

# **Sideways Concessions and Individual Decisions to Protest**

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Sideways concessions to protests are policy reforms that increase the satisfaction of potential protestors, without being directly linked to the stated demand of the protests. By avoiding both the potential backlash effect of repression and the inspirational effects of direct concessions, they can be powerful tools for leaders attempting to quell societal unrest. However, for this to be true, individuals must actually take sideways concessions into account when deciding whether or not to protest. This article evaluates the effectiveness of sideways concessions at reducing individual mobilization potential using a survey experiment conducted in Kyrgyzstan in October 2015. The evidence suggests that sideways concessions do, in fact, decrease the propensity of certain individuals to protest. In particular, sideways concessions are most effective among respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the government and are not optimistic about the future of the country.

## **1 Introduction**

In early September of 2002, over a thousand citizens marched 70km from the city of Tash Kumyr to the city of Kara Kul in Southern Kyrgyzstan. The march was organized to protest the government's handling of mass demonstrations in nearby Aksy earlier that year, where police opened fire on a group of more than 1,000 unarmed civilians. The September protesters demanded justice for the victims and the resignation of the Kyrgyz president.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks after the September march, the Kyrgyz government signed a well-publicized international agreement concerning the delivery of Kazakh coal and Uzbek gas.<sup>2</sup> This agreement ensured that energy-starved Southern Kyrgyzstan would receive adequate power supplies during the coming winter. The delivery of this energy proceeded very smoothly, especially compared to the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

How might seemingly unrelated events like a protest over government repression and the signing of an energy deal be related? In this article, I argue that *sideways concessions* to protest movements can reduce the mobilization potential of individuals who might otherwise join, decreasing the likelihood that protests spread and grow. Sideways concessions are policy responses designed to improve how individuals feel towards the government over issues unrelated to the demands of a protest. These concessions are hidden in business-as-usual politics and are not linked explicitly to protests or stated protester demands. As such, sideways concessions avoid the perils associated with “giving in” to protesters, as well as the backlash associated with more repressive responses to protest. By decreasing the mobilization potential of individuals, while avoiding the negative side effects of direct concessions and repression, sideways concessions may be a powerful tool for preventing the spread of protest.

Despite their theoretical attractiveness, sideways concessions are only effective at containing societal unrest if individuals take them into account when deciding whether to protest. Suppose an individual is considering joining a protest over some issue. If that individual is motivated purely by the issue at hand, then the government’s actions in other issue areas will not impact his or her decision to protest. If the same is true of all individuals in a society, then sideways concessions - which are not directly related to the issues being protested over - will not affect the momentum of a protest movement. On the other hand, if policy concessions are somewhat fungible, so that that a concession on one issue impacts an individual’s decision to protest over another issue, then sideways concessions will decrease the likelihood that individuals join the protests and, at the aggregate level, help prevent the movement from expanding.

In this article, I present evidence from a survey experiment conducted in Kyrgyzstan to evaluate whether sideways concessions decrease the propensity of individuals to protest. Respondents in the treatment group were told about hypothetical improvements in a particular issue area, while those in the control group were given no such information. Respondents in both groups were then asked about how likely they are to protest over an unrelated issue. Individuals who received the sideways concession treatment indicated a lower average willingness to join protests, although the treatment had a significantly greater impact on individuals who were dissatisfied with the government and/or not optimistic about the future. Sideways concessions

had a much smaller effect on individuals with positive outlooks; hearing about an improvement or reform on one issue-area confirms their existing beliefs rather than make these beliefs even more positive. I also assess the plausibility of using sideways concessions in other contexts by presenting observational evidence from Turkey and Ukraine that an individual's support for protest movements depends on more than his or her feelings about the dominant issues or narratives.

Returning to the initial example, protests over the government's handling of the Aksy events continued during the fall of 2003, but never gained the momentum necessary to achieve their stated goals and eventually petered out.<sup>4</sup> Does this mean that ensuring adequate energy supplies to the protesting region successfully prevented the protests from spreading and contributed to the gradual dampening of the movement? While unlikely to be the sole reason the protests never achieved their stated goals, the individual-level evidence presented in this paper suggests the energy deal would certainly have helped.

The findings of this article contribute to our knowledge in several areas. First, they speak directly to existing literature concerning individual decisions to join political protests. By demonstrating that sideways concessions can decrease individual mobilization potential, the article provides evidence that concessions are, in fact, fungible. Consequently, we need to take a broader view of the context in which individuals make their decisions to protest. At the aggregate level, this also suggests that concessions and repression are not the only government actions that affect whether protest movements persist and expand; we should also account for indirect responses, like sideways concessions, when predicting how protest movements will evolve. Finally, the findings emphasize the heterogeneous effects of government response on individuals: it is not the case that all individuals respond to sideways concessions in the same way. This suggests that individuals may also respond differently to other government actions, including direct concessions or repression. Refocusing our attention on individual perceptions of government response may help us understand when these responses will be successful at the aggregate level and when they will not.

As I will discuss in more detail later, the Kyrgyz case provides some unique advantages. Protest in Kyrgyzstan is common enough that individuals freely discuss its occurrence; yet, it

is also a context in which protest has historically played a central role in politics. There is no theoretical reason to expect the core findings about the conditional effectiveness of sideways concessions at the individual level to be limited to this case. However, different contexts are likely to have different proportions of individuals who are satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of the government, and who are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the country. This will affect the aggregate impact of sideways concessions on protest movement dynamics. Future research into other cases will, no doubt, provide interesting comparative results in this vein.

## 2 Theory

Sideways concessions to protest are policies or accommodations that address citizen grievances, without directly engaging the occurrence of an ongoing protest movement or the issues central to its narrative. The act of protest is, in itself, a kind of demand. Political relaxations targeted at freedoms of speech or association are clearly linked to the act of protest and thus are also outside the realm of sideways concessions. Additionally, while protests are not always coherent,<sup>5</sup> a dominant narrative of their goals generally emerges, usually with the help of both local and foreign media coverage. This narrative is central to the frames used by protest activists to mobilize additional participants. Sideways concessions must be in areas outside of this dominant narrative. However, all other policy accommodations that increase citizen satisfaction or improve attitudes towards government may be used as sideways concessions. Although typically hidden in “business as usual” politics, these kinds of concessions can have a significant impact on individual propensities to join protest. As such, they are a potentially powerful governmental response to protest.

Sideways concessions primarily affect individuals at the earliest stage of mobilization. We can think of an individual’s mobilization potential as measuring his or her underlying propensity to protest or, in other words, how difficult an individual will be for activists to recruit.<sup>6</sup> Klandermans argues that people ultimately join protests for one of three reasons: instrumentality (to change something), identity (to manifest one’s identification with a group), and ideology

(to give meaning the the world and express their views and feelings).<sup>7</sup> Some individuals may simply be more prone to mobilization than others. Individuals may desire certain changes more than they desire other changes, or feel that desire more strongly than other individuals, and therefore be more susceptible to mobilization on instrumental grounds. There may be psychological or social reasons why certain individuals feel impelled towards group identification, which might, for example, make them more susceptible to mobilizing arguments based on identity.<sup>8</sup> And individuals may hold different ideologies that may or may not resonate with the dominant narrative of a given protest movement. Each of these characteristics affects individual mobilization potential and, in doing so, helps determine how easy or difficult an individual will be for protest activists to recruit. Individual mobilization potential thus determine who can be effectively mobilized and how difficult such mobilization will be.

Although many factors influence individual mobilization potential, one important component is the existence and interpretation of grievances. As scholars have argued, dissatisfaction can increase the likelihood that individuals join protests and other mass movements.<sup>9</sup> Yet grievances are much more common than protests.<sup>10</sup> Treating grievance as a component of individual mobilization potential helps explain this apparent contradiction. Individuals with a high level of grievance have a higher mobilization potential, but still do not spontaneously protest without some kind of targeting or selective incentives. The effort needed to convince such individuals to join a protest will be lower than for those who are satisfied with the status quo, but whether they are ever targeted by protest activists will depend on the goals, ideology, and capacity of the movement itself, as well as the political opportunity structure it faces at the moment of mobilization.<sup>11</sup> In this view, grievance makes individuals cheaper and easier to recruit, but does not explain the proximate decision to actually protest.

Sideways concessions work by decreasing overall dissatisfaction or grievance, thereby making it harder for them to be successfully recruited to a protest movement. For example, individuals who receive an economic boost from a new government policy may be subsequently less likely to join a protest over democratization, simply because they feel more positively towards the government than they did before their economic situation improved. Under such circumstances the “anti-government” frames typical of a democratization movement will resonate less

strongly, making it harder for activist to convince them to join.

Why should governments utilize sideways concessions? After all, there are more direct responses that governments can make to protest, notably repression and direct concessions to the protesters' demands.<sup>12</sup> However, theoretical and empirical findings suggest that these responses carry risks: repression can spur "backlash" protests or cause an escalation of tactics,<sup>13</sup> and direct concessions sometimes embolden and inspire protestors.<sup>14</sup> Using sideways concessions allows governments to avoid both of these pitfalls. To understand why, consider how repression and direct concessions enter into individual calculations concerning protest.

Repression raises the costs of engaging in protest, but can also increase perceptions of injustice or anger, signal the government's (bad) type, or otherwise increase the instrumental or internal benefits of engaging in protest.<sup>15</sup> As positive responses, sideways concessions do not generate the same kind of negative signal about the implementing government and, therefore, avoid the backlash effect associated with repression.

