

The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities

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Abstract

The Arab Spring has been described as a youth rebellion driven by grievances about unemployment and dissatisfaction with existing regimes. In this article, we assess these claims by examining the characteristics of the current youth generation in the Arab world in comparison with earlier cohorts. We find that some of the conventional assumptions about this generation—that they are less religious, more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to protest—are true, but others—that they are more supportive of secularization, more interested in politics, and more dissatisfied with their regimes—should be reconsidered. Using the first wave of the Arab Barometer survey, we discuss how patterns of political attitudes and behavior vary across cohorts, and cast doubt upon the claim that the Arab Spring was the result of an angry youth cohort that was especially opposed to the old regimes.

Keywords

Arab Spring, revolution, democracy, youth, regimes

In the wake of the Arab Spring, analysts and casual observers alike are wondering about the character of the activists who have brought down regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, and are threatening to do so in others. The popular media has painted these uprisings as youth revolutions, in which young citizens—perhaps aided by social media—took to the streets in opposition to oppressive regimes. The sources driving youth discontent in the region are multifaceted. They range from frustration with economic conditions, to opposition to the political status quo, to a lack of a sense of efficacy in general. What is not clear, however, is to what extent the youth population is distinct from other cohorts across societies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In other words, do the youth populations in the Arab region feel

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less at ease with the status quo than their older counterparts? And if so, are they more likely to protest and demonstrate as a result of these grievances? Answering these questions will shed important light on the recent cycle of protests across the Arab world.

Current coverage of the events in the region attributes the growing grievances of a youth bulge without adequate employment as a major source of the tension and disillusionment of the youth. Ragui Assaad, for example, argues that the growing youth movement is particularly disenchanting: “the region is facing a demographic bulge in which youth aged fifteen to twenty-nine comprise the largest proportion of the population. These young people, frustrated with the lack of jobs, have been at the forefront of anti-government protests.”² Assaad goes on to say, “So, demographics, simply by having a larger number of people who are very frustrated at their inability to turn their education into productive jobs, has really exacerbated the problems.”

In essence, scholars argue that the youth population has been awoken. Once considered a passive agent in the political sphere, the events of the Arab Spring have galvanized this new-found youth momentum. Rami Khoury says about the youth population that was once passive: “Today, they have sparked and manned one of the most important historical transformations anywhere in the world in modern history.”³

The Youth Population in the Arab World

The youth population in the Arab world is growing expeditiously. Sixty percent of the region’s people are under 30, twice the percent of North America.⁴ Thirty percent of the population is between the ages of 14 and 24.⁵ More than half of the people in the Arab world today are under the age of 25.⁶ Not only

²) Ragui Assaad, “Demographics of Arab Protests,” interview with Council on Foreign Relations, 14 February 2011, <http://www.cfr.org/egypt/demographics-arab-protests/p24096>.

³) UNICEF, *A Generation on the Move: Insights into the Conditions, Aspirations and Activism of Arab Youth* (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs, 2011).

⁴) Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Projections for 2010-2030,” 27 January 2011, <http://www.pewforum.org/The-Future-of-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx>.

⁵) USAID, “USAID Convenes Conference for Arab Youth Development,” press release, 14 November 2011, <http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2011/pr111114.html>.

⁶) Mounira Chaeib, “Young in the Arab World: Lebanon,” *BBC World Service*, 8 February 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/documentary_archive/4559765.stm.

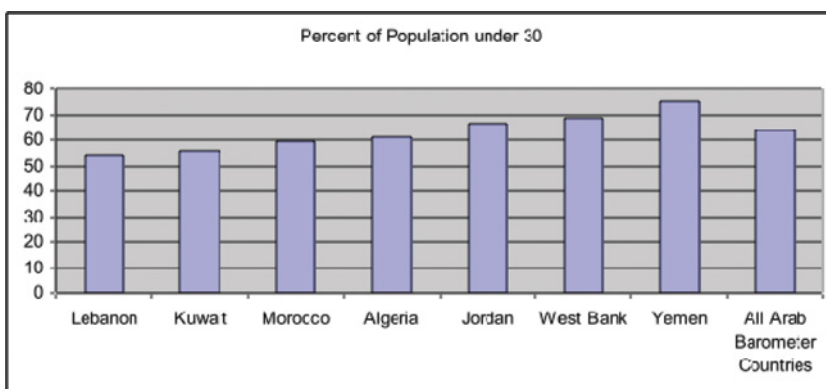


Figure 1 Percent of Population under 30 in Arab World

Source: World Bank.

is the youth bulge high in the Middle East, it is the second highest in the world—second only to sub-Saharan Africa.

Unemployment is rampant in MENA, and the rate of unemployment is four times as high for young people compared to others: “North Africa and the Middle East have the highest regional rates of joblessness in the world.”⁷ In MENA, there has been a consistent rise in the number of unemployed since 1996. Estimates suggest that about 500,000 additional people in MENA are unemployed each year.⁸ Further exacerbating the problem is that for new entrants, the unemployment rate is much higher.⁹ Youth unemployment rates are as high as 80% in some areas.¹⁰ Few can travel; emigration is just a frustrating dream.¹¹ It is no surprise that a recent study found that about 70% of youth in the Arab world wanted to leave the region.¹²

⁷ Ellen Knickmeyer, “The Arab World’s Youth Army,” *Foreign Policy*, 27 January 2011.

⁸ Nimrod Raphaeli, “Unemployment in the Middle East – Causes and Consequences,” *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 10 February 2006.

⁹ Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin and Ismihan Kilicarslan, “An Analysis of the Unemployment in Selected MENA Countries and Turkey,” *Journal of Third World Studies* 25:2 (2008): 189-205.

