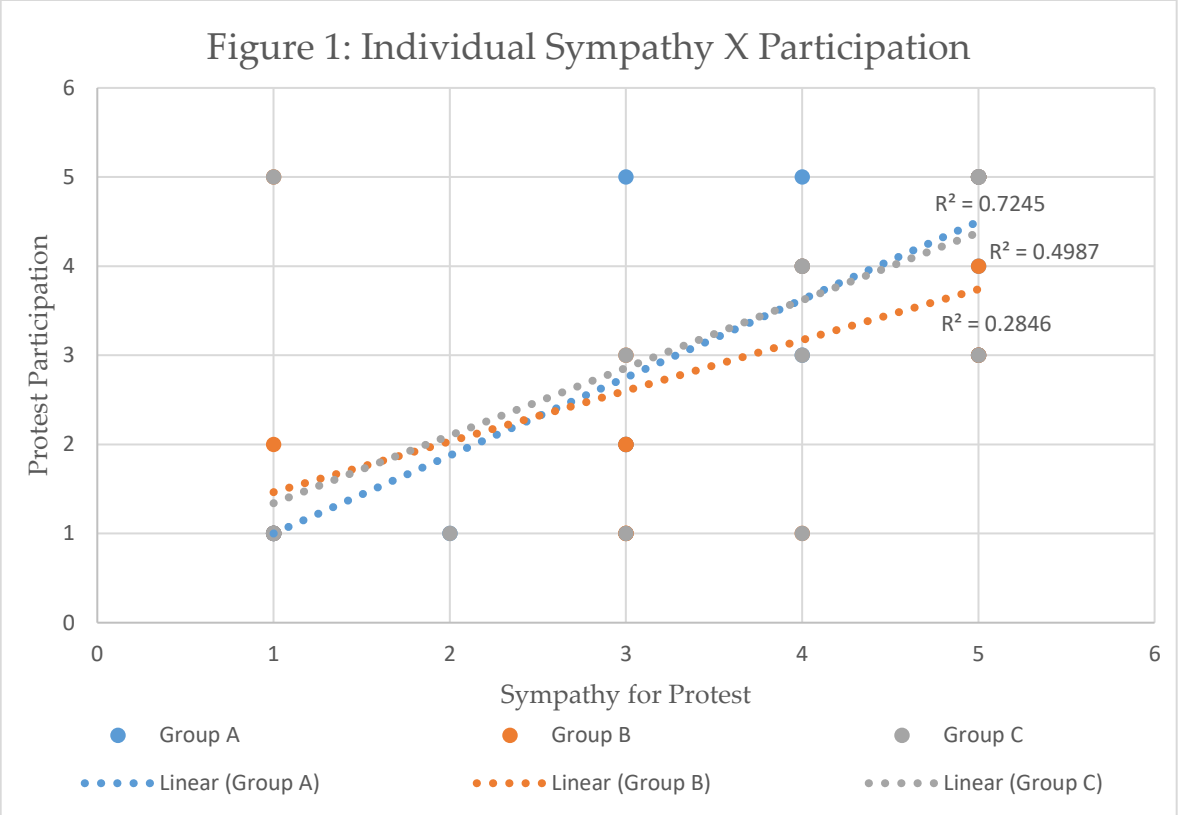


Figure 1 plots the 60 participants' individual responses, including a line of best fit and corresponding correlation value for each group, to compare predicted sympathy and participation. The line for group A demonstrates a strong correlation, with a small variance as sympathy levels increase. The line for group B demonstrates the least correlation, with both a higher level of estimated participation among participants of low sympathy and a lower level of estimated participation among highly sympathetic participants. The line for group C indicates a similar variance among participants of low sympathy, however as sympathy increases among group C the predicted protest participation for participants also increases, resulting in a correlation value between the other two groups. Because figure 1 displays the data through overall trend lines for each group, the display of broad data is at the expense of individual discrepancies, which may cancel out. As a study of social psychology with individuals as a unit

of analysis, it is necessary to investigate also individual variances in participants' predicted reactions.

