

Determinants of Attitude Toward Political Parties in Palestine: The effect of the Egyptian Revolution on supporters of Fatah and Hamas¹

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Abstract

For the Palestinians, what is the impact of the Arab Spring? The revolution not only dislodged Mubarak from the presidency, but also changed Egyptian policy regarding Palestinians in Gaza. New Egyptian diplomacy has encouraged Hamas and Fatah, which had been in dispute, to seek reconciliation and has loosened the border control on humanitarian grounds. We focus on Palestinian voting attitudes in the wake of the Arab Spring. Despite the vast quantity of literature written about Palestinian politics since the first decade of the millennium, we know little about the determinants of Palestinian attitudes toward the divided governments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Fatah government, in the West Bank, increased in popularity after submitting a request for UN recognition of Palestinian statehood. In Gaza, the Hamas government lost popularity because of mismanagement but won support through the success of its prisoner swap deal with Israel.

However, evaluation of the ruling party does not depend only on one-time events. This research attempts to measure the impact of policy change in Gaza after the Arab Spring. We provide an account of our research on Palestinian attitudes toward the divided governments based on two sets of the original survey data conducted in May 2009 and June 2012. The paper sheds light on Palestinian attitudes and makes clear the effects of “democratization” in the Middle East and the effects of regional context factors on the occupied Palestinians.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Palestinians, Natural Experiment, Difference in Differences

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Introduction

The breakdown of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes occurred in the first months of 2011 through mass demonstrations against the ruling parties. It has since been labeled the Jasmine Revolution, the Egyptian Revolution, and, collectively, the Arab Spring. The name "Arab Spring" suggests that the protests spread across the Arab world including into the occupied Palestinian territories. One month after the fall of the Mubarak government, peaceful demonstrations, inspired by the Arab Spring, demanded that Fatah and Hamas leaders end the infighting and reconcile. The Palestinian Authority was divided into one government in the Gaza Strip and another in the West Bank because of a failed handover of power to Hamas after it won the second election of the Palestinian Legislative Council in January 2006.

Though Egypt had previously attempted to play a mediating role in the Palestine dispute, former President Hosni Mubarak was not seen as a fair mediator by Palestinians because he was regarded as an agent of U.S. Middle East policy. The Mubarak government maintained strict control of the border with southern Gaza, attempting to block the smuggling of arms, ammunition, and even daily commodities like cement. Since Israel regards Hamas as a terrorist group, the northern border of Gaza has been under blockade by the Israel Defense Force since Hamas came to power. Gazans have suffered under conditions of austerity and their world has become like a prison without walls.

After Israel introduced the blockade, smuggling became Gaza's alternative. Through the tunnels under Rafah came everything from building materials and food to medicine and clothing, from fuel and computers to livestock and cars. Hamas smuggled in weapons. (Verini, 2012, p. 59)

The revolution not only dislodged Mubarak from the presidency, but also changed Egyptian policy regarding Palestine. The new Egyptian regimes have encouraged the parties in dispute to reconcile and loosened border control on humanitarian grounds. In Cairo, on May 3, 2011, the leadership of Fatah and Hamas presented a joint press release concerning a reconciliation agreement. The reconciliation seemed to be a direct result of the Egyptian revolution from the standpoint of both the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and Khaled Meshaal, the

head of the Politburo of Hamas. The diplomatic policy of Egypt changed from acting as an agent of the U.S. to a position leaning in favor of the Palestinians. Abdel Bari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, identified the relationship between the Arab revolutions and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, claiming that the complete victory of the Egyptian revolution was the shortest way not only to the liberation of the Palestinians but also to the liberation of the Arab peoples (Atwan, 2011).

For the Palestinians, what is the impact of the Arab Spring? Would the enthusiasm for revolutions involve the residents in the occupied territories? Are Hamas or Fatah growing or falling in popularity because of the wave of Arab democratization? "The domestic politics of Middle Eastern states are affected by their regional and international environments in numerous ways." (Gause, 2010, p. 49). We have seen much interaction between domestic and international events in the region. These interacting political situations stem from the characteristics of the political systems of many Middle Eastern states built by the European contest for power before World War II. The unresolved problem of the Israeli-Palestine conflict is born from these systems. "Perhaps no political system in the Arab world shows the sharp impact of international politics more than Palestine." (Brown, 2010, p. 385).