¹⁰ Jack Shenker et al., “Young Arabs Who Can’t Wait to Throw off Shackles of Tradition,” *The Guardian*, 14 February 2011.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Gavriel Queenann, “Report: 70% of Arab Youth Want to Leave Region,” *Arutz Sheva*, 16 November 2011.

Alongside these economic concerns, the youth population is also quite frustrated with the political circumstances present in the region. The lack of freedoms and abundance of political oppression has left a potentially dynamic youth population feeling rather sullen.¹³ The youth objected to the repression exercised by regimes in their countries and their inability to express their political and social opinions openly. Many have argued that this frustration is the reason why social media has been such an important instrument for this youth population. Crucially, social media allows these youth to overcome and bypass political repression. Growing up being told that they could trust no one, social media allowed the youth population to come together in meaningful ways.¹⁴ Some estimates put the number of new users at 100 million. In Tunisia, it was reported that 20% of the youth population use Facebook. To circumvent the government's censorship, finger-length memory sticks were used to permit users to log on anonymously. The youth movements distributed these memory sticks. Soon enough, these youth groups were able to create secret cyber communities away from the eyes of the authorities.¹⁵ Facebook certainly played an important role as Egyptians monitored the death of Khalid Said, and over three million users in Morocco have now joined the social networking site. Thus, the youth population appears to be highly engaged in political and social affairs.

Not only has the youth population been portrayed as frustrated with economic and political conditions, but during the events of the Arab Spring it has also been portrayed as more liberal, less religious, and more supportive of secular politics. In fact, the coverage of the riots and protests made a concerted effort to distinguish between the protestors and the usual suspects. "Rather than the Arab world's usual suspects—bearded Islamists or jaded leftists—it is the young people, angry at the lack of economic opportunity available to them, who are risking their lives going up against police forces."¹⁶ But the main point is that under the old order, despotism and Islamism fed on each other. There is nothing to lament about the passing of this perverse symbiosis. Rather, there is a lot to celebrate given that in the young, dynamic middle classes of an awakening Arab world there are, against all odds, democrats

¹³) Shenker et al., "Young Arabs."

¹⁴) *Ibid.*

¹⁵) *Ibid.*

¹⁶) Knickmeyer, "The Arab World's Youth Army."

with whom to democratize.¹⁷ John Esposito, in a CNN op-ed, writes that the current wave of demonstrations was led by youth who were disillusioned with the “failures of Islamist authoritarian regimes in Sudan, Iran, the Taliban’s Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia.”¹⁸ He maintains that the youth population was not interested in theocracy, but rather in democracy.¹⁹

The Arab Youth: How Different are they From Other Cohorts?

Juxtaposed with the above accounts are also patterns that may indicate that the youth are not necessarily different from earlier cohorts. Although the youth have more access to the Internet than their older counterparts, Internet access for youth in the region is still quite low in comparative perspective.²⁰ Further, researchers have found that the youth (18–24) tend to identify closely with traditional, religious, and familial ties.²¹ For example, the youth in Jordan still identify strongly with the army and the police over independent media, while the Lebanese youth demonstrate tight sectarian attachments.²²

In fact, new studies have shown that although the youth are a vibrant source of change, their messages lack coherence and direction. Just before the Tunisian elections, for example, the youth showed a lack of organization and involvement. A recent survey conducted by the International Foundation of Electoral Services revealed that only 38% of Tunisian youth aged 18–24 correctly identified the purpose of their next election: to choose an assembly to write the constitution.²³

¹⁷ David Gardner, “Arab Youth Steps in Where Islamism Failed,” *Financial Times*, 10 July 2011.

¹⁸ John Esposito, “Arab Youth Want Democracy, Not Theocracy,” *CNN*, 28 February 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-28/opinion/protests.democracy.islam_1_islamists-arab-youth-islamic?_s=PM:OPINION.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The World Bank’s figures on Internet usage suggest that in 2010, the Arab World was still lagging behind the global average in terms of internet users per capita by about 13%.

²¹ UNICEF, *A Generation on the Move*.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Sara Sorcher, “Arab Youth Still Want Change, But Won’t Be Politicians,” *National Journal*, 4 August 2011.

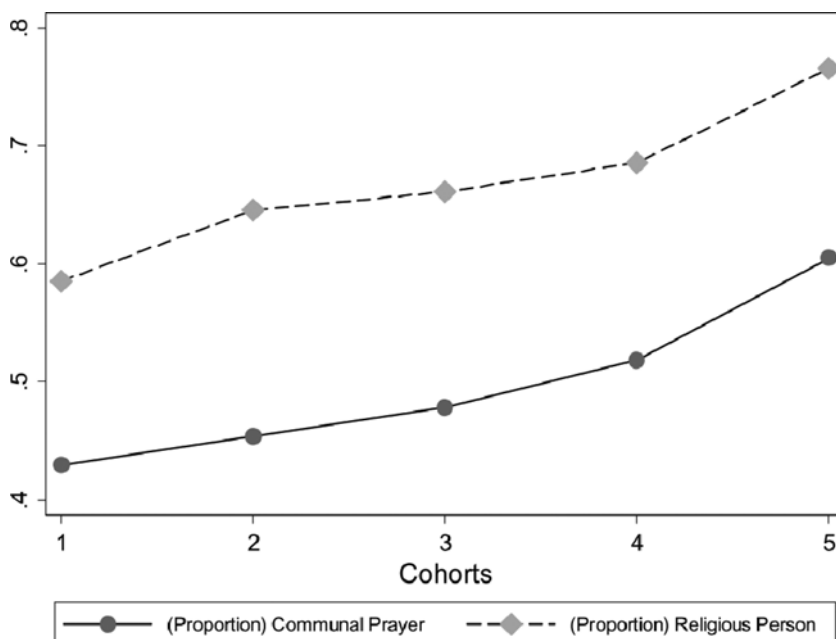
Thus, on the one hand the youth population has been portrayed as highly engaged, involved politically, upset about economic conditions, and distancing itself from existing forms of opposition movements—namely Islamists. How true are these classifications? Fortunately, it is possible to characterize the younger generations in the Arab world and compare them to others through cross-national survey data. The Arab Barometer provides the best source of data on political attitudes in the Arab world, and allows us to observe changes in both political outlook and behavior across age groups. The character of the Arab Spring revolutionaries dictates what types of questions we ought to be asking, for if these revolutions were truly driven by the young generations, we might expect that the results of these revolutions will move in lockstep with the attitudes of these young citizens themselves. If the current generation of Arab citizens closely resembles older generations, then we might not expect them to differ greatly in their political outcomes; but if differences emerge between birth cohorts, then it is conceivable that these revolutions—if responsive to the protesters—could lead to significant political change.