**Table 3: Average Sympathy and Participation Discrepancy**

| Group A | Group B | Group C | >7 FH | 7-15 FH | <15 FH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.61 | 0.65 | 1.11 | 0.70 | 1.18 | 1.25 |

Table 3 indicates the average absolute difference between predicted sympathy and predicted protest participation among each group, and among participants in each category of time spent socializing outside of class. This table suggests that on an individual level, there is less correlation between sympathy and behavior than suggested in figure 1, particularly among participants of group C and among students who spend a great amount of time with friends outside of class.

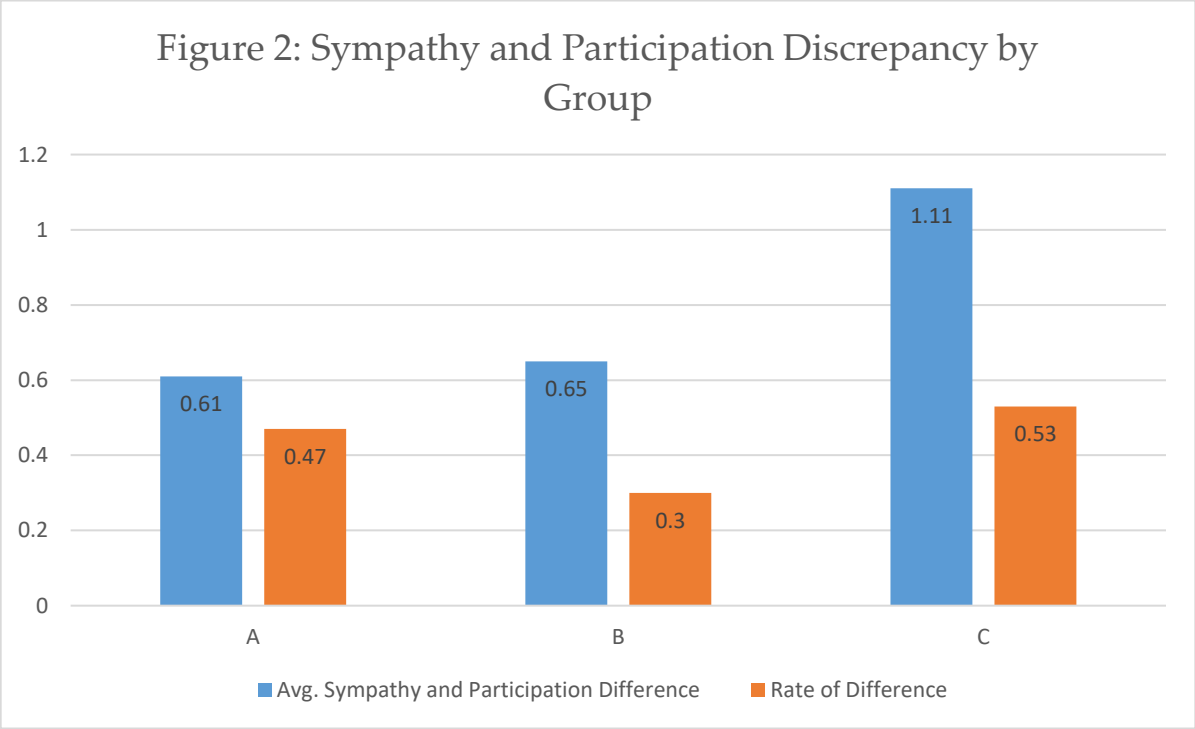


Figure 2 demonstrates how greatly the individual variances within group C contrast with groups A and B. While large outlying variances within group B may have skewed the overall

trend line, on average participants in groups A and B both report predicted participation rates that generally matched their predicted sympathy levels for the protest. Group B in particular is also shown to have comparatively few individuals who expressed a discrepancy in their predicted behavior, with only a 30% rate of difference compared to close to 50% for groups A and C. Within group B, those participants who predict a likely discrepancy in their behavior express a large contrast (2 or more) between sympathy and participation, which helps to explain the low correlation value from figure 1. By contrast, the average absolute difference for members of group C between predicted sympathy and predicted participation is greater than 1, and more than half of the members in group C express a predicted behavioral discrepancy. In other words, when faced with a scenario of low social desirability to join a protest, participants were more likely than not to indicate that the likelihood of their participation would not reflect their level of sympathy for the cause. In each group, individual discrepancies trended significantly toward a lower likelihood of participation than sympathy.