In this study, we focus on Palestinian political attitudes in the wake of the Arab Spring. This research questions the magnitude of the impact of the Arab Spring on the Palestinians. We wonder whether this impact led to an increase or a decrease in the popularity of Palestinian political parties. Does the Egyptian policy change in border control determine Palestinian attitudes toward Hamas and Fatah in the Gaza Strip? This paper contains four sections. The first briefly reviews the existing literature on the association between foreign affairs and political attitudes. The literature review presents the theoretical foundations for the quantitative analyses, which are explored in the third section. The second section provides a detailed description of the data set for the study and of the hypotheses. The third section outlines and examines the hypotheses on the basis of quantitative models. The final section discusses the results of these analyses and presents the implications of this study for political studies of the Middle East.

I. Democratic Dominos and the Political Attitudes of Ordinary Citizens

The Palestinian question is a central component of Middle East politics. It lies behind several wars and two uprisings, the First Intifada and the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict causes a political spillover effect across the Arab and Islamic world because of a sense of Muslim community, Ummah, or Arab nationalism among its neighbors. Those countries invested in the issue of Palestine are not only the “moderate” Arab countries (e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) but also the “radical” block, in the view of the United States, like Syria or Iran. Russia has frequently acted as a main player in opposing U.S. diplomatic intervention in the Middle East.

The Mubarak government gave priority to the Israel-Palestinian peace process in its foreign policy. However, the purpose of Egyptian diplomacy was not to promote the peace process but to stabilize the Middle Eastern regional order. As Dessouki (2008, p. 169) describes, “Egyptian foreign policy under Mubarak has been characterized by stability, moderation, and predictability.” The Palestinians regarded the diplomatic position of the former Egyptian president as intended to maintain the status quo. Therefore, from Egyptian and Palestinian viewpoints, it was effectively designed to protect the national interests of the U.S. and Israel.

Former president Mubarak attempted to act as a mediator to facilitate reconciliation between Palestinian factions. However, as mentioned above, Hamas maintained a cautious attitude toward him because his government was viewed as tilting toward Fatah. The Islamists of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood established Hamas as an independent organization in December 1987, and the members of Hamas maintain an intimate connection with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Therefore, the Mubarak government, which feared the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, tightened border control and contributed to the Gaza blockade to restrain Islamist activities. Hamas refused an Egyptian proposal for reconciliation with Fatah in September 2009 (Ezaki, 2012, p. 77).

The overthrow of the Mubarak regime led subsequently to the rise of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took power until the establishment of the next government and decided to permanently reopen the Rafah border crossing for passengers and ease the siege of the Gaza Strip on 28 May 2011 (Brownlee, 2012, p.

163). This meant that a direct policy transformation regarding the occupied Palestinian territories occurred because of the Arab Spring. Palestinian Islamists might celebrate the fact that the Freedom and Justice Party, the party of the Muslim Brotherhood, occupied 47.2% of the parliamentary seats as of the last election in 2012. The first official trip abroad of the Hamas prime minister in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, may be one of the achievements of the Arab Spring. In Tunisia, the prime minister, government ministers, and the leader of the Islamist An-Nahda movement, the landslide election winner of the constitutional assembly after the Arab Spring, greeted and honored Haniya as a visiting head of state. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood also gave him a great welcome and the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Badie, had a meeting with him. Badie affirmed the close ties between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, and said "The Arab Spring will become a blood-soaked winter for the occupation. The Zionist program is coming to an end." (Barkan, 2012). The rise of the Islamists in Egypt came to a climax with the victory of Mohamed Morsi, the candidate of the Freedom and Justice Party, in the presidential election in June 2012.