Direct concessions can also cause both mobilization and demobilization. Ginkel and Smith illustrate this in a formal model of the strategic interaction between a government, a set of dissidents, and the masses.<sup>16</sup> Granting direct concessions to the masses has two competing effects. On the one hand, they may be less likely to join a protest movement instigated by the dissidents because they are happier, overall, with the status quo. However, a government that grants direct concessions also signals its weakness and, consequently, becomes an attractive target for revolution. This follows from the fact that only weak governments need to grant concessions; strong governments can survive a challenge without resorting to conciliatory policies. Thus, direct concessions are only rational if they decrease the likelihood of rebellion (by making the people happier), more than they increase it (by signaling that the government is weak). Sideways concessions are a stealthier version of their more direct counterparts. They still make people happier, but their indirect nature makes it less likely that any such signal of weakness is observed.

In sum, three things must be true for sideways concessions to work in practice. First, the individual has to recognize that they are better off than they were before; that is, their level of grievance must decline. Second, he or she must give the government credit for that im-

provement. Finally, his or her individual mobilization potential over one issue must change in response to these new feelings about the government, even though the concessions are unrelated to this issue. In this article, I focus on the last step of this process: do concessions over one issue actually affect individual propensity to protest over another issue? If sideways concessions decrease individual grievances in the way described above, then the answer should be yes. This is my first hypothesis:

*H1: Sideways concessions reduce the mobilization potential of individuals.*

The first hypothesis speaks to the most fundamental question - do sideways concessions actually demobilize individuals on average? However, I also explore the possibility that sideways concessions are more effective at decreasing the mobilization potential of some individuals than that of others. If responses to protest have different effects on different people, then the composition of the target citizenry determines the aggregate impact. This can explain why government responses - be it repression, direct concessions, or sideways concessions - have different effects on the trajectory of protest movements in different contexts and at different times.

First, I expect that individuals who express satisfaction with the government will be less responsive to sideways concessions. These concessions increase satisfaction and make individuals wish to reward the government. Individuals who are already satisfied face a ceiling effect that blunts the impact of sideways concessions; for such individuals, an improvement may simply confirm current levels of satisfaction, rather than increasing them further. It is possible to have a larger effect on levels of satisfaction among those who express dissatisfaction with the government because they view an improvement as a significant change that they will particularly wish to reward. Another way to think about this is that citizens update their beliefs about the government's type based on its actions. The "good" signal of sideways concessions has a larger effect on the posterior beliefs of an individual who holds a prior belief that the government is "bad" than one who already believes the government is "good." This is my second hypothesis:

*H2: Sideways concessions are less effective at reducing the mobilization potential of individuals who are already satisfied with the government.*

Second, optimism about the future of the country also moderates the impact of sideways concessions. Sideways concessions represent an improvement or reform on some issue. Having seen such an improvement, individuals may update their beliefs about whether things in the country are getting better or worse. This, in turn, will influence their decision to protest. After all, if things are getting better *without* protest, why should individuals pay the costs of actually joining a protest?

The argument concerning the differential effect of sideways concessions mirrors the one above: I expect a ceiling effect to come into play among optimists. Individuals who think things are getting better will view an improvement over some issue as confirmation that their optimism is well-founded. On the other hand, individuals with more moderate or pessimistic beliefs may actually change their mind about the direction the government is going after observing the sideways concessions treatment. This leads to the third and final hypothesis:

*H3: Sideways concessions are less effective at reducing the mobilization potential of individuals who are optimistic about the future of the country.*

I will evaluate these three hypotheses using survey data from the country of Kyrgyzstan. Before proceeding to this, however, I provide a brief background of protest in Kyrgyzstan and argue that it is a particularly good case for studying the effects of sideways concessions on the decision to join a protest movement.

### **3 Protest in Kyrgyzstan**

Kyrgyzstan is a small, landlocked country located in Central Asia that gained independence in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The events that took place in Aksy in 2002,



which sparked the protests discussed in the introduction to this article, have been called a “watershed moment” for Kyrgyzstan.<sup>17</sup> The protests in Aksy began in January, following the imprisonment of a Azimbek Beknazarov, a local politician. On March 17, the protest swelled to include several thousand participants and demonstrators allegedly threw stones at members of police. In response to this antagonism, police opened fire on the crowd.<sup>18</sup> While the protests in Aksy, and the subsequent backlash protests over the government’s handling of them, did eventually die out, they arguably ushered in a new era in which protest occurred much more frequently than before.

Mirroring trends in the broader literature on protest, scholars propose both actor-centric and structural explanations to explain the occurrence of protest in Kyrgyzstan. For example, Radnitz emphasizes the role of local politics and elite strategies, discussing how the Tulip revolution began as a series of unrelated protests about the failure of particular candidates in the recent elections that then coalesced into a larger movement.<sup>19</sup> Khamidov also stresses the role of local politics in explaining the Nookat protests that took place in October 2008.<sup>20</sup> Taking a somewhat different approach, Tucker argues that widespread electoral fraud, which served as a focal point and helped overcome the collective action problem, was instrumental in causing the Tulip Revolution.<sup>21</sup> Finally, McGlinchey emphasizes the role of political elite fragmentation and a “civil society that can be readily mobilized,”<sup>22</sup> something that can be explained by generally high individual mobilization potential among the Kyrgyz people.

Its experience with protest in the last fifteen years makes Kyrgyzstan a particularly good case for studying the effectiveness of sideways policy concessions. On the one hand, protest is common enough that individuals are less afraid to talk about the topic than might be the case elsewhere. I observed this willingness to talk about protest personally during eight months of field research during 2010-2011. In addition, before fielding the 2015 national survey, I conducted a pilot version. As part of this, I asked each of my eleven participants if they felt comfortable answering questions about protest and whether they thought other people would feel comfortable. None of our respondents expressed personal discomfort. For example, one respondent replied “It is comfortable to answer. Also, we are used to protests.” Several other participants also mentioned the fact that the Kyrgyz people are “used to” protest when discussing how they felt

about answering questions. One respondent also emphasized the normative dimension, noting that “I felt comfortable. There is nothing wrong with protest.” Responses to the question about how respondents thought others would feel exhibited a little more variation. Although most opined that others would also feel comfortable answering these questions, several respondents hesitated to make a judgement, justifying this with comments like “people are different; some may feel comfortable, some not.” In general, though, the Kyrgyz people seem willing to share their opinions about protest in a survey setting.

On the other hand, although protests are common in Kyrgyzstan, they are not so routine as to be purely performative. In some places, protests become everyday events that rarely inspire change and certainly do not challenge the fundamental authority of the state.<sup>23</sup> Such protests can signal opinions or preferences - much like voting - but do not actually force change to occur. In Kyrgyzstan, however, protests have successfully removed two presidents from power in the last 15 years and, consequently, are taken seriously by the Kyrgyz government.<sup>24</sup> Leaders who view protest as serious threats to the status quo are more likely to utilize any and all tools available to them, including sideways concessions. For this reason, understanding how sideways concessions work is both more important and more realistic in Kyrgyzstan than it might be in other contexts.

## **4 Evidence from Kyrgyzstan**

The focus of this article is whether sideways concessions decrease individual mobilization potential. The latent willingness - or mobilization potential - of individuals to protest for different causes helps us understand who will be more or less susceptible to being mobilized by protest activists. To identify how sideways concessions affect the mobilization potential of individuals, I utilize data from a national survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan in October, 2015. This section outlines the methodology and major findings of the survey, and discusses how the treatment effect might translate to real-world situations.

## 4.1 Methodology

The survey was conducted by a professional Kyrgyz-based survey firm, SIAR Research and Consulting. Interviews were face-to-face in respondents' own houses. Respondents were asked at the beginning of the session whether they would prefer to take the survey in Russian or Kyrgyz. The sample was proportional to the population by region and consisted of 1000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan over the age of 18.<sup>25</sup> Within each primary sampling unit (PSU), households were selected using sequential random sampling of household registration numbers. Supervisors at each PSU identified random lists of households to be interviewed. If an attempt to survey a household failed, the household was replaced with the next one on the random list. Within each household, the appropriate respondent was selected using a Kish grid procedure that ensured each household member was selected as the respondent with almost-equal probability.

The survey included an experimental component designed to evaluate the effect of sideways concessions on individual mobilization potential. First, respondents were asked to identify which issue they would be *most* likely to protest over and *second most* likely to protest over from a list of four issues. The issues included on the list were: (1) government corruption, (2) unemployment, (3) high/rising prices, and (4) migration or border issues. The issues on this list were identified from a survey of other public opinion polls in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>26</sup> I also asked participants in our pilot surveys for other suggestions, but no common themes emerged. One respondent even noted "Other problems? These problems are the biggest ones, the main ones. If they are solved, other problems will be solved themselves." The most commonly selected issue was unemployment and the least commonly selected issue was migration or border issues.