The average individual difference is not statistically significant at $p < .05$ between groups, meaning a null hypothesis that members of each group on average respond the same cannot be rejected.

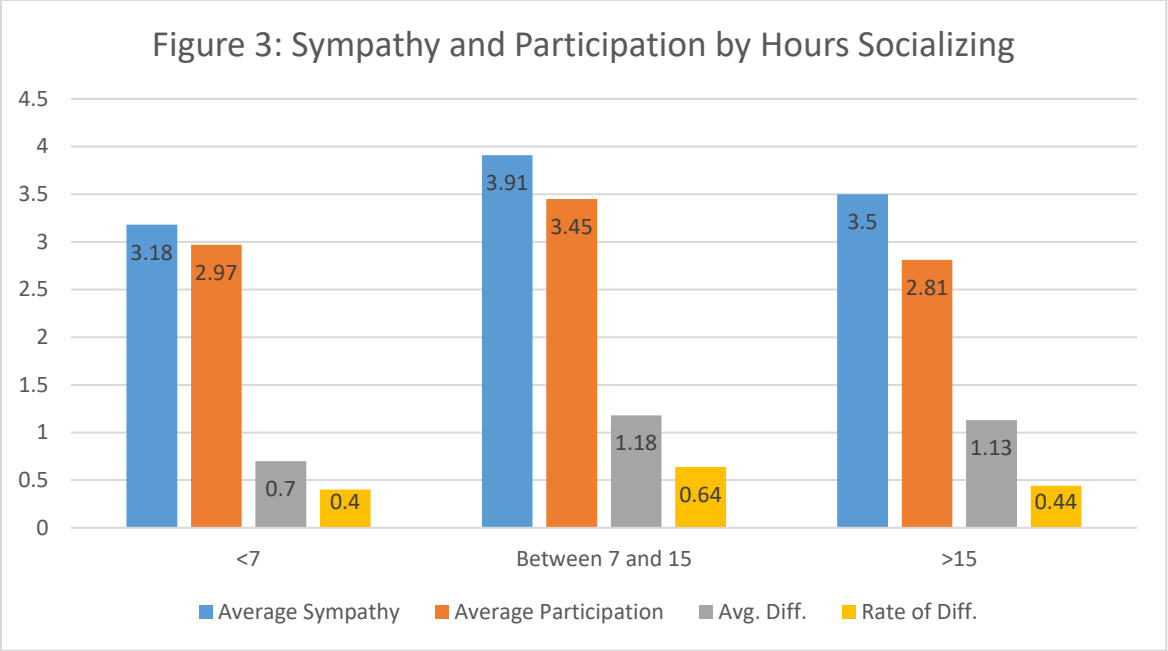


Figure 3 displays the responses of participants across all groups sorted by how social each individual participant is. Participants in each group indicated whether they spend on average less than seven, between seven and fifteen, or more than fifteen hours each week with their friends outside of class. The majority of participants self-identified themselves as spending less than seven hours each week voluntarily with friends (see Table 1). There is not a statistically significant or readily observable change between participants when compared across their social tendencies.

## Pooled Results

Interviewees unanimously agreed that social interactions and relationships define student experience and generally affect political engagement at the University of Jordan. However, the survey data suggests that most students spend less than seven hours a week with friends outside of class.

An observable difference exists between the responses of students placed in a situation of low social desirability to attend a protest and the responses of students offered higher levels of

social desirability. This finding is tangibly observable as an almost 50% decrease in average discrepancy (see Figure 2). This finding is supported by interviews conducted with students, protest organizers, and professors of psychology. While the change in survey data is not statistically significant, the two data sources together suggest that it is more likely valid than not. In other words, the data suggests that students' self-predicted attendance of a protest will most closely match their personal sympathies with said protest when they know that classmates or friends are attending.

Survey data from each group demonstrates that students who differ in their self-predicted sympathy and participation levels are likely to have higher levels of sympathy than participation. Survey data mirrors the experiences of interviewed students and activists in this aspect, who suggest that in general social barriers to engaging in a protest are stronger than social incentives to participate.