It is a well-known phenomenon for political scientists that successful democratization encourages the breakdown of dictatorship in neighboring countries. This is called the "democratic domino" (Leeson & Dean, 2009; Starr, 1991; Starr & Lindborg, 2003) or the "diffusion of democracy" (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Teorell, 2010), and the Arab Spring is no exception. The democratic domino theory relies on the premise that geographic proximity plays a critical role in the spread of democracy. Although the theory provides some potential mechanisms for democratic dominoes, "a demonstration effect" or "learning" idea regarding the tactics and strategies of the successful countries is the most important channel, in our view, with which to do research into public opinion (Leeson & Dean, 2009; Simmons, Dobbin, & Garret, 2006). Huntington (1991, p. 101) points out Korean activists learned the "people power" approach in the Philippines, and Hungarian democratization was the result of the direct consultation between the democratizers and their Spanish predecessors.

When tens of thousands of Palestinian people took part in protests on 15 March 2011 to demand an end to the division between Hamas and Fatah, they adopted demonstration tactics and strategies from the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution and the

Egyptian Revolution. Young activists utilized Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, emulating their brothers and sisters in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya (Sherwood, 2011; Sherwood & Balousha, 2011). The protests pushed the leaders of Fatah and Hamas to present a joint press release concerning a reconciliation agreement in Cairo about two months later. This agreement is the achievement of the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation deal between Hamas and Fatah by the post-Mubarak regime (Brownlee, 2012, p. 163). However, did the Tunisian and Egyptian influence on Palestinian activists also change the political attitudes of ordinary citizens?

Previous research on the political attitudes of the Palestinians has examined the fields of foreign policy, democratization, and election studies. Shamir and Shikaki (2010) produced unique and well-organized studies looking at public opinion on the topic of the Middle East Peace Process in Israeli and Palestinian society. Hamanaka (2002) has heightened interested in Palestinian democratic values, civil society, and the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority. Jamal (2007) tried to find signs of undemocratic value among the Palestinians living under occupation by use of an integrated quantitative data analysis of original poll results and interviews with NGO members. Abu-Sada (1996) addressed the association between party affiliation and Palestinian political attitudes, convincingly arguing that Fatah supporters support peace negotiations and oppose the armed resistance against Israel. Adherents of other parties oppose the peace process and support the violent struggle. These results indicate that the Palestinians have consistency in their attitudes toward party affiliation and diplomatic policy.

Although convincing arguments have been made about the nature of Palestinian political attitudes, much of the quantitative research ignores the effect of a drastic transformation of the regional order on the citizen's decision-making process in the occupied territories. This is the consequence of the limited research design of the literature, which used a single-shot survey or cross-sectional data for the purpose of comparative analysis. Systemic transformations—such as the Arab Spring—are rare and did not take place in the region, in spite of the preponderance for wars and armed conflicts. The opportunity has come to examine the effect of the Arab democratic revolution on Palestinians as if it were a natural experiment (Stock & Watson, 2012, pp. 529–536). Here, we apply the research design of intertemporal comparison to find

determinants of Palestinian attitudes toward Hamas and Fatah. That is, this study requires the collection of two datasets, one before and one after the Arab revolution.

Hypothesis: *The Arab Spring movement affected the views of supporters of Hamas and Fatah. In particular, changes in post-revolution Egyptian policy had an effect on the voting attitudes of Palestinians.*

The hypothesis is consistent with the interactive character of Arab politics cited in Gause (2010). Palestinian politics sharply influences other Arab countries, and the inverse influence might exist in Middle Eastern politics at the same time. The West Bank has enjoyed the benefit of economic growth driven by development assistance (World Bank, 2010; World Bank, 2011). The electorate may support the Fatah government because of economic prosperity, even if it is not sustainable over a long period. By contrast, the Gaza Strip has suffered from frequent fuel shortages and dysfunctional medical services. The quality of daily life has deteriorated due to several electricity crises. The tunnels under the border with Egypt provide a lifeline for Gaza through the supply of commodities since Israel has closed the border and now controls the distribution of goods. Although the Hamas government restored public order after the deportation of Fatah fighters in 2007, the Gaza Strip continues to have severe economic problems due to the Israeli blockade (Kawakami, 2012, pp. 213–249; Verini, 2012).