Half of the respondents were randomly assigned to a treatment group and half to a control. Respondents in the treatment group then received information about hypothetical improvements made by the government regarding the issue they selected as "second most likely." This prompt was designed to imitate a sideways concession by the government. In contrast, respondents in the control group received no additional information. Both groups were then asked to quantify how likely they would be to join a protest over their "most likely" issue. The difference between the treatment and control groups can be used to calculate the average effect of the sideways concessions treatment on individual mobilization potential. The complete text of

the treatment and control questions is below:

*[CONTROL] How likely are you to join an anti-government protest about [issue identified as the most likely to protest over]?*

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Not very likely
4. Highly unlikely

*[TREATMENT] Suppose the government takes positive steps to correct [issue identified as the second most likely to protest over]. How likely are you to join an anti-government protest about [issue identified as the most likely to protest over]?*

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Not very likely
4. Highly unlikely

One of the unique features of this survey experiment is the use of dynamic updating. Both the treatment and control groups received questions that referred back to their answers about these issues. The goal of the survey experiment is to identify whether concessions are fungible, not to reproduce a situation in which real sideways concessions are used. By asking respondents about the likelihood of protesting over the issue they selected as “most likely,” the survey captures the idea that individuals typically protest over a particular issue, but remains agnostic about what that issue is. Arbitrarily selecting one issue would likely deflate the percentage of people who said they would protest, since not all of them would feel strongly about the selected issue.

The main outcome for both the control and treatment versions is the individual’s subjective likelihood of joining a protest over their “most likely” issue. It is possible that the answer to these questions captures more than individual mobilization potential. For example, if individuals interpreted the question to mean that the hypothetical protest would occur *today*, it might also include some of the proximate cost-benefit analysis that typically comes later in the mobilization process.<sup>27</sup> However, the sideways concessions treatment does not affect these

calculations, since it does not involve anything that affects the costs and benefits. Therefore, the difference between the treatment and the control will capture the effect of the treatment on individual mobilization potential, as desired, although the absolute percentages should be viewed with some caution.

The treatment and control groups are generally well balanced, according to the test outlined by Hansen and Bowers.<sup>28</sup> The overall  $\chi^2$  statistic is insignificant (see Table 3 in the Appendix), indicating balance. Furthermore, when looking at individual traits, the only significant difference between the two groups is that there is a higher proportion of individuals who answered that they have an income of “about average” in the control group than in the treatment group. There is no theoretical reason to expect this would impact the results.

The two belief-based moderators were asked pre-treatment. First, respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with the Kyrgyz government?” Although originally a four-category question, relatively few individuals selected the extreme responses (very satisfied, very dissatisfied) and so I have collapsed them into two categories for the analysis. Second, respondents were asked “Do you think things in Kyrgyzstan are...” and given the options of “getting better” (optimists), “getting worse” (pessimists), or “staying about the same” (moderates). In the Appendix, I compare the demographic factors that influence how individuals answered these questions. Older individuals, those with less education, those from the South, and those with greater income are more likely to express satisfaction. However, only income has a statistically significant effect on being an optimist.

## **4.2 Results**

The experimental design helps us to evaluate the main hypotheses of the article. The random assignment of respondents to treatment and control groups means that the difference between groups captures the average effect of the sideways concession treatment on individual propensity to protest. The findings regarding the first hypothesis are illustrated in the top panel of Figure 1. Individuals who received the treatment are somewhat more likely to protest than those who were assigned to the control group. However, the difference between these two groups is relatively small - 4 percentage points - and the t-test is not quite statistically signif-

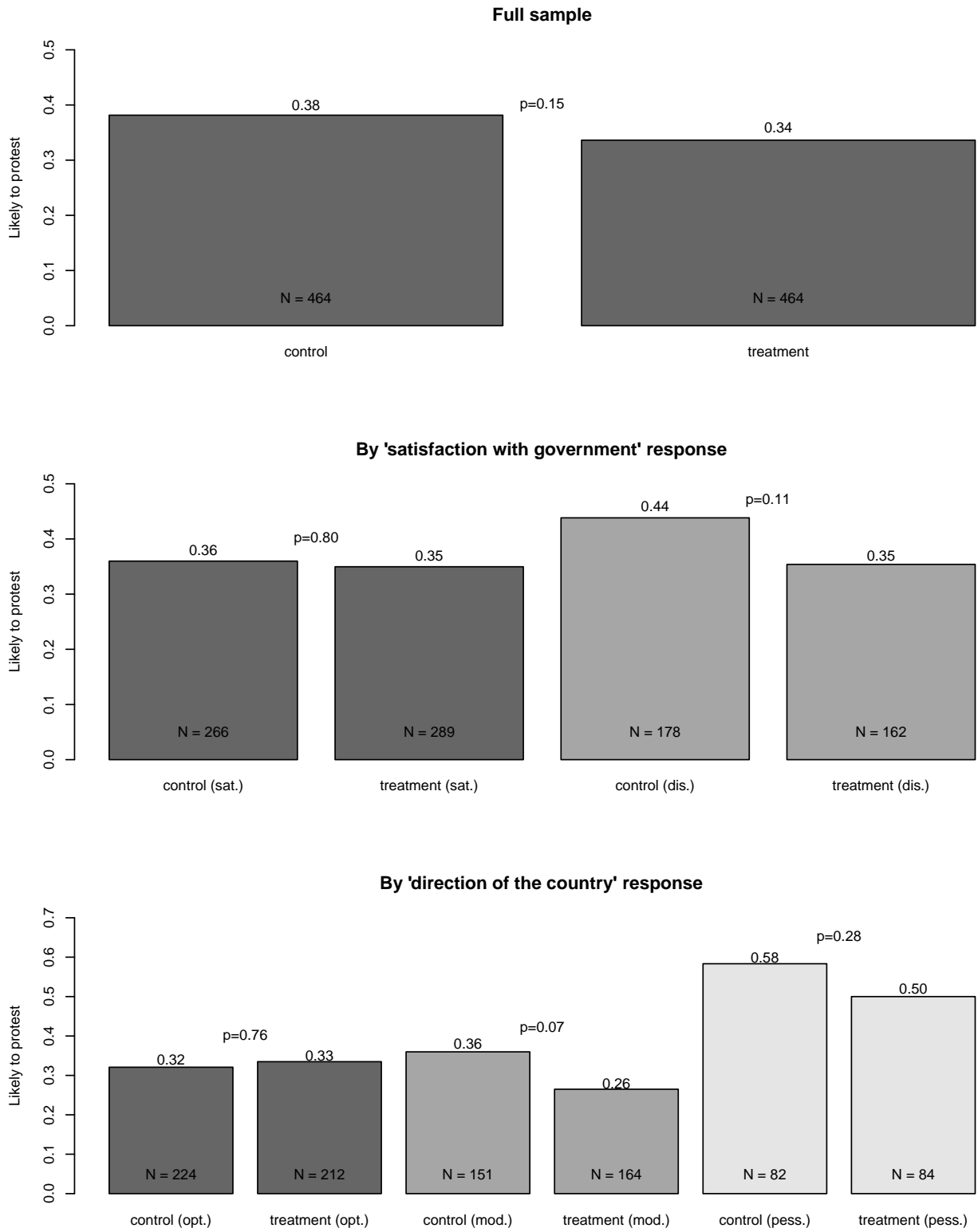
icant at conventional levels. The results provide only tentative support for the hypothesis that sideways concessions reduce average individual mobilization potential.

As the remainder of Figure 1 shows, splitting the sample by the proposed moderators changes the picture quite substantially. In the middle panel, the full sample is split according to whether the respondent is satisfied or dissatisfied with their government. The second hypothesis predicted that satisfied individuals would be less responsive to the sideways concessions treatment. This is, in fact, the case. The treatment effect was very small and statistically insignificant - 1 percentage point - among those individuals who expressed satisfaction with the government. In contrast, the treatment group among those who expressed dissatisfaction is 9 percentage points more likely to protest than the control, although the result just barely misses conventional levels of statistical significance.

The third hypothesis predicted that optimists would be less affected by the sideways concessions treatment than more pessimistic respondents. Figure 1 demonstrates that the data support this hypothesis as well. The treatment effect for optimists is not statistically significant and, in fact, is marginally positive (+1 percentage point). In contrast, those with intermediate views exhibit a (negative) treatment effect 10 percentage points and pessimists of 8 percentage points, although only the former result is statistically significant. Interestingly, pessimists in both the treatment and control groups exhibited a higher propensity for protest than any of the other groups. Also interesting is the fact that those in the treatment group with intermediate beliefs are actually less likely to protest than any of the optimists, suggesting that the effect of the treatment on these moderate individuals has a substantively important effect.

What might explain the fact the treatment effect is stronger (substantively and significantly) among moderates than pessimists? The relevant size of these groups may play a role: there are 315 self-identified moderates and only 166 self-identified pessimists. In addition, it is possible that some of the pessimists did not believe the treatment. I discuss this possibility in greater detail in the next section, but for now I just want to note that, if true, this would dampen the size of the treatment effect among pessimists and, if the pessimists were split between believing and not believing the treatment, also add noise to the results. If real-world concessions were actually observed - rather than just hypothetical ones - it is very possible they would have a

Figure 1: Effect of sideways concessions on decision to protest



*The reported p-values are calculated using simple t-tests. Results from logit models are presented in the Appendix.*

larger impact the mobilization potential of individuals in this group.

### **4.3 Discussion**

The results presented above suggest that sideways concessions are modestly effective at decreasing the propensity of individuals to protest and that certain beliefs - notably how satisfied individuals are with the government and how optimistic they are about the direction of the country - influence the size of this effect. Sideways concessions have the most influence on people who are less satisfied and less optimistic, suggesting they are most effective when they are, to some extent, surprising.

Interestingly, the individuals who are most affected by sideways concessions are also those that governments most want to target. Individuals who have high levels of grievance (i.e. who are dissatisfied and/or pessimistic) also have a high mobilization potential, while those with lower levels of grievance (i.e. who are satisfied and/or optimistic) are already difficult for protest activists to recruit. It is better for governments to target individuals who are more likely to be recruited than those who are unlikely to be receptive to recruitment efforts. Therefore, the population most influenced by sideways concessions is likely to be the same population the government most wants to demobilize.