Reconsidering the Role of Youth in the Arab Spring

In the following analysis, Birth Cohort is divided into five categories. The youngest cohort is labeled cohort **1**, including respondents between the ages of 18 and 24. Cohort **2** covers ages 25–34, **3** covers ages 35–44, **4** covers ages 45–54, and **5** covers ages 55 and above.

First, it is useful to consider potential modernization effects. One of the main hypotheses of mainstream modernization theory is that as countries modernize, individuals will tend to become less religious. In the Arab world, this trend seems to be present. Figure 2 depicts the proportion of people in each birth cohort who identify as a religious person and who participate in communal prayer. This figure suggests considerable cohort differences. Among the youngest cohort, less than 60% of respondents identify themselves as “religious,” compared to nearly 80% for the oldest cohort. A similar trend exists in communal religious practice. Just above 40% of the youngest generation participates in communal worship, while the corresponding figure for the oldest generation is about 60%.

Other evidence for a modernization-type process is also present in the data. Figure 3 plots the proportion of college-educated and unemployed individuals by cohort. As expected, there is a linear downward trend in likelihood of

Supposition #1: Youth Population is Less Religious than Other Cohorts*Figure 2* Religiosity, by Cohort

college education with older age, with the exception of the youngest cohort, many of whom are simply not old enough to have earned a college degree yet. Perhaps more interesting is the unemployment trend. A popular theory of youth mobilization in the Arab world attributes the recent protests to high unemployment among young people—unemployment creates grievances that motivate anti-government mobilization and also reduces the opportunity cost of protest.²⁴ Although it is impossible to infer causality from these results, the data support the notion that younger Arabs are much more likely to be unemployed. Indeed, the youngest generation is nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as compared to middle age groups.

²⁴ International Labour Organization, “Youth unemployment in the Arab world is a major cause for rebellion,” 5 April 2011, http://www.ilo.org/rome/risorse-informative/per-la-stampa/comunicati-stampa/WCMS_154078/lang--en/index.htm.

Supposition #2: Youth Population More Educated and Less Employed

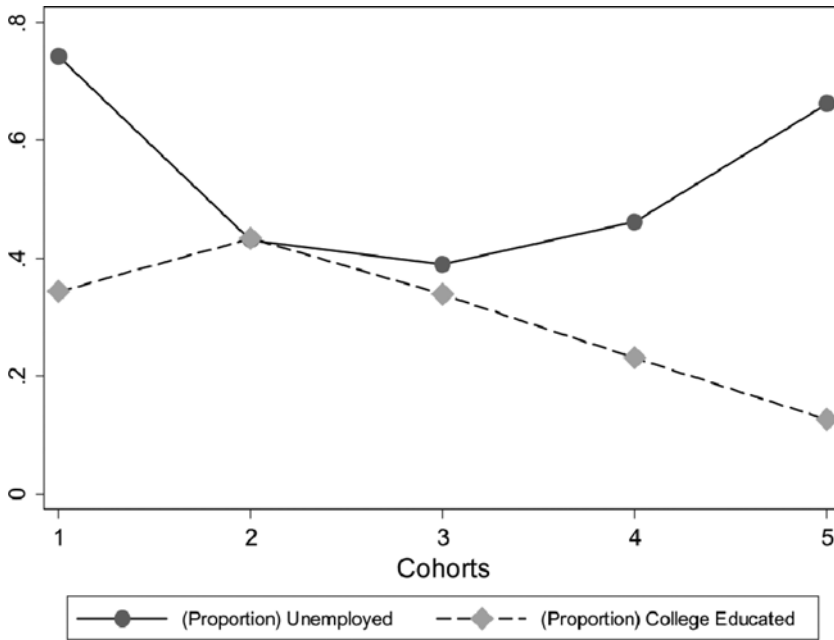


Figure 3 Education and Unemployment, by Cohort

We have yet to observe, however, how these social and economic changes translate into political attitudes. It is feasible that the lower levels of religiosity among younger Arabs could be associated with greater calls for secularization and a rejection of religious involvement in politics. Since younger individuals score lower on average in both belief and practice, we might expect that these same individuals will tend to call for separation of religion and state, tolerance for other religions, and moves toward secular law. Figure 4, however, presents patterns in contrast with this expectation. Rather than promoting secularization and tolerance, younger generations are *more* likely to support Islamic law and *less* likely to say that they would be comfortable living near neighbors of other religions. It is evident that the decreases in personal piety associated with younger age groups have *not* translated into more secular or tolerant political attitudes.