II. Data and Methods

The data used for this study comes from two waves of the National Poll Survey in Palestine: Palestine 2009 and Palestine 2012. This author had a leading role in designing the survey and drafting the questionnaires. The two surveys were conducted in May 2009 and in June 2012, drawing a representative sample from the Palestinian residents (over 18 years old) of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, collectively referred to as the occupied Palestinian territories. The Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre (JMCC) conducted interviews in Arabic with a stratified, three-stage random sample of 800 participants in both polls. In the first stage, 80 sampling

areas (communities) were selected based on the Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 2007 conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, after stratification of the population by district and type of community (urban, rural, and refugee camp) with probabilities proportional to size.² In the second stage, 10 households were selected from each of the chosen sampling points. Finally, in the third stage, one individual from each household was selected using Kish tables.³ Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected individuals.

JMCC interviewers are instructed to go to assigned primary sampling units to conduct the 10 interviews per sampling area. Within each sampling area, the household selection method is based on a pre-defined route. Interviewers are instructed to follow a specific route when selecting the household. Since most population concentrations are not designed for development, nor is there a well-defined bloc system, interviewers, particularly in villages and refugee camps, are asked to go to a specific place (e.g., mosque, elementary school) to begin their route. They are instructed to start from that place and then take, for example, the fourth street on their left. When the street is determined, they are instructed to choose the third or second house on their right, then the following third house on the left, etc. The number of levels in each house is also taken into consideration, as is the number of streets where the household is selected.

In cities, the same method is used. The city is divided into neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are also randomly selected, and in each neighborhood interviewers have a starting point; then each neighborhood is treated in the same way as above for the selection of households. As for the members of the household, respondents are selected using Kish tables. The Kish method is an objective procedure for selecting respondents within the household. Each household is visited a maximum of twice to locate the selected person. Table 1 shows a descriptive summary of the data for analysis.

² The statistical foundation of the procedure of probabilities proportional to size is explained in Ch. 7 of (Kish, 1965).

³ Kish (1965, pp. 395–404) takes us through the use of Kish tables in the selection of individual respondents.

Table 1
Descriptive Summary of the Data

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Voting	1600	2.505625	1.098623	1	4
Gaza	1600	0.405625	0.4911661	0	1
Year	1600	0.5	0.5001563	0	1
Year_Gaza	1600	0.225	0.4177129	0	1
Income	1590	3.790566	1.36882	1	9
Sex	1600	1.503125	0.5001466	1	2
Education	1595	6.020063	2.539445	1	13
Age	1589	35.56954	13.45605	18	90
Egypt	1529	3.251799	1.263684	1	5
United States	1518	2.317523	1.411637	1	5
Russia	1432	2.335196	1.072855	1	5
Iran	1472	2.439538	1.245691	1	5
Syria	1496	2.40508	1.157359	1	5
Israel	1519	1.745227	1.240618	1	5
Saudi Arabia	1512	3.175265	1.154669	1	5
Qatar	1502	3.026631	1.188703	1	5

Research Design: Difference-in-Differences Method

The Arab Spring, and especially the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, occurred suddenly without a direct connection to Palestinian politics. Here, we are able to regard it as a kind of a natural experiment. A special method is required to examine the effect of systemic transformative waves, such as regional revolutions, on Palestinian political attitudes. Therefore, we try to establish the difference-in-differences estimator of changing distribution of party support before and after the Arab Spring. In order to investigate the effect of pro-Palestinian policies, for example, opening the border with Southern Gaza, enhanced diplomatic ties between the post-Mubarak regime and the Islamist Hamas government in Gaza, and support from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for Hamas, we treat the sample in the West Bank as the control group

without the effect of an opened border. The sample in the Gaza Strip will be the treatment group because of the opening of the Egyptian border.

The difference-in-differences identification strategy, the difference-in-differences (DD) model, is useful for the estimation of policy effects with pooled cross sections data (Agrist & Pischke, 2009, pp. 227–233). We merge Palestine 2009 and 2012 data and create the identification variable of time (Year), the treatment variable of Gaza Strip (Gaza), and the interaction variable of the identification and the treatment (Year_Gaza). The DD model is a device to find the true treatment effect of Egyptian policy changes after the Arab Spring through an assumed counterfactual voting attitude toward Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The simple difference between voting attitudes toward Hamas and Fatah is not valid to evaluate the policy change in Gaza. We have to not only control the effect of other variables, but also get the DD estimator from the difference between the intention of voting for Hamas after the Arab Spring and the counterfactual intention to vote for Hamas in a parallel world in which Hosni Mubarak continued to govern Egypt in 2012.