In addition, there is a strong case why the effect size found in this survey is artificially smaller than would be the case in a real-world scenario. First, the survey design relies on the fact that respondents internalize hypothetical “improvements,” and update their propensity to protest accordingly. If respondents did not actually believe the government would ever make such improvements, or were skeptical about what “positive steps” might be, then the treatment would fail to have an effect. A real, tangible improvement in these issue areas would be much harder to deny. Therefore, hypothetical improvements are likely to have a much smaller impact on individual mobilization potential than real-world, tangible improvements.

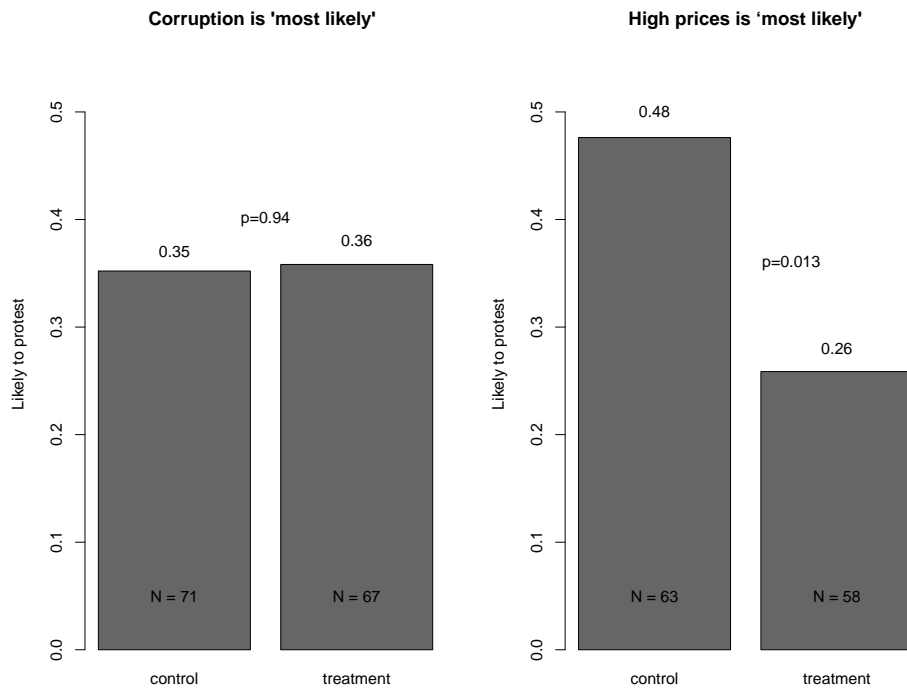
I have two reasons to believe skepticism about the hypothetical improvements is dampening the effect size in the survey. First, during the pilot interviews, some respondents indicated their skepticism directly. One said, “[After hearing about improvements] I would think this is just a game. Nothing will change.” Similarly, another respondent said “[After hearing about im-



provements] I wouldn't believe. I'd believe after I experienced the changes myself." Although it is impossible to generalize from this, the fact that two of only eleven pilot respondents indicated skepticism suggests that this might be a widespread problem. Real sideways concessions might work on such skeptics, even if the hypothetical ones do not. Second, we might think individuals who selected "corruption" as the issue they are most likely to protest over would be particularly skeptical of the treatment. After all, if you believe that corruption is bad enough to protest over, then you are unlikely to believe the government will take real, positive steps in any other issue area. Figure 2 displays the main treatment effect of an improvement in unemployment for individuals who selected corruption as their "most likely" issue and those that selected high/rising prices. For those likely skeptics who named corruption as their "most likely" issue, the treatment effect is statistically indistinguishable from zero. In contrast, when we look at individuals who named high or rising prices as their "most likely" issue, the results are startlingly different: there is a large and statistically significant effect. This suggests that concessions over unemployment are much less effective on individuals who believe corruption is a big problem than on those who do not list this among their top two issues. Although the potential for skepticism makes the treatment in this survey relatively weak, the effect that actual, tangible improvements have on individual mobilization potential is likely to be much larger than that of hypothetical improvements.

Finally, by placing the sideways concession treatment so close to the question about protest, the design may artificially link sideways concessions to protest in the minds of individuals and generate an inspirational effect that would not exist - or at least would not be as pronounced - in the real-world. Although the sideways concessions treatment does not mention that the improvements were made in response to protest, it is certainly possible that some individuals make this connection and, subsequently, update their beliefs positively about the probability that future protests would succeed. This would also dampen the effect of the hypothetical sideways concessions in the survey because certain individuals might become inspired to join protests. Real-world sideways concessions are more subtle than this. Combined with the potential for skepticism, the possibility of inspiration suggests that real-world sideways concessions are likely to have a larger effect on individual mobilization potential than the hypothetical ones

Figure 2: Effect of sideways concessions over unemployment



*The reported p-values are calculated using simple t-tests. Results from logit models are presented in the Appendix.*

presented here.

## 5 Sideways concessions in other contexts

The experimental data presented in this article suggest that at least some individuals take sideways concessions into account when thinking about whether or not to join a protest. In this section, I provide evidence that this is plausible in contexts other than Kyrgyzstan. I examine the effect of positivity regarding unrelated issues on support for two protest movements - the Gezi Park protests in Turkey and the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine - and demonstrate that individuals with positive views on issues that are not central to the narrative of these protests are less likely to support these protests, even if they agree with the major goals of the protest. While this is not direct evidence that sideways concessions worked, or even that they were used in response to these protests, it does imply they would have been effective in these situations.

It also provides further evidence that individuals take feelings on unrelated issues into account when making their decisions to protest.

## 5.1 Gezi Park protests

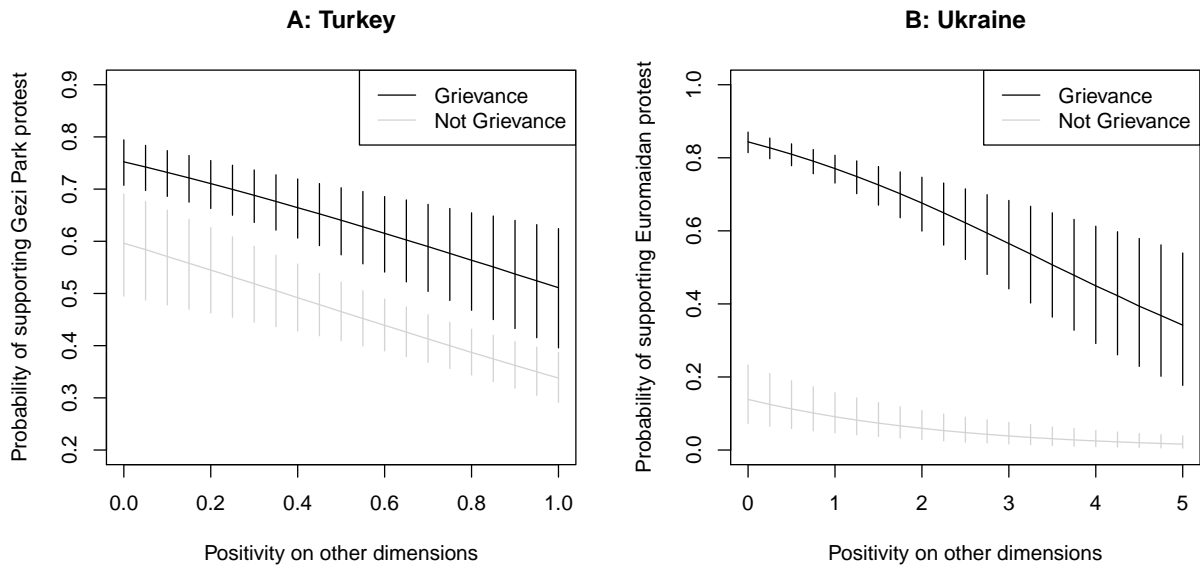
The Gezi Park protests began on May 30th and lasted through the summer of 2013 in Turkey. The original protest was a relatively small sit-in against the urban development of Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park, but it was the government's heavy-handed and violent response to this original protest that inspired hundreds of thousands, if not millions, to join the movement.<sup>29</sup> While attempting to clear Gezi park, the police beat unarmed protestors, raided their tents, and set them on fire.<sup>30</sup> Protests in 60 Turkish cities followed soon after.

The primary narrative of the Gezi Park protests revolved around respect for freedom of expression in Turkey. Several days into the protest, one of the groups that helped organize the original sit-in issued a list of demands. While the preservation of Gezi Park was among them, this group also called for relaxations concerning freedom of expression.<sup>31</sup> Over time, the latter demands became even more dominant, and the protests continued even after President Erdogan announced that the Gezi Park plans had been cancelled in mid-June.<sup>32</sup>

Since the Gezi Park protests were primarily linked to the idea of freedom of expression, I expect that individuals who believe that freedom of expression is important and that it is a problem in Turkey will support the Gezi Park protests. However, the theory of sideways concessions implies that individuals also take into account their feelings on unrelated issues. For example, an individual with a positive evaluation of the economy, or the functioning of democratic elections, may be less inclined to protest *even if* he or she feels strongly that freedom of expression is an important problem in Turkey.