Despite decreases in average individual religiosity, religion remains an important political identity. Figure 5 shows that younger individuals are, in

Supposition #3: Youth Population Less Likely to Support Political Islam

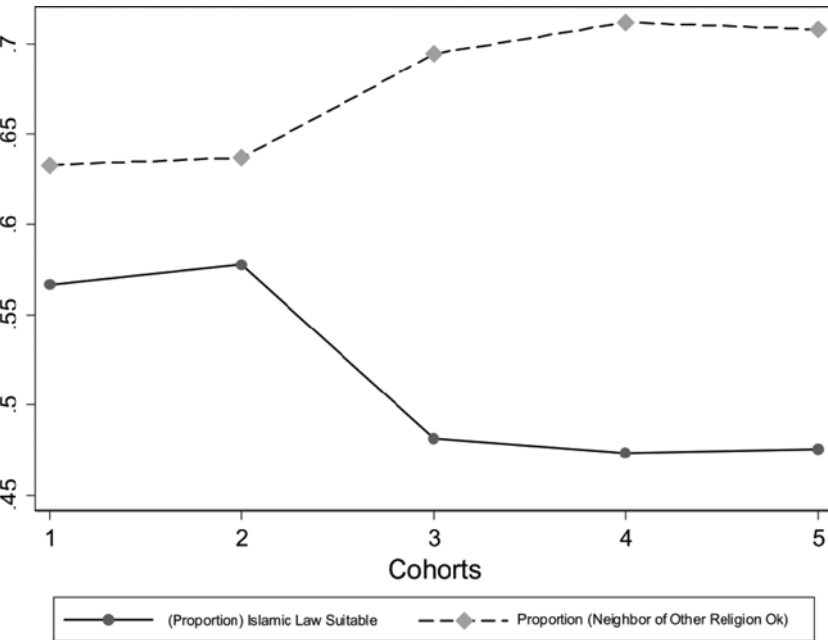


Figure 4 Support for Religious Law and Religious Tolerance, by Cohort

fact, *more* likely to identify themselves primarily as “Muslim” rather than as citizens of country *X* or as an Arab. Taken together, these trends suggest that piety does not necessarily move in harmony with a religious political identity. Younger generations are at the same time more Muslim and less Muslim than their predecessors. Although the political consequences of these attitudinal shifts are somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that analysts should not interpret decreases in religious belief or practice as indicative of a decline in the importance of religion—Islam specifically—in public life.

How do these changes in both socioeconomic attributes and political attitudes relate to changes in political behavior? Younger generations appear to participate in politics in more informal ways. Figure 6 demonstrates that the youngest generation is around 50% more likely to participate in protests than is the oldest generation, but substantially less likely to vote. These findings lend some support—at least impressionistically—to the image

Supposition #4: Youth Population Less Likely to Identify as Muslim

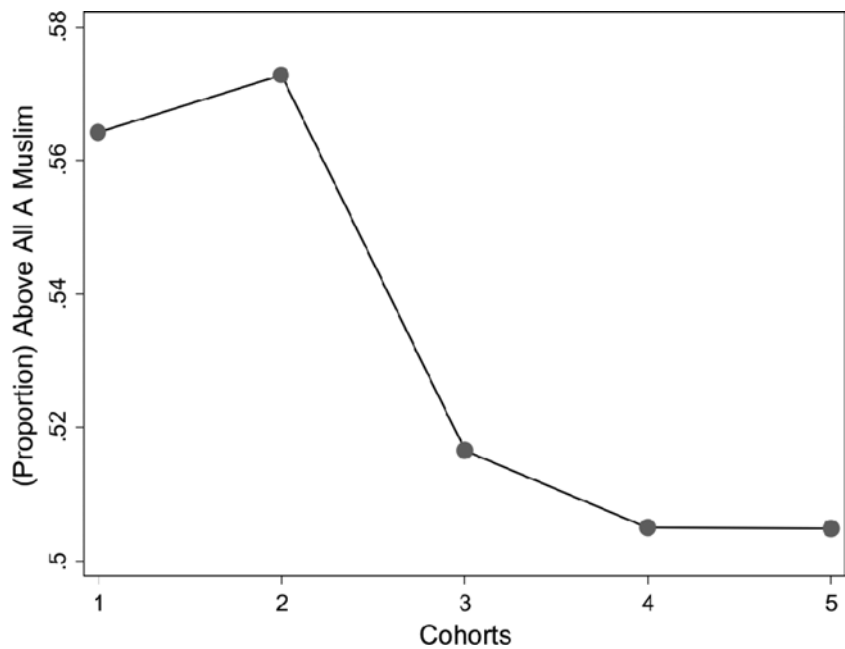


Figure 5 Muslim Identity, by Cohort

of the Arab Spring as a youth-based phenomenon. At the same time, it is important to consider that these surveys were all conducted several years in advance of the Arab Spring. Even before the recent spate of demonstrations, 30% of the youngest generation of Arabs had participated in organized protest. In this sense, the Arab Spring can be viewed as the culmination of a process that had *already begun*; even several years before the fall of Ben Ali, younger Arabs were protesting in greater numbers than in earlier generations.

Figure 7 shows that in general, attitudes towards the regime remain fairly flat across cohorts. In general, the average citizen’s satisfaction with the government (as measured on a ten-point scale) does not vary widely across cohorts. Interestingly, the youngest cohort is slightly *more* satisfied with the government on average than are middle cohorts.