## Discussion

The vignette I used for this research illustrated a controversial occurrence, pitting traditional and religious values against modernization and economic factors. The goal was to create a realistic scenario that students consider and can imagine reacting to in realistic ways. Interview responses suggest that the scenario should work because casinos are an ongoing question and a consistent source of controversy in Jordan, and furthermore because youth often feel an internal conflict that leaves uncertain the degree to which they individually sympathize with casino building or protests of such projects. The survey data suggests that the scenario succeeded in eliciting honest individual responses because they average at slightly sympathetic and have a high standard deviation. In other words, the scenario is nuanced and believable enough for students to feel conflicted in their responses, and this conflict emerges in the data.

Students of each scenario group were on average less likely to attend a protest than they were sympathetic to one (see Table 2). This finding corroborates previous survey data of actual protest participation rates compared to political dissatisfaction in Jordan, and agrees with information on perceived barriers to participation mentioned by several interviewees. Self-estimated levels of participation are higher than actual participation levels, as prior research would indicate.

Students at the University of Jordan spend on average less than seven hours a week with their friends outside of class (see Table 1), however relationships and friendship bonds still define their lives as college students. The data suggests that, at least on an activism level, actual time spent with friends has no effect on behavior – individual discrepancy between sympathy and participation does not change (see Figure 3). One psychology professor suggests that social media might be taking the place of face to face interactions, so that time spent interacting with friends might actually be much higher on average. Whether or not this is true, it is clear from interviews that students at the University of Jordan *want* to be social, regardless of how social they actually are, and they feel social pressure as a result of this.

The major finding of my research derives from a combination of interview data and the survey data presented in Figure 2. I expected a scenario in which students were told that most other students would attend a protest to elicit the lowest rate of change among surveyed students. The survey data instead suggests that scenario B, in which students know only that some of their friends are planning to attend, creates the lowest rate of change among participants. In other words, students are most likely to behave in line with their personal sympathies when they know that they have friends attending the protest. Interviewed participants support this notion; students and activists acknowledge that they feel the strongest pull to attend events that they have friends

at, and an organizer suggests students who want to attend a protest often only will if they can find people they know personally going.

Surveyed students predicted that they would be 20% more likely to behave in line with their sympathies toward a protest when strong friendship bonds were isolated, as opposed to just knowledge of the number of people attending. This finding is not statistically significant, and so from the surveys alone a null hypothesis cannot be rejected. However, unanimous interview acknowledgement of the importance of friendship bonds among students suggests that this result is more likely true than not, and a lack of statistical significance at $p < 0.05$ can be attributed to a small sample size.

Knowing that many people will attend a protest as opposed to only a few reduces some discrepancy among students (see Figure 2). While nearly as many students in group A and group C exhibit some difference between their sympathy and predicted participation, the size of difference is on average much lower for students who know that many people will attend. However, while knowledge of high attendance helps to bring behavior somewhat more in line with student sympathies, it does not have the effect of reducing an absolute number of discrepancies that friendship bonds do. An organizer and multiple students interviewed corroborate and expand on this finding, explaining the social aspects of being with friends before and after a protest as well as the safety aspect of knowing who they can leave with should the protest turn violent.

The survey does not offer a control group – a group D in which no information about attendance is provided. I made the assumption that students, having heard of a protest via word of mouth, would realistically have some perception of peers attending. This is supported by student interviews and by observation of student rallies during my time at the University of

Jordan. However, without a control group the effect of perceived peer pressure can only be compared in varying degrees. The data does not suggest whether or not the addition of any knowledge of peer movements bears on affect, and instead keeps the existence of some knowledge of peers constant across all three groups.

Following collective action theory, we can expect that personal preferences for participation in a protest will generally differ from personal sympathies toward that protest. The theoretical model of increased peer pressure as a solution to a collective action problem suggests that as peer pressure increases, personal sympathies should increasingly equal personal intention to participate. The combined survey and interview data presented here suggests that perceived peer pressure from relationship and friendship bonds creates some incentive to join collective actions.