To see whether this expectation is borne out, I use data from the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, which was conducted in Spring 2014. In the Turkish version of the survey, respondents were asked whether they supported the Gezi Park protests.<sup>33</sup> Since the question concerns the Gezi Park protests specifically, I expect individuals who are aggrieved about freedom of expression are more likely to express support for these protests. Respondents were asked how important it was to them to live in a country where "people can peaceful protests against the government."

Figure 3: Effect of positivity on support for protest



*The vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Panel A: ‘Grievance’ means that the individual noted freedom of expression as both important and a problem. ‘No Grievance’ means that at least one of these two conditions was not met. Predicted probabilities are calculated from Model 2 in Table 7 in the Appendix. Panel B: ‘Grievance’ means that the individual felt positively to the EU, was pro-trade, opposed Yanukovich, and listed corruption as a grievance. ‘No Grievance’ means that neither of these were true. Predicted probabilities are calculated from Model 1 in Table 8 in the Appendix.*

They were also asked whether they thought this described their country well or not. Individuals who said freedom of expression was both important and not present in their country are coded as having expressed this as a grievance.

In addition, the survey asks the same series of questions for other issues: honest elections, fair judicial system, military under civilian control, lack of media censorship, freedom of religion, and economic prosperity. These issues were not central to the narrative of the Gezi park protests. I create an ‘index of positivity’ based on responses to these questions. Respondents who answered that an issue is both important and present in Turkey are described as having positive views on that issue. I use the number of issues the respondent says are present in the country, divided by the number of issues they list as important to measure positivity.

The main results are illustrated in Figure 1 (the numerical results are in Table 4 in the Appendix). Individuals who express a grievance concerning freedom of expression are more likely to support the Gezi Park protests. However, regardless of whether they express this grievance,

increasing positivity over other issues is associated with a decline in the probability of supporting the Gezi Park protests. While this does not show that the Turkish government purposefully employed sideways concessions in response to Gezi Park, it does suggest that doing so would have been effective: as in Kyrgyzstan, individuals in Turkey are responsive to issues outside of the core issue of the protest.

## **5.2 Euromaidan protests**

The Euromaidan protests began in December 2013 and led to the 2014 Ukrainian revolution that overthrew the Yanukovich government. The original protest was in favor of closer integration with Europe and expressed anger at the fact that President Yanukovich unilaterally delayed signing the European Union Association Agreement. After the government's brutal response to the demonstrations, the protests expanded. This continued despite government crackdowns. President Yanukovich eventually fled the country and was officially removed from power on the 22nd of February.<sup>34</sup>

The original grievance of the Euromaidan protests was thus Yanukovich's anti-European stance, which suggested a shift in the government's orientation away from Europe and implicitly towards Russia. As the protest expanded, however, government corruption and general dissatisfaction with the Yanukovich government emerged as common rallying cries. I expect, therefore, that individuals with a positive opinion of Europe and trade would be most aggrieved by the cancellation of the EU trade deal. However, individuals who believe corruption is a problem and those who disliked Yanukovich also have grievances that align with the movement. Positivity on issues outside of these core ones, however, should decrease the likelihood that individuals supported the protests.

The general methodology is the same as above, and again draws on the Pew Global Attitudes Survey. As before, the main dependent variable is support for the Euromaidan protests. To capture the degree of grievance, I use an indicator variable for whether the respondent reported a favorable view of the European Union, and another for whether the respondent reported that they thought international trade was good for the country. Individuals who supported the EU and trade would have a higher level of grievance over the cancellation of the EU trade deal that

was at the core of the Euromaidan protests. I did not measure opinions towards Russia, because the subsequent events in Crimea are likely to have colored these opinions. Furthermore, as the protest evolved, government corruption and Yanukovich's government became important targets of criticism. I therefore include a measure of whether the respondent considered corruption a moderately big or very big problem (as opposed to small or nonexistent) and a measure of whether he or she felt favorably or unfavorably towards Viktor Yanukovich.

As before, I create a positivity index to measure how respondents felt about other issues. Since data on importance was not available, I only used a simple count variable of whether the respondent listed the issue as either a small problem or not a problem, rather than a moderately big or very big problem. The issues included were: crime, corruption (when not treated as a direct grievance), pollution (air and water), provision of public goods (schools and health care), and economy (rising prices, inequality, employment opportunities). For the composite indicators (i.e. pollution, public goods and economy), I only coded the individual as "positive" if he or she said that each of the components was not a problem, or only a small problem.

The main results are illustrated in Panel B of Figure 1 and the numerical results can be found in Table 5 in the Appendix. The result show a similar pattern to the ones from Turkey. Individuals are less likely to be supportive if they are positive on an increasing number of other issues, regardless of whether they share the grievances of the protest. The substantive effect is particularly large among those who express a grievance related to the dominant narrative of the protest, suggesting that positivity on unrelated issues can go a long way towards canceling out the effect of grievance. As with the Gezi Park protests, this suggests that individuals would have been responsive to sideways concessions if the government had chosen to use them.

## **6 Conclusion**

The main goal of this article was to evaluate the effectiveness of sideways concessions to protest on decreasing individual propensities to protest. The evidence suggests that sideways concessions are effective at decreasing individual mobilization potential among certain groups of citizens, but those who express satisfaction and optimism about the future of the country are

less susceptible to the effects of sideways concessions. This differential effect does not really decrease the substantive power of sideways concessions, since those who are dissatisfied and less optimistic about the future have higher starting levels of grievance and are, therefore, more important for the government to demobilize.

The findings in this article imply that we should broaden the way we think about government responses to protest. The survey experiment and observational studies both suggest that individuals are responsive to improvements in unrelated issue areas; therefore, improvements of any kind can be important tools for leaders who seek to dampen the spread of ongoing protest. Failing to account for the effects of sideways concessions may lead us to over-predict the success and spread of protest movements.

This article also indicates that government responses to protest have a heterogenous impact across individuals. While sideways concessions are less effective on certain individuals, they are notably never escalatory; that is, they never increase individual mobilization potential. Sideways concessions therefore avoid the backlash and inspirational effects of repression and direct concessions respectively. However, the same heterogenous effects may have very different implications for direct concessions or repression. If individual beliefs moderate the impact of these responses as well, then different distributions of beliefs may generate different aggregate effects (mobilizing or demobilizing) across contexts.

While this article answers the most fundamental questions concerning the effectiveness of sideways concessions - do improvements on one issue matter for explaining protest over another issue and how does this effect vary across individuals - it is limited in some regards. In particular, the existing study cannot answer two important questions about the real-world effectiveness of sideways concessions: first, do individuals *notice* the improvements made and second, do they *link* these to the ongoing protests? In other words, are sideways concessions visible enough to matter, while not being visibly linked to the protest? If individuals do not notice the improvements, sideways concessions cannot affect individual mobilization potential in practice. If individuals do notice the improvements, but make the connection between them and ongoing protests, then they may have the same escalatory effects as direct concessions. The current survey made the sideways concessions visible by design and explicitly chose to not

link them to any ongoing protest movements. This allowed a more direct test of the fungibility of concessions; however, future work should aim to address these unanswered questions.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Vadim Neshkumai. Protest march in Kyrgyzstan over. *Itar-Tass Weekly News*, September 13 2002.

<sup>2</sup>Agreement on coal and gas supplies. *The Times of Central Asia*, 041, October 10 2002

<sup>3</sup>For example, consider relations with Uzbekistan during the previous year: gas supply was cut in October of 2001 (see: Kyrgyzstan: Uzbeks halt natural gas deliveries. *The Times of Central Asia*, 138, October 25, 2001), resumed later that month (see: Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan reach gas, water accord. *The Times of Central Asia*, 139, November 1 2001), then cut again in November (see: Fyodor Sukhov. Leaders are fighting over water. – as a result, things are bad for everyone. *The Current Digest of the Russian Press*, 53(44):14–15, November 28 2001). A new agreement was not signed until February of 2002 (see: New agreement on natural gas supplies. *The Times of Central Asia*, 007, February 14 2002).

<sup>4</sup>Residents of south Kyrgyzstan protest authorities' reprisals against pickets. *AP-Blitz*, 222, November 20 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Mark Beissinger. The semblance of democratic revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3):1–19, 2013

<sup>6</sup>This builds on the idea of of “mobilization potential”. See: Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema. Networks, motivation, and barriers: Steps towards participation in social movements. *American Sociological Review*, 52(4):519–531, 1987, p. 519.

<sup>7</sup>Bert Klandermans. The demand and supply of participation: Social-psychological correlates of participation in social movements. In David Snow, Sarah Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, editors, *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.

<sup>8</sup>Benjamin Giguere and R. N. Lalonde. Why do students strike? direct and indirect determinants of collective action participation. *Political Psychology*, 31(2):227–247, 2010.

<sup>9</sup>James Davies. Toward a theory of revolution. *American Sociological Review*, 27(1):5–19, February 1962; Ted Gurr. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1970

<sup>10</sup>For example: Russell Dalton, Alix Van Sickle, and Steven Weldon. The individual-institutional nexus of protest behavior. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40:51–73, 1 2010.