Figure 8 displays a surprising result: the youngest generation, on average, is *more* likely than other cohorts to believe both that leaders care about ordinary

Supposition #5: Youth Population Less Likely to Participate Politically

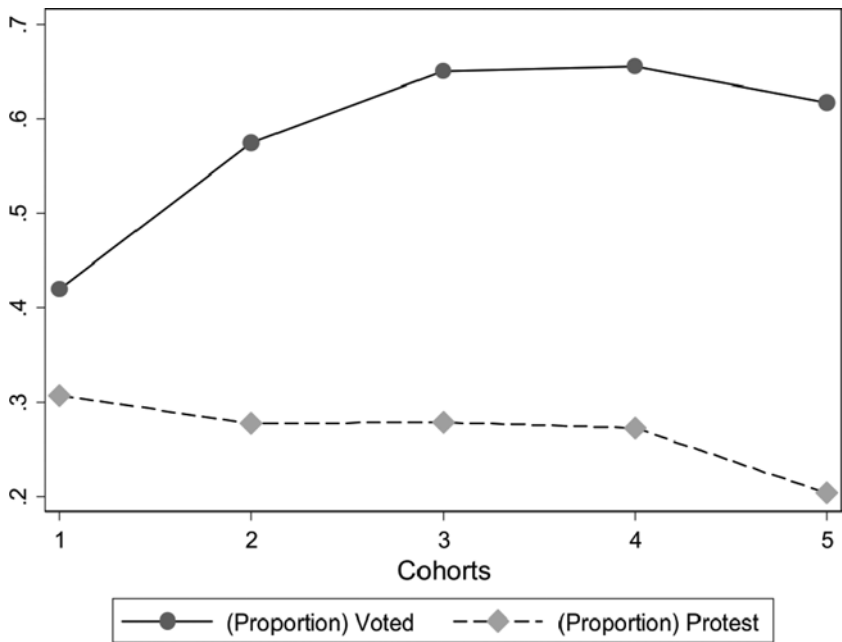


Figure 6 Political Participation, by Cohort

citizens and that the government creates conditions that allow for prospering. Contrary to the common image of youth populations in general—and the Arab youth specifically—younger citizens in the Arab world are *more* sympathetic to their leaders, at least in terms of their evaluations of those leaders' choices.

Figure 9 shows that a similar trend is noticeable in the area of economic conditions. Despite their high level of unemployment, the Arab youth are *more* satisfied with the current economic conditions of their countries and *more* optimistic that conditions will improve in the coming years than the other four cohorts. If deteriorating economic conditions led to a youth-led revolt in the Arab Spring, as is commonly asserted, then attitudes toward these conditions must have changed sharply and rapidly in the few years prior to the Arab Spring. As of the time in which the first wave of the Arab Barometer was conducted, the youth population was substantially *happier* with their countries' economic conditions than were older generations.

Supposition #6: Youth Population Less Satisfied with Government

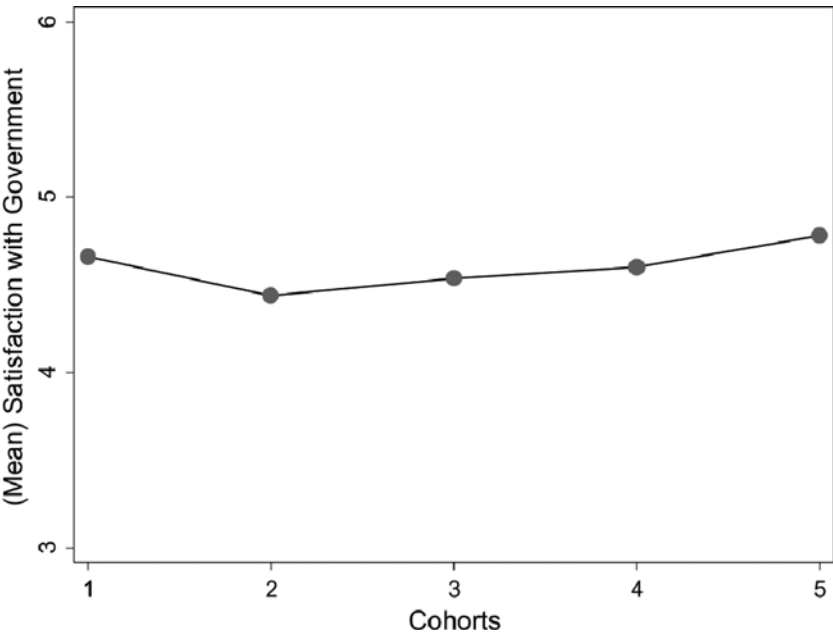


Figure 7 Satisfaction with Government, by Cohort

Figure 10 reveals a nearly monotonic decrease in interest in politics across age cohorts: younger generations are, on average, much less interested in politics than are older citizens. This finding is consistent with the observation that younger citizens are substantially less likely to vote in elections. The Arab Spring, then, poses a puzzle: what caused a fairly uninterested group of citizens to revolt, if indeed these revolts were primarily a youth-driven phenomenon? Clearly, if the Arab Spring was brought about by the youth, something must have occurred that substantially raised their interest in politics.

Figure 11 demonstrates that the youngest cohort understands democracy in largely the same way as older cohorts. The youngest generation is slightly more likely than others to believe that elections are the primary characteristic of democracy, but this difference is minimal and not statistically significant.