## Limitations and Recommendations

The greatest limitation for my research was in time; the parameters of the project required all research and analysis to be completed in four weeks only, so the number and diversity of people surveyed and interviewed was severely limited. My research only surveyed students at a single university in Jordan, and the sample was too small to find statistical significance from the survey. Having a small sample size also restricted the scope of the vignette universe to three, meaning I could only examine one factor. Surveyed students were mostly urban, from Amman, and overwhelmingly Muslim. While this may represent the majority of students at the University of Jordan, it does not represent all or even most student identities, and a more diverse sample of students would offer more comprehensive results. My lack of Arabic fluency limited me to only interviewing people in English, restricting Arabic speaking activists and organizers (among others) from the scope of my interviews.

This survey should be carried out on a larger scale, with a more diverse and comprehensive population of students, before concluding any concrete statistical findings. With a large enough sample size, a fourth test should be included in the survey in which no information is added indicating the people planning to attend, to examine the degree to which providing any information at all shifts participants' responses.

More interviews should be carried out, with participants of each survey group in addition to more university students. More protest organizers, activists, and people experienced with protest culture in Jordan should be interviewed with possible. It is also necessary to interview people uninterested in politics in Jordan and unwilling to attend protest movements, in order to gain as many perspectives on the topic as possible.

This research is based on the assumption that individual people can be understood as rational actors, and that they respond to particular individual motivators through personal cost/benefit analysis. This assumption itself is far from universally accepted, and as noted by Somers, research assuming this theory can be self-biased toward reinforcing its own theoretical framework. Any conclusions drawn from this or similar data should be read and interpreted accordingly, and accepted with the caution and acknowledgement that significant further work must be done before the theory's utility is proven.

## Conclusion

Perceived peer pressure influences the behavior of Jordanian students in protest. Data gathered through a mixed-methods approach of interviews and factorial surveys suggests that Jordanian students change their *intended* behavior based on their knowledge of the actions of their peers. The observed effect is only noteworthy with regard to close friends.

In a survey investigating student intention to join a hypothetical protest, knowledge of the attendance of close friends resulted in a 20% increase in students expressing an equal level of sympathy for the protest and intention or likelihood to take part in it. These results are supported by interviews of students, psychologists, and protest organizers.

Peer pressure, in the sense of this research, is not pressure to act in contrast to an individual's preferred action, but rather is an incentive to change individual preferences in action. Collective action theory assumes that people acknowledge the benefit of a collective action, but do not have the right individual incentives to motivate their own participation. Peer pressure, as theorized by Homans, Höllander, and Kandel and Lazear, creates an incentive to participate that fulfills an individual's social desires. The empirically demonstrated strength of social desires suggests that, if a perceived social benefit exists, it is enough to motivate action.

My analysis of responses from students at the University of Jordan suggests that peer pressure stemming from friendship bonds has a small but non-negligible effect. Knowledge of friends participating in a protest did *not* motivate more students to mark an intention to participate when it was not in line with their sympathies. Nor did friendship bonds create a higher level of sympathy for the protest than simple knowledge of the students attending. However, the friendship bonds did encourage students to mark intention to participate more in line with their sympathies. This finding, though not statistically significant on its own, observably supports the theory of peer pressure as an addition to collective action theory. The results suggest that when students believe in the cause of a protest, knowledge of their friends' attendance provides the necessary motivator to overcome their rational choice barrier to participate. Interviews explain that this motivator provides both a social incentive and the classic incentive of a reduction in perceived personal risk. Students feel safer attending protests with

friends, and are likely to pick where they participate based on who they know will also go. In this way, a student protest culture is formed and sustained by webs of interpersonal bonds between potential individual participants.