<sup>11</sup>John McCarthy and Mayer Zald. *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*. General Learning Press, Morristown, NJ, 1973; John McCarthy and Mayer Zald. Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82:1212–1241, 1977; Herbert Kitschelt. Political opportunity structures and political protest: Anti-nuclear movements in four democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 16(1):57–85, January 1986; David Snow and Robert Benford. Clarifying the relationship between framing and ideology. *Mobilization*, 13:373–394, 2000

<sup>12</sup>A more recent article argues that strategically ignoring a protest may be another kind of response: Dina Bishara. The politics of ignoring: Protest dynamics in late Mubarak Egypt. *Perspectives on Politics*, 13:958–975, 12 2015

<sup>13</sup> Sabine Carey. The dynamic relationship between protest and repression. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59(1):1–11, 2006;

<sup>14</sup>Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle. Popular protest and political reform in Africa. *Comparative Politics*, 24(4):419–442, 1992; Graeme Davies. Policy selection in the face of political instability: Do states divert, repress, or make concessions? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, pages 1–24, 2014

<sup>15</sup> Karl-Dieter Opp and Wolfgang Roehl. Repression, micromobilization, and political protest. *Social Forces*, 69(2):521–547, 1990.

<sup>16</sup> John Ginkel and Alastair Smith. So you say you want a revolution: A game theoretic explanation of revolution in repressive regimes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43(3):291–316, June 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Pannier. Kyrgyzstan: One year later, aksy deaths were watershed moment in Kyrgyz history. *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, March 17 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Pannier. Kyrgyzstan: Anniversary of Aksy tragedy marked. *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, June 1, 2006 for an overview of these events.

<sup>19</sup>Scott Radnitz. *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Alisher Khamidov. The lessons of the ‘Nookat Events’: Central government, local officials and religious protests in Kyrgyzstan. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(2):148–160, 2013.

<sup>21</sup>Joshua Tucker. Enough! electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3):535–551, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Eric McGlinchey. Exploring regime instability and ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan. *Asia Policy*, 12:79–98, 2011, p. 80. For an overview of elite fragmentation in Kyrgyzstan, see Eugene Huskey and Gulnara Iskakova. Why don’t opposition elites cooperate with each other in the post-communist world: Interview evidence from Kyrgyzstan. National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, University of Washington, 2009

<sup>23</sup> For a nice overview of the literature on normalization of protest and an extension of this to the normalization of the protester, Peter Van Aelst and Stefaan Walgrave. Who is that (wo)man in the street? from the normalisation of protest to the normalisation of the protester. *European Journal of Political Research*, 39:461–486, 2001

<sup>24</sup> Josie Le Blond and Ruby Russell. Opposition risk Kyrgyzstan’s stability in protests. *The Washington Times*, October 12 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Table 1 in the Appendix displays the main strata for the sample. Within each strata, there were two types of primary sampling units. The first were rural settlements subordinated to rural councils. The second were parts of large urban settlements. These were identified by dividing cities into units, each with populations between 3991 and 5364.

<sup>26</sup>For example: The International Republican Institute. Kyrgyzstan national opinion poll: April 25–may 13, 2011. *Baltic Surveys Ltd./The Gallup Organization*, 2011

<sup>27</sup> Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema. Networks, motivation, and barriers: Steps towards participation in

social movements. *American Sociological Review*, 52(4):519–531, 1987.

<sup>28</sup> Ben Hansen and Jake Bowers. Covariate balance in simple, stratified and clustered comparative studies. *Statistical Science*, 23(2):219–236, 2008

<sup>29</sup> Gezi Park Protests: Brutal denial of the right to peaceful assembly in Turkey. *Amnesty International*, October 2013.

<sup>30</sup>Elif Shafak. The view from Taksim Square: Why is Turkey now in turmoil? *The Guardian*, 3 June 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Sebnem Arsu. Protest group gives Turkish official a list of demands. *The New York Times*, June 5, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Gov't to comply with court ruling suspending Gezi Park's demolition. *Hurriyet Daily News*, June 13, 2013.

<sup>33</sup>This is not a perfect test, since it asks about support for a protest rather than individual willingness to join. The survey is also retrospective, raising issues of self-reporting and after-the-fact revisions of opinions. However, it was the best observational study I could find that asked about support for specific protests and, therefore, allowed me to identify direct grievances and unrelated positivity.

<sup>34</sup> For a nice overview, see: Yuriy Shveda and Joung Ho Park. Ukraine's revolution of dignity: The dynamics of Euromaidan. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 7:85–91, 2016

# Appendix

## Additional Tables and figures

Table 1: Proportionate Stratification by Urban/Rural Population

| Province            | Urban population        |                      |                   | Rural population        |                      |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|                     | Population              | %                    | No. of interviews | Population              | %                    | No. of interviews |
| <i>Batken</i>       | 66,813                  | 1.95%                | 20                | 195,933                 | 5.71%                | 57                |
| <i>Jalalabat</i>    | 149,844                 | 4.37%                | 44                | 464,468                 | 13.53%               | 135               |
| <i>Isykkul</i>      | 85,584                  | 2.49%                | 25                | 192,436                 | 5.61%                | 56                |
| <i>Naryn</i>        | 24,004                  | 0.70%                | 7                 | 128,469                 | 3.74%                | 38                |
| <i>Osh</i>          | 52,933                  | 1.54%                | 15                | 607,299                 | 17.69%               | 177               |
| <i>Talas</i>        | 21,089                  | 0.61%                | 6                 | 113,533                 | 3.31%                | 33                |
| <i>Chuy</i>         | 100,698                 | 2.93%                | 29                | 448,625                 | 13.07%               | 131               |
| <i>Bishkek town</i> | 606,505                 | 17.67%               | 177               | 2,557                   | 0.07%                | 0                 |
| <i>Osh town</i>     | 155,958                 | 4.54%                | 45                | 15,658                  | 0.46%                | 5                 |
| <b><i>TOTAL</i></b> | <b><i>1,263,428</i></b> | <b><i>36.81%</i></b> | <b><i>368</i></b> | <b><i>2,168,978</i></b> | <b><i>63.19%</i></b> | <b><i>632</i></b> |

Figure 4: Issues Selected as “Likely” to Protest Over

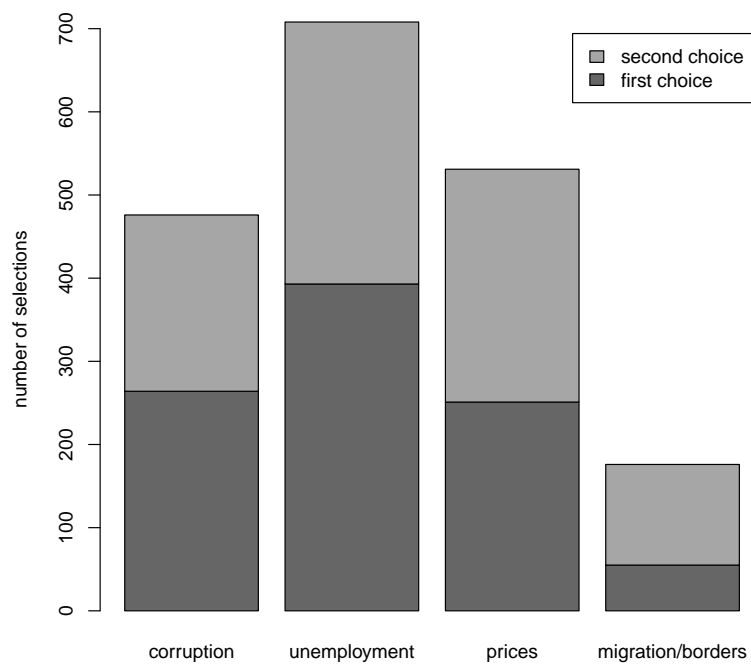


Table 2: Overview of Treatment vs. Control Groups

|                            |                             | <b>Control</b> | <b>Treatment</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Age</b>                 | <i>Under 30</i>             | 129            | 123              |
|                            | <i>30-59</i>                | 210            | 194              |
|                            | <i>Over 50</i>              | 161            | 183              |
| <b>Gender</b>              | <i>Male</i>                 | 200            | 200              |
|                            | <i>Female</i>               | 300            | 300              |
| <b>Language</b>            | <i>Kyrgyz</i>               | 331            | 334              |
|                            | <i>Russian</i>              | 169            | 166              |
| <b>Geographic Location</b> | <i>Bishkek City</i>         | 89             | 88               |
|                            | <i>Osh City</i>             | 24             | 26               |
|                            | <i>Chuy Province</i>        | 80             | 80               |
|                            | <i>Osh Province</i>         | 96             | 96               |
|                            | <i>Batken Province</i>      | 38             | 39               |
|                            | <i>Jalal-Abad Province</i>  | 90             | 89               |
|                            | <i>Talas Province</i>       | 20             | 19               |
|                            | <i>Issyk-Kul Province</i>   | 41             | 40               |
|                            | <i>Naryn Province</i>       | 22             | 23               |
| <b>Education</b>           | <i>Primary or less</i>      | 8              | 9                |
|                            | <i>Some secondary</i>       | 29             | 30               |
|                            | <i>Completed secondary</i>  | 278            | 275              |
|                            | <i>Technical education</i>  | 69             | 80               |
|                            | <i>Some university</i>      | 28             | 26               |
|                            | <i>Completed university</i> | 88             | 80               |
| <b>Occupation</b>          | <i>Homemaker</i>            | 120            | 119              |
|                            | <i>Retired</i>              | 110            | 120              |
|                            | <i>Unemployed</i>           | 113            | 105              |
|                            | <i>Employed part-time</i>   | 23             | 28               |
|                            | <i>Employed full-time</i>   | 82             | 73               |
|                            | <i>Self-employed</i>        | 32             | 26               |
|                            | <i>Student</i>              | 20             | 29               |
| <b>Income level</b>        | <i>Lowest 10%</i>           | 18             | 23               |
|                            | <i>Below average</i>        | 85             | 97               |
|                            | <i>About average</i>        | 360            | 335              |
|                            | <i>Above average</i>        | 36             | 43               |
|                            | <i>Top 10%</i>              | 1              | 2                |