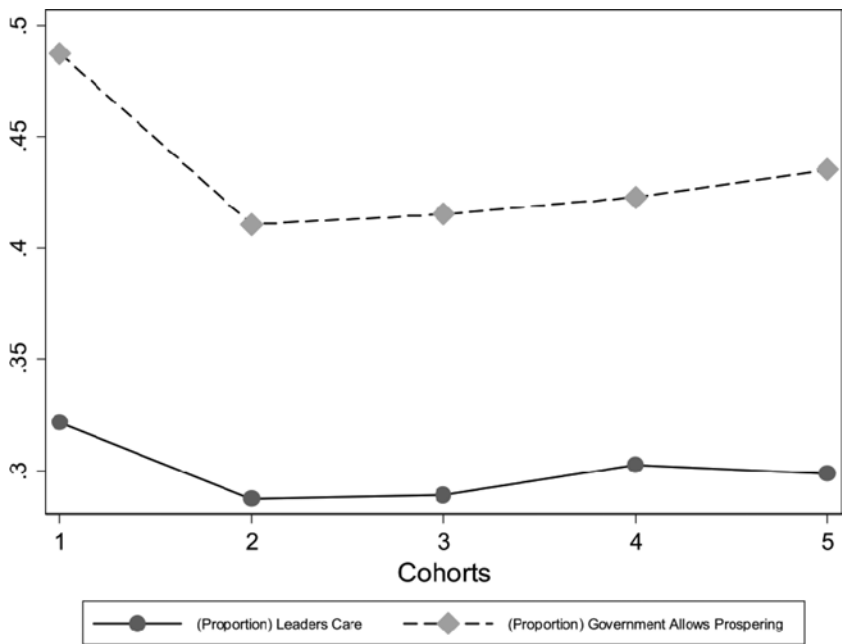


Figure 8 Attitudes toward Government, by Cohort

Likewise, the youth cohort is somewhat more likely to view democracy as a mechanism for income equality, but the effect is minimal. The only area in which the youth view democracy differently from others is in the question of providing basic necessities: the youngest cohort is less likely to view democracy as primarily a provider of basic necessities. This difference is perhaps attributable to the rise in living conditions in the region over time.

Basic Models

In this section, we examine two dependent variables more carefully. The first is protest and the second is support for political Islam. In particular, we are interested in seeing what factors were most likely to structure protest before the Arab Spring, and what factors were most important for determining levels of support for political Islam. In both models, we pay particular attention to the role of the youth.

Supposition #7: Youth Population Less Satisfied with Economic Situation

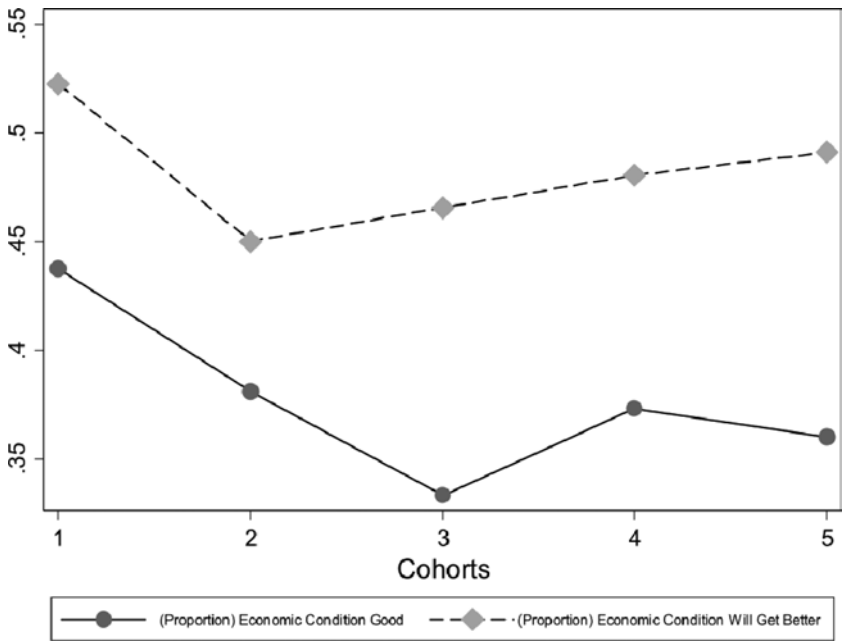


Figure 9 Economic Evaluations, by Cohort

In analyzing protest trends, some interesting patterns emerge. Table 1 presents the results of three logistic regressions where the dependent variable is scored as a 1 if the respondent had participated in at least one protest during the previous three years. All models include country fixed effects (not reported) to account for any differences that might shift one country up or down, on average, on the dependent variable. In all three models, the coefficient estimate on the “Youngest” variable (which is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the respondent is in the youngest of the five cohorts) is highly significant and positive. This result holds up even when we include variables measuring unemployment status, college education, and their interaction. Contrary to what might be expected, unemployment does not seem to be driving protest (though this finding does not necessarily mean that unemployment was not a key factor in motivating protests during the Arab Spring). In fact, the “unemployed” variable is *negatively* associated with protest in each