To this point, literature investigating the ongoing youth-led social movements throughout the Middle East has by and large ignored the social desires of the youths involved. The research presented here provides two critical takeaways. First, social desires are a critical aspect of why people behave the way they do, as observed through the responses of Jordanian youths. Any attempt to truly understand events in the Middle East without addressing the social desires of and social pressures upon individuals is failing to acknowledge the nuanced social lives that participants in these movements have. A social psychological approach, which places individual actors as the unit of observation, is necessary to understanding the evolution of contemporary movements in Jordan and throughout the Middle East. Second, this research provides some of the first empirical support to Höllander's proposed collective action solution. By demonstrating the non-negligible effect of social desires on intended Jordanian student behavior, this research suggests that Olson's initial theory of collective action insufficiently accounts for the existence of social desires that factor into an individual's cost/benefit analysis for cooperation. The research suggests that any equation of individual decision calculus for participation in a social movement should include the perception of peer pressure from friends as a unique contributing factor.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Interview Informed Consent (English Version)

**Informed Consent Form**

SIT Study Abroad
a program of World Learning

**Effect of Perceived Peer Pressure on the Political Activism of Jordanian Students**

**Jordan Hughes, Washington University in St. Louis**

School for International Training—Jordan: Geopolitics, International Relations, and the Future of the Middle East

1. The purpose of this study is to measure the extent to which social desirability and peer effect the political participation of university students in Jordan.

2. **Rights Notice**
**If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview.** Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.
   a. ***Privacy*** - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

   b. ***Anonymity*** - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.

   c. ***Confidentiality*** - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

3. **Instructions:**

*Please read the following statements carefully and mark your preferences where indicated. Signing below indicates your agreement with all statements and your voluntary participation in the study. Signing below while failing to mark a preference where indicated will be interpreted as an affirmative preference. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions regarding this consent form.*

I am aware that this interview is conducted by an independent undergraduate researcher with the goal of producing a descriptive case study on the social context of political participation in Jordan

I am aware that the information I provide is for research purposes only. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study.

I am aware that I have the right to full anonymity upon request, and that upon request the researcher will omit all identifying information from both notes and drafts.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any question and to terminate my participation at any time, and that the researcher will answer any questions I have about the study.

I am aware of and take full responsibility for any risk, physical, psychological, legal, or social, associated with participation in this study.

I am aware that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study, but a copy of the final study will be made available to me upon request.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use my name and position in the final study.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use my organizational affiliation in the final study.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use data collected in this interview in a later study.

**Date:**
_____

**Participant's Signature:**
_____

**Participant's Printed Name:**
_____

**Researcher's Signature:**
_____

***Thank you for participating!***

*Questions, comments, complaints, and requests for the final written study can be directed to:*
Dr. Ashraf F. Alqudah: (962) 0785422478 ; ashraf.alqudah@sit.edu

**Appendix B: Standard Interview Questions**

Theme – Casino Controversy

What are your understandings of popular perception of casinos in Jordan?

Would people care if a casino were built in their town? Would they care enough to protest? Would they care enough to leave?

Theme – Youth Cultural Affiliations

To what extent do traditional, tribal, and Islamic regulations play a role in the everyday lives of young people?

Do young people in Jordan feel a sense of conflict between traditional and progressive values in everyday life in Jordan?

Theme – Student social and participation dynamics

To what extent do relationships among students play into their perceptions of politics?

Do Jordanian students tend to express strong political opinions? For which issues?

Regarding students who do attend protests and demonstrations - in your experience do they typically have a high degree of knowledge around the issues they're protesting? What are the social dynamics among students within protest movements?

What do you think it would take for students to become more politically active?

**Appendix C: Combined Survey Forms A, B, and C (English)**

Please read the below scenario and respond as honestly as possible

The government of Jordan has decided that building a five-star hotel in Ajloun will be a public benefit, increasing foreign investment in the area and adding to the visibility of Ajloun's natural attractions. The hotel will employ 100 people. It will also include a casino and is likely to serve alcohol. The government has bought land in the governorate for the project. Several local businesses have brought the matter to court, making the case that the project is not in fact a benefit for the people of Ajloun. They believe the hotel will limit their own economic vitality at the same time as degrading Jordanian culture and values. The court has not yet issued a ruling for the case.

You hear that a local action to protest is being organized, and read the statement of one of the organizers. He is calling on youth and college students to protest the move by leaving classes to have a public demonstration of protest. After discussing with your friends you learn that [a majority of students / some of your friends / very few people] at the university will participate in the protest.

Please indicate your support for the march on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not at all sympathetic and 5 is highly sympathetic to the march.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Please indicate your likelihood to participate in the march on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not at all willing to go and 5 is confident you would participate.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.