Table 3: Overview of treatment vs. control groups (balance tests)

|  | Standard Difference (z-score)<br>All categorical | Standard Difference (z-score)<br>Numerical |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Age</b>                                 |  | 0.073<br>(1.155)                           |
|  | <i>Under 30</i>                                  | -0.028<br>(-0.437)                         |
|  | <i>30-59</i>                                     | -0.065<br>(-1.031)                         |
|  | <i>Over 50</i>                                   | 0.093<br>(1.464)                           |
| <b>Gender</b>                              | <i>Male</i>                                      | 0.000<br>(0.000)                           |
|  | <i>Female</i>                                    | 0.000<br>(0.000)                           |
| <b>Language</b>                            | <i>Kyrgyz</i>                                    | 0.013<br>(0.201)                           |
|  | <i>Russian</i>                                   | -0.013<br>(-0.201)                         |
| <b>Geographic Location</b>                 | <i>South</i>                                     | 0.008<br>(0.126)                           |
|  | <i>Bishkek City</i>                              | -0.005<br>(-0.083)                         |
|  | <i>Osh City</i>                                  | 0.018<br>(0.290)                           |
|  | <i>Chuy Province</i>                             | 0.000<br>(0.000)                           |
|  | <i>Osh Province</i>                              | 0.000<br>(0.000)                           |
|  | <i>Batken Province</i>                           | 0.008<br>(0.119)                           |
|  | <i>Jalal-Abad Province</i>                       | -0.005<br>(-0.082)                         |
|  | <i>Talas Province</i>                            | -0.010<br>(-0.163)                         |
|  | <i>Issyk-Kul Province</i>                        | -0.007<br>(-0.116)                         |
|  | <i>Naryn Province</i>                            | 0.010<br>(0.152)                           |
| <b>Education</b>                           |  | -0.015<br>(-0.245)                         |
|  | <i>Primary or less</i>                           | 0.015<br>(0.245)                           |
|  | <i>Some secondary</i>                            | 0.008<br>(0.134)                           |
|  | <i>Completed secondary</i>                       | -0.012<br>(-0.191)                         |
|  | <i>Technical education</i>                       | 0.062<br>(0.976)                           |
|  | <i>Some university</i>                           | -0.018<br>(-0.280)                         |
|  | <i>Completed university</i>                      | -0.043<br>(-0.676)                         |
| <b>Occupation</b>                          | <i>Homemaker</i>                                 | 0.005<br>(-0.074)                          |
|  | <i>Retired</i>                                   | 0.047<br>(0.751)                           |
|  | <i>Unemployed</i>                                | -0.039<br>(-0.612)                         |
|  | <i>Employed part-time</i>                        | 0.045<br>(0.718)                           |
|  | <i>Employed full-time</i>                        | -0.050<br>(-0.786)                         |
|  | <i>Self-employed</i>                             | -0.051<br>(-0.811)                         |
|  | <i>Student</i>                                   | 0.083<br>(1.32)                            |
| <b>Income level</b>                        |  | -0.041<br>(-0.646)                         |
|  | <i>Lowest 10%</i>                                | 0.050<br>(0.797)                           |
|  | <i>Below average</i>                             | 0.062<br>(0.983)                           |
|  | <i>About average</i>                             | -0.109*<br>(1.716)                         |
|  | <i>Above average</i>                             | 0.052<br>(0.820)                           |
|  | <i>Top 10%</i>                                   | 0.037<br>(0.578)                           |
| <b>Overall <math>\chi^2</math> p value</b> | 0.991  | 0.884                                      |

Results from unstratified balance test performed using the Rltools package in R. See [20].

Table 4: Correlations Between Demographic Features and Satisfaction/Optimism

|            | <b>satisfied<br/>logistic<br/>Model 1</b> | <b>optimism<br/>ordered<br/>logistic<br/>Model 2</b> |
|------------|---|--|
| Age        | 0.245**<br>(0.119)                        | -0.006<br>(0.107)                                    |
| Male       | 0.038<br>(0.161)                          | -0.012<br>(0.143)                                    |
| Russian    | -0.229<br>(0.156)                         | -0.191<br>(0.141)                                    |
| Education  | -1.443*<br>(0.773)                        | -0.263<br>(0.486)                                    |
| Homemaker  | -0.004<br>(0.214)                         | 0.076<br>(0.189)                                     |
| Retired    | -0.139<br>(0.230)                         | 0.158<br>(0.204)                                     |
| Unemployed | 0.058<br>(0.202)                          | 0.108<br>(0.181)                                     |
| Student    | 0.065<br>(0.343)                          | 0.436<br>(0.319)                                     |
| Income     | 0.252**<br>(0.111)                        | 0.289***<br>(0.099)                                  |
| South      | 0.353**<br>(0.146)                        | 0.182<br>(0.133)                                     |
| Constant   | 1.120<br>(0.815)                          |  |
| N          | 960                                       | 983  |

\*\*\* p < .01; \*\* p < .05; \* p < .1



Table 5: Effect of treatment on the probability that respondents are likely to protest

| <b>Sample</b>                | <b>Likely to protest</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full                         | -0.197#<br>(0.137)       |
| Satisfied with government    | -0.045<br>(0.178)        |
| Dissatisfied with government | -0.354#<br>(0.223)       |
| Things are getting better    | 0.064<br>(0.204)         |
| Things are staying the same  | -0.444*<br>(0.246)       |
| Things are getting worse     | -0.337<br>(0.313)        |

Each row reports the coefficient and standard error from a simple logit regression of treatment on likelihood of protest for the sample indicated. # :  $p < 0.15$ . \* :  $p < 0.10$

Table 6: Effect of treatment and moderators on likelihood of protest

|                   | <b>Model 1</b>       | <b>Model 2</b>       | <b>Model 3</b>    | <b>Model 4</b>       |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| treatment         | -0.444*<br>(0.246)   | -0.360<br>(0.250)    | -0.354<br>(0.223) | -0.419*<br>(0.229)   |
| optimist          | -0.174<br>(0.219)    | -0.177<br>(0.227)    |                   | 0.016<br>(0.169)     |
| pessimist         | 0.913***<br>(0.275)  | 0.911***<br>(0.278)  |                   | 0.963***<br>(0.203)  |
| satisfied         |                      | 0.023<br>(0.159)     | -0.328<br>(0.200) | -0.181<br>(0.211)    |
| treat x optimist  | 0.508<br>(0.320)     | 0.423<br>(0.323)     |                   |                      |
| treat x pessimist | 0.108<br>(0.398)     | 0.075<br>(0.404)     |                   |                      |
| treat x satisfied |                      |                      | 0.309<br>(0.285)  | 0.449<br>(0.293)     |
| Constant          | -0.576***<br>(0.163) | -0.556***<br>(0.184) | -0.248<br>(0.158) | -0.525***<br>(0.182) |
| N                 | 917                  | 885                  | 895               | 885                  |

\*\*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .1$

Results are from logit models with 'likely to protest' as the dependent variable.

Table 7: Effect of unrelated positivity on support for protest in Turkey

|   | <b>Model 1</b>       | <b>Model 2</b>       |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Freedom of expression grievance         | 0.746***<br>(0.192)  | 0.719***<br>(0.213)  |
| Positivity on other dimensions, count   | -0.192***<br>(0.039) |                      |
| Positivity on other dimensions, percent |                      | -1.070***<br>(0.244) |
| Constant                                | 0.352**<br>(0.177)   | 0.396*<br>(0.211)    |
| N                                       | 898                  | 877                  |

\*\*\*p < .01; \*\*p < .05; \*p < .1

All models are logits.

Table 8: Effect of unrelated positivity on support for protest in Ukraine

|  | <b>Model 1</b>       | <b>Model 2</b>       | <b>Model 3</b>       | <b>Model 4</b>       |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Support for EU   | 2.833***<br>(0.153)  | 2.780***<br>(0.155)  | 2.681***<br>(0.160)  | 2.605***<br>(0.163)  |
| Pro-trade  | 1.053***<br>(0.316)  | 1.089***<br>(0.321)  | 0.879***<br>(0.328)  | 0.890***<br>(0.332)  |
| Positivity index, combined econ./pub. goods factors                    | -0.444***<br>(0.083) |                      |                      |                      |
| Positivity index, disaggregated econ./pub. goods factors               |                      | -0.198***<br>(0.044) |                      |                      |
| Positivity index (no corrupt.), combined econ./pub. goods factors      |                      |                      | -0.474***<br>(0.094) |                      |
| Positivity index (no corrupt.), disaggregated econ./pub. goods factors |                      |                      |                      | -0.230***<br>(0.048) |
| corruption grievance   |                      |                      | 0.689*<br>(0.401)    | 0.491<br>(0.412)     |
| anti-Yanukovych  |                      |                      | 1.785***<br>(0.290)  | 1.865***<br>(0.290)  |
| Constant   | -2.383***<br>(0.334) | -2.313***<br>(0.344) | -4.345***<br>(0.565) | -4.064***<br>(0.575) |
| N  | 1260                 | 1185                 | 1217                 | 1144                 |

\*\*\*p < .01; \*\*p < .05; \*p < .1

All models are logits.