Supposition #8: Youth Population More Engaged in Politics

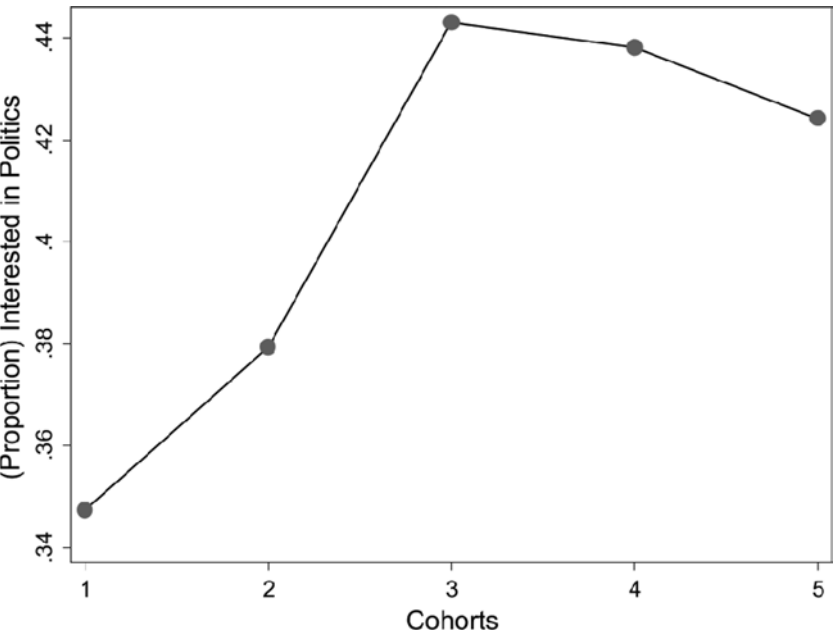


Figure 10 Interest in Politics, by Cohort

model. College education, as expected, is positive and significant in each model, but the interaction of the variables “College Educated” and “Unemployed” yields a negative coefficient estimate in model 3. Based on these data, it does *not* appear that unemployed college graduates are the most likely to protest. However, protest does appear to be a youth-driven phenomenon, even when controlling for factors such as education, income, and unemployment status.

Table 2 presents the results of several regressions involving support for political Islam and Islamic law. The dependent variable in model 1 is a dummy variable indicating that the respondent believes that Islamic law is suitable for his/her country. In models 2 and 3, the dependent variable is a composite scale of support for political Islam, which is composed of three questions: the “Islamic law suitable” question in model 1, a religious tolerance question, and a question about support for laws only based on Shari’a (see appendix for details).

Supposition #9: Youth Population Understands Democracy to Be Something Different

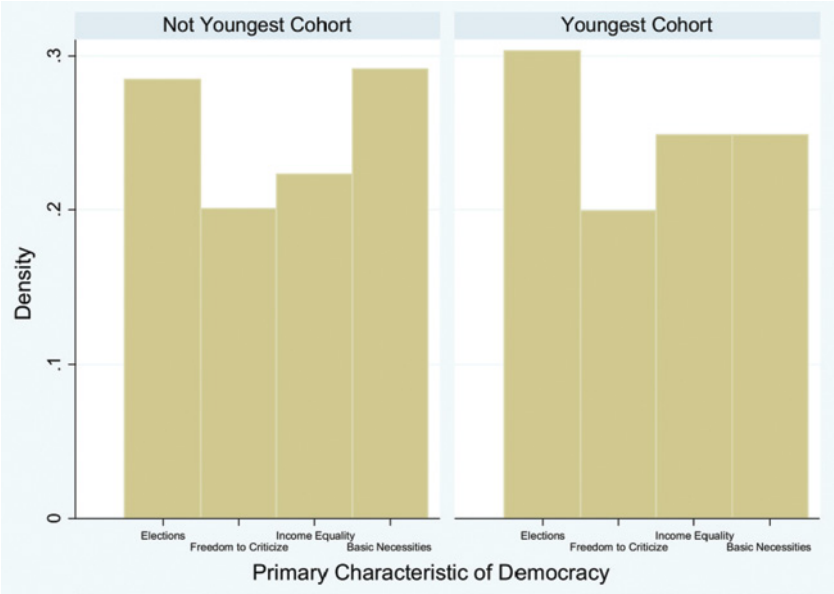


Figure 11 Primary Characteristic of Democracy, by Cohort

The results in Table 2 suggest that the youngest cohort is substantially more supportive of political Islam, on average, than other cohorts. This finding contrasts with modernization-style hypotheses, which claim that younger generations will become increasingly tolerant, liberal, and secular compared to their older counterparts. Despite the fact that the young generation is less religious on average than its predecessors, it is more supportive of both Islamic law and political Islam in general. Unsurprisingly, Internet usage and especially college education mitigate this effect—higher scores on each of these variables are associated with lower levels of support for political Islam. Unemployment is a significant predictor of support for Shari’a law and has a weaker, but still positive, effect on overall support for political Islam. The interaction between “Youngest” and “Unemployed” variables is nowhere near significance, suggesting that the effect of unemployment on support for political Islam is not conditional on age.

Table 1 Logistic Regression Results, Protest

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Youngest	0.465*** (0.0859)	0.506*** (0.138)	0.514*** (0.138)
Income	0.0677*** (0.0123)	0.0680*** (0.0123)	0.0680*** (0.0123)
Communal Prayer	0.211*** (0.0777)	0.212*** (0.0778)	0.214*** (0.0778)
Read Qur'an a lot	0.0498 (0.0693)	0.0492 (0.0693)	0.0505 (0.0694)
Unemployed	-0.279*** (0.0793)	-0.264*** (0.0883)	-0.178* (0.0994)
College Educated	0.241*** (0.0771)	0.242*** (0.0772)	0.343*** (0.0939)
Female	-0.524*** (0.0770)	-0.525*** (0.0771)	-0.533*** (0.0773)
Youngest*		-0.0688	-0.0572
Unemployed		(0.179)	(0.179)
College Educated*			-0.292*
Unemployed			(0.155)
Intercept	-2.353*** (0.155)	-2.360*** (0.156)	-2.407*** (0.158)
N	5176	5176	5176
R ²			

Conclusion

After analyzing the characteristics of the Arab youth and comparing them to those of earlier generations, the image of the youth cohort in the Arab world remains complicated. Some common intuitions about the nature of this cohort have been confirmed: they are, on average, less religious, more educated, more likely to be unemployed, more likely to protest, and less likely to vote. In other ways, however, our findings depart from the conventional wisdom about this generation. Young Arabs are generally more supportive of political Islam than their older counterparts, and tend to support Shari'a law more than do older citizens. They are more likely to identify themselves primarily as Muslims than are older generations. They are, in general, happier with their governments' efforts to create prosperity. Interestingly, despite their