The DD method applies multinomial logistic regressions to estimate the effect of the Egyptian revolution on Palestinian attitudes. The dependent variable of the multinomial logistic model is of the discrete type: voting for Hamas, voting for Fatah, voting for other parties or no vote. The independent variables are Year, Gaza, and the interaction term in the logistic models. Year identifies before or after the Arab Spring. The variable of Gaza distinguishes the control group from the treatment group under the effect of an open border policy. The coefficient of the interaction term means the average treatment effect in the following simple expression: $\hat{\delta} = (P(\bar{y}_{2,T}) - P(\bar{y}_{2,C})) - (P(\bar{y}_{1,T}) - P(\bar{y}_{1,C}))$. *T* means treatment group, *C* is control group, and number subscripts denote the first and the second period (Wooldridge, 2013, pp. 438–443).

The set of the control variables includes socio-demographic characteristics, as well as evaluations of Egypt, the United States, Russia, Iran, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar as contributors to regional stability in the Middle East. According to the sociological approach of the Columbia school (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948), demographic traits, (e.g., sex, age, education, and income) would correlate with specific political parties (Abu-Sada, 1996). The countries on the above list appear to be major

powers in Middle East politics, according to the literature, especially Gause (2010). The pattern of assessments of the countries would be associated with the party identification of Palestinians.

III. Analysis

Beginning with simple examinations, Table 2 shows the changes in the popularity of Hamas and Fatah among Palestinians between May 2009 and June 2012. The rate of voting for Hamas increased 2.2 percentage points in three years. The difference is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level. The rate of voting for Fatah increased 6.5 percentage points, but this statistic passes a significance test of proportion at a 0.01 level. This leads to the remark that the popularity of Hamas dropped while Fatah retained their adherents in this period.

Table 2

Palestinian ratings of voting for Hamas and Fatah

	May 2009	June 2012	Diff 2012-2009
Hamas	19.4%	21.6%	+2.2
Fatah	32.5%	39.0%	+6.5 ***

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed χ^2 - test

Table 3

Ratings of voting for Hamas in Gaza and of Fatah by Region

	May 2009	June 2012	Diff 2012-2009
Hamas in Gaza	26.0%	26.2%	+0.2
Hamas in West Bank	15.7%	19.0%	+3.3
Fatah in Gaza	35.6%	33.1%	-2.5
Fatah in the West Bank	30.7%	42.4%	+11.7 ***

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed χ^2 - test

Table 3 presents ratings of Hamas and Fatah by residents of Gaza and the West Bank separately. The supporters of Hamas did not change significantly but Fatah followers

increased about 12 percentage points in the West Bank, reaching a level of statistical significance ($p = 0.001$). It is evident from the first result that Hamas not only held its support in the West Bank and East Jerusalem but kept constant support as the ruling party in Gaza. The result also indicates that the Fatah government enjoyed increasing popularity in the West Bank. It is unclear whether the findings in the two cross tables, Tables 2 and 3, support the hypothesis or not. Hence, we must further observe the direct association between the Arab Spring and Palestinian attitudes toward political parties before reaching a conclusion.

Table 4

Results of Multinomial Regressions of Voting Attitudes toward Hamas, with Not Voting as the Base Category: Regression Coefficients (with Standard Errors in Parentheses)

	Model 1			Model 2			Mode 3			Model 4		
	Not Vote: Hamas			Not Vote: Hamas			Not Vote: Hamas			Not Vote: Hamas		
Intercept	-0.81	***	(0.13)	-0.18		(0.48)	-2.23	***	(0.46)	-1.55	*	(0.69)
Gaza	1.23	*	(0.24)	1.25	***	(0.23)	0.98	***	(0.26)	0.98	***	(0.27)
Year	0.43	*	(0.19)	0.49	*	(0.19)	0.78	***	(0.24)	0.86	***	(0.25)
Year_Gaza	-0.81	***	(0.13)	-0.84	**	(0.31)	-0.63		(0.36)	-0.74	*	(0.37)
Income				0.01		(0.06)				0.02		(0.07)
Sex				-0.05		(0.15)				-0.05		(0.17)
Education				-0.04		(0.03)				-0.05		(0.03)
Age				-0.01		(0.01)				-0.01		(0.01)
Egypt							0.17	*	(0.09)	0.17		(0.09)
United States							-0.22	*	(0.09)	-0.23	*	(0.09)
Russia							0.03		(0.10)	0.03		(0.10)
Iran							0.36	***	(0.08)	0.36	***	(0.09)
Syria							0.16		(0.10)	0.18		(0.10)
Israel							-0.18		(0.10)	-0.20	*	(0.10)
Saudi Arabia							0.02		(0.09)	0.02		(0.09)
Qatar							0.08		(0.07)	0.09		(0.08)
N	1,600			1,585			1,326			1,314		
χ^2 (significance)	66.32 (0.0000)			108.93 (0.0000)			233.54 (0.0000)			264.07 (0.0000)		
Pseudo-R ²	0.02			0.03			0.07			0.07		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, two-tailed t-test

The difference-in-differences part of the quantitative analysis examines Models 1 through 4 by multinomial logistic regression. The dependent variable of the statistical model is four possible outcomes of voting behavior in this coding: (1) Hamas, (2) Fatah, (3) other parties, and (4) not vote. Table 4 shows the partial regression coefficient and its statistical significance for each variable on voting probability for Hamas as opposed to no vote. Table 5 reports the results in the case of probability for Fatah. The results of voting for other parties and not voting are considered a single base category because other political parties are small and not important without Hamas and Fatah for considering Palestinian politics from a broad perspective.

Table 5

Results of Multinomial Regressions of Voting Attitudes Toward Fatah, with Not Voting as the Base Category: Regression Coefficients (with Standard Errors in Parentheses)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Not Vote: Fatah		Not Vote: Fatah		Not Vote: Fatah		Not Vote: Fatah	
Intercept	-0.13	(0.11)	0.87 *	(0.37)	-0.36	(0.38)	0.97	(0.58)
Gaza	0.87 ***	(0.21)	0.87 ***	(0.21)	0.30	(0.24)	0.35	(0.24)
Year	0.56 ***	(0.15)	0.65 ***	(0.16)	0.56 **	(0.20)	0.65 ***	(0.20)
Year_Gaza	-0.96 ***	(0.28)	-1.06 ***	(0.28)	-0.76 *	(0.32)	-0.87 **	(0.33)
Income			0.03	(0.05)			-0.01	(0.06)
Sex			-0.39 **	(0.13)			-0.39 *	(0.15)
Education			-0.02	(0.02)			-0.03	(0.02)
Age			-0.01 *	(0.00)			-0.01 *	(0.01)
Egypt					0.29 ***	(0.07)	0.28 ***	(0.08)
United States					-0.10	(0.08)	-0.10	(0.08)
Russia					0.13	(0.09)	0.12	(0.09)
Iran					-0.32 ***	(0.08)	-0.32 ***	(0.08)
Syria					0.03	(0.08)	0.06	(0.08)
Israel					-0.17 *	(0.08)	-0.18 *	(0.08)
Saudi Arabia					0.21 **	(0.08)	0.21 **	(0.08)
Qatar					-0.06	(0.06)	-0.06	(0.07)
N	1,600		1,585		1,326		1,314	
χ^2 (significance)	66.32 (0.0000)		108.93 (0.0000)		233.54 (0.0000)		264.07 (0.0000)	
Pseudo-R ²	0.02		0.03		0.07		0.07	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed t-test

Model 1 is the baseline model and estimates the effect of $\hat{\delta}$: the interaction term of the identification and the treatment (Year_Gaza) on voting behavior. Model 2 contains socio-demographic traits of the Palestinians as the control variables. Model 3 attempts to find the effect of $\hat{\delta}$ in controlling each evaluation of foreign countries on regional stability. Model 4 is a full model containing the set of the control variables.