# English Text of Kyrgyzstan Survey

*Q1) What is your age?*

1. Under 20
2. 20-40
3. 40-60
4. Over 60

*Q2) What is your gender?*

1. Male
2. Female

*Q3) Which of the following most accurately describes your level of education?*

1. Completed primary education or less
2. Some secondary education
3. Completed secondary education
4. Some university education
5. Completed university education

*Q4) Which of the following most accurately describes your current employment status?*

1. Homemaker
2. Retired
3. Unemployed
4. Employed part-time
5. Employed full-time
6. Self-employed

*Q5) Which of the following most accurately describes your family income*

1. In the lowest 10% of the country
2. Less than average
3. About average

4. Above average
5. In the upper 10% of the country

*Q6) In what region of Kyrgyzstan does your family live?*

1. City of Bishkek
2. City of Osh
3. Chuy Province (not Bishkek)
4. Osh Province (not Osh city)
5. Batken Province
6. Jalal-Abad Province
7. Talas Province
8. Naryn Province
9. Issyk-Kul Province

*Q7) How satisfied are you with the Kyrgyz government?*

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied

*Q8) Do you think things in Kyrgyzstan are:*

1. Getting better
2. Getting worse
3. Staying about the same

*Q9) Which of the following issues would you be most likely to protest over?*

1. Government corruption
2. Unemployment
3. High/ rising prices
4. Migration or border issues

Q10) Which of the following issues would you be the second most likely to protest over?  
[NOTE: Do not include the option selected in [Q9]]

1. Government corruption
2. Unemployment
3. High/ rising prices
4. Migration or border issues

Q11) *[TREATMENT: Suppose the government takes positive steps to correct [Q10]]* How likely are you to join an anti-government protest about [9]?

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Not very likely
4. Highly unlikely

Q12) *Would the following considerations affect your decision to protest about [Q9]? Whether you thought the protest would be successful:*

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes, a little
3. No, not at all

*How many people you thought would also be at the protest:*

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes, a little
3. No, not at all

*Your general attitude towards the government:*

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes, a little
3. No, not at all

*Whether somebody you know was protesting:*

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes, a little
3. No, not at all

Q13) *Do you think protest can be an effective tool for influencing the government?*

1. Yes
2. Maybe
3. No

## Ukraine and Turkey survey questions

The data for both the Ukraine and Turkey models come from the Pew Research Global Attitudes Survey from Spring, 2014. The text of the questions and a full description of the methodology for each follow.

**Ukraine:** The Ukraine survey took place between April 5 and April 23 of 2014. The sample included the oblasts of Lunhans'k, Donets'k, and Crimea. Interviews were conducted face-to-face.

*Dependent variable.* The dependent variable comes from the following question:

**Q123c) In general, did you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the antigovernment protests that took place late last year and early this year in Independence Square in Kiev?**

An answer of 'strongly support' or 'somewhat support' is coded as support ('1'). An answer of 'somewhat oppose' or 'strongly oppose' is coded as no support ('0').

*Existence of grievance.* Four different questions are used to capture grievance. The first two are used in all the models, while the second two are only used in Models 3 and 4.

**Q15f) Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the European Union**

An individual who answers 'very favorable' or 'somewhat favorable' is coded as expressing a grievance ('1'), while one who answers 'somewhat unfavorable' or 'very unfavorable' is coded as not expressing a grievance ('0').

**Q27) What do you think about the growing trade and business tied between Ukraine and other countries - do you think it is a very good thing, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or a very bad thing for our country?**

An individual who answers 'very good thing' or 'somewhat good thing' is coded as expressing a grievance ('1'), while one who answers 'somewhat bad thing' or 'very bad thing' is coded as not expressing a grievance ('0').

**Q21b) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: corrupt political leaders**

An individual who answers 'very big problem' or 'moderately big problem' is coded as expressing a grievance ('1'), while one who answers 'small problem' or 'not a problem at all' is coded as not expressing a grievance ('0').

**Q54a) Now I'd like to ask your views about some leaders and organizations in our country. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Viktor Yanukovich.**

An individual who answers 'very unfavorable' or 'somewhat unfavorable' is coded as expressing a grievance ('1'), while one who answers 'very favorable' or 'somewhat favorable' is coded as not expressing a grievance ('0').

*Positivity index.* This is constructed using the following questions. In the models with combined pollution/economic/public goods factors, an individual must answer positively on all the questions to be coded as ‘positive.’ In the models with disaggregated pollution/economic/public goods factors, each question is counted separately. The positivity index is a simple count of how many considerations the respondent answers positively. Corruption is removed from this index in Models 3 and 4, and treated separately as a grievance.

**Q21a) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: crime.**

**Q21b) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: corrupt political leaders.**

**Q21c) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: poor quality schools. [PUBLIC GOODS]**

**Q21e) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: air pollution. [POLLUTION]**

**Q21f) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: water pollution. [POLLUTION]**

**Q21h) Now I am going to read you a list of things that may be problems in our country. Please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all: health care. [PUBLIC GOODS]**

**Q23a) Do you think rising prices is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all? [ECONOMIC]**

**Q23b) Do you think a lack of employment opportunities is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all? [ECONOMIC]**

**Q23a) Do you think the gap between the rich and poor is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all? [ECONOMIC]**

For all questions, an individual who answers ‘small problem’ or ‘not a problem at all’ is coded as positive (‘1’), while one who answers ‘very big problem’ or ‘moderately big problem’ is coded as not positive (‘0’).

**Turkey:** The Turkey survey was conducted face-to-face between April 11 and May 16 of 2014.

*Dependent variable.*

**Q123c) In general, did you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or**



**strongly oppose the antigovernment protests that took place late last year, such as those in Gezi Park?**

An answer of ‘strongly support’ or ‘somewhat support’ is coded as support (‘1’). An answer of ‘somewhat oppose’ or ‘strongly oppose’ is coded as no support (‘0’).

*Existence of grievance.* An individual is coded as having a grievance if he or she both cares about the issue and lists it as a problem:

**Q76i) How important is it to you to live in a country where people can hold peaceful protests against the government?**

An answer of ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ is coded as caring about the issue (‘1’), while an answer of ‘not too important’ or ‘not important at all’ is coded as not caring (‘1’)

**QTUR1i) Does the fact that people can hold peaceful protest against the government describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers ‘not too well’ or ‘not well at all’ is coded as thinking this is a problem (‘1’), while an individual who answers ‘very well’ or ‘somewhat well’ is coded as not thinking this is a problem (‘0’).

*Positivity index.* For each issue, and individual is coded as being positive if he or she both cares about the issue and believes it is not a problem. The count variable adds all the issues an individual feels positively about, while the percentage variable divides this by the total number of issues the respondent lists as important.

**Q76b) How important is it to you to live in a country where honest elections are held regularly with a choice of at least two political parties?**

An answer of ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ is coded as caring about the issue (‘1’), while an answer of ‘not too important’ or ‘not important at all’ is coded as not caring (‘0’)

**QTUR1b) Does “honest elections are held regularly with a choice of at least two political parties” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers ‘not too well’ or ‘not well at all’ is coded as thinking this is a problem (‘1’), while an individual who answers ‘very well’ or ‘somewhat well’ is coded as not thinking this is a problem (‘0’).

**Q76c) How important is it to you to live in a country where there is a judicial system that treats everyone in the same way?**

An answer of ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ is coded as caring about the issue (‘1’), while an answer of ‘not too important’ or ‘not important at all’ is coded as not caring (‘0’)

**QTUR1c) Does “there is a judicial system that treats everyone in the same way” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers ‘not too well’ or ‘not well at all’ is coded as thinking this is a problem (‘1’), while an individual who answers ‘very well’ or ‘somewhat well’ is coded as not thinking this is a problem (‘0’).

**Q76d) How important is it to you to live in a country where the military is under the control of civilian leaders?**

An answer of 'very important' or 'somewhat important' is coded as caring about the issue ('1'), while an answer of 'not too important' or 'not important at all' is coded as not caring ('0')

**QTUR1d) Does “the military is under the control of civilian leaders” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers 'not too well' or 'not well at all' is coded as thinking this is a problem ('1'), while an individual who answers 'very well' or 'somewhat well' is coded as not thinking this is a problem ('0').

**Q76e) How important is it to you to live in a country where the media can report the news without state/government censorship?**

An answer of 'very important' or 'somewhat important' is coded as caring about the issue ('1'), while an answer of 'not too important' or 'not important at all' is coded as not caring ('0')

**QTUR1e) Does “the media can report the news without state/government censorship” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers 'not too well' or 'not well at all' is coded as thinking this is a problem ('1'), while an individual who answers 'very well' or 'somewhat well' is coded as not thinking this is a problem ('0').

**Q76f) How important is it to you to live in a country where you can practice your religion freely?**

An answer of 'very important' or 'somewhat important' is coded as caring about the issue ('1'), while an answer of 'not too important' or 'not important at all' is coded as not caring ('0')

**QTUR1f) Does “you can practice your religion freely” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers 'not too well' or 'not well at all' is coded as thinking this is a problem ('1'), while an individual who answers 'very well' or 'somewhat well' is coded as not thinking this is a problem ('0').

**Q76g) How important is it to you to live in a country where there is economic prosperity?**

An answer of 'very important' or 'somewhat important' is coded as caring about the issue ('1'), while an answer of 'not too important' or 'not important at all' is coded as not caring ('0')

**QTUR1g) Does “there is economic prosperity” describe our country very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?**

An individual who answers 'not too well' or 'not well at all' is coded as thinking this is a problem ('1'), while an individual who answers 'very well' or 'somewhat well' is coded as not thinking this is a problem ('0').