Table 2 Regression Results, Support for Political Islam

	(1) Islamic Law Suitable (Logit)	(2) Political Islam (OLS)	(3) Political Islam (OLS)
Youngest	0.242** (0.101)	0.109*** (0.0403)	0.149** (0.0684)
Income	-0.00861 (0.0136)	-0.00782 (0.00523)	-0.00748 (0.00525)
Internet Usage	-0.0146 (0.0282)	-0.0217** (0.0107)	-0.0222** (0.0107)
Communal Prayer	-0.0178 (0.0951)	-0.0830** (0.0352)	-0.0832** (0.0352)
Read Qur'an a lot	0.406*** (0.0758)	0.199*** (0.0301)	0.198*** (0.0301)
Unemployed	0.184** (0.0910)	0.0513 (0.0370)	0.0621 (0.0399)
College Educated	-0.257*** (0.0870)	-0.0962*** (0.0329)	-0.0957*** (0.0329)
Female	-0.0732 (0.0952)	-0.0215 (0.0355)	-0.0234 (0.0356)
Youngest* Unemployed			-0.0612 (0.0843)
Intercept	0.745*** (0.203)	1.792*** (0.0769)	1.785*** (0.0776)
N	3701	2587	2587
R ²		0.484	0.484

Standard errors in parentheses

* p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

high unemployment rates, the Arab youth are both more satisfied with their countries' economic conditions and more optimistic about future economic prospects.

What do these findings imply about the role of the youth cohorts in the Arab Spring? The data suggest that youth mobilization against the regime was not caused by *grievances* with the regime. In general, the youth were more likely to be satisfied with the regime than others. On the contrary, it appears that *opportunities*—both real and perceived—may have motivated the youth to mobilize. The youth generation is more connected with the rest of the Arab

world and the international community as a whole than any generation that preceded it, and seems to be highly optimistic about what ordinary citizens can do. The opportunities presented by a mobilized citizenry seemed to play more of a role in motivating the Arab Spring than did an elevated sense of anti-regime sentiment among the youth.

Clearly, we can only go so far in characterizing the political attitudes and behaviors associated with the Arab Spring using the available data—the data used in this analysis pre-date the Arab Spring by several years. We can, however, make considerable progress in describing the cohort that has been said to be the driving force behind the recent revolutions in the Arab World. It is unclear how the events that led to the Arab Spring, or the Arab Spring itself, impacted the attitudes and behaviors of this cohort. In the coming years, it will be useful and interesting to examine the *changes* in political attitudes before and after the Arab Spring. For now, this study has attempted to draw a baseline for comparison, and to describe how the Arab youth viewed politics *before* the Arab Spring.

Future studies of the political outlooks of the Arab Youth should aim to make before-and-after comparisons that identify both the changes that led to the Arab Spring and the impact of the Arab Spring itself. In doing so, these studies can assess the relative importance of various factors that are said to have driven revolution: unemployment, corruption, repression, and others. By focusing on the micro-level attitudes of individual citizens, such analyses will be able to look into the minds of everyday Arab citizens. This type of analysis will prove invaluable for both an understanding of Arab political change and general theories of political behavior.

Appendix: Wording of Questions Used in the Analysis

101) How would you rate the current overall economic condition of [country name] today?

1. Very Good
2. Good
3. Bad
4. Very Bad

102) What do you think will be the state of [country name]'s economic condition a few years (3–5 years) from now?

1. Much Better
2. A Little Better
3. About the Same
4. A Little Worse
5. Much Worse

207) Did you participate in the elections on [country name]?

1. Yes
2. No

215) Generally speaking, how interested would you say you are in politics?

1. Very interested
2. Interested
3. Little interested
4. Not interested

222) How often do you use the Internet?

1. Daily or almost daily
2. At least once a week
3. At least once a month
4. Several times a year
5. I do not use the Internet

230) Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these please tell me whether you, personally, have ever done each of these things in the past three years:

2. Attend a demonstration or protest march
1. Once
2. More than once
3. Never

231) People often differ in their views on the characteristics that are essential to democracy. If you have to choose only one thing, what would you choose as the most important characteristic, and what would be the second most important?

1. Opportunity to change the government through elections
2. Freedom to criticize the government/ those in power
3. A small income gap between rich and poor
4. Basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter for everyone
5. Other (specify) _____

246) I'm going to describe various types of political systems that exist in the Middle East and ask what you think about each as a way of governing [country name]. For each one, would you say it is a very suitable, suitable, somewhat suitable or not suitable at all way of governing [country name]?

4. A system governed by Islamic law in which there are no political parties or elections

- 301) Which of the following best describes you?
1. Above all I am a [nationality of country name]
 2. Above all I am a Muslim
 3. Above all I am an Arab
 4. Above all I am a Christian
 5. Other (please state)_____
- 303) Which of the following groups you do wish to have as neighbors?
1. Followers of other religions
 1. I don't wish 2. I don't mind
- 402) In your opinion, how important is each of the following principles as a guide for making the laws of our country?
2. The government should implement only the laws of the sharia
 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly Disagree
- 507) Do you agree/disagree with the following statements:
2. Our political leaders care about ordinary citizens
 4. Our government creates conditions for people to be able to prosper through their own efforts
 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly Disagree
- 702) Gender:
1. Male 2. Female
- 703) Level of education:
1. Illiterate 2. Elementary 3. Primary 5. Secondary
 6. College Diploma- two years 7. BA 8. MA or higher
- 704) Employment Status:
1. Yes 2. No
- 712) How often do you read the Quran?
1. Everyday or almost everyday 2. Several times a week
 3. Sometimes 4. Rarely 5. I don't read
- 714) Do you pray at:
1. Mosque 2. Home 3. Both 4. Church
- 715) (Income includes all salaries, wages, and rent)
Monthly income for individual in [local currency]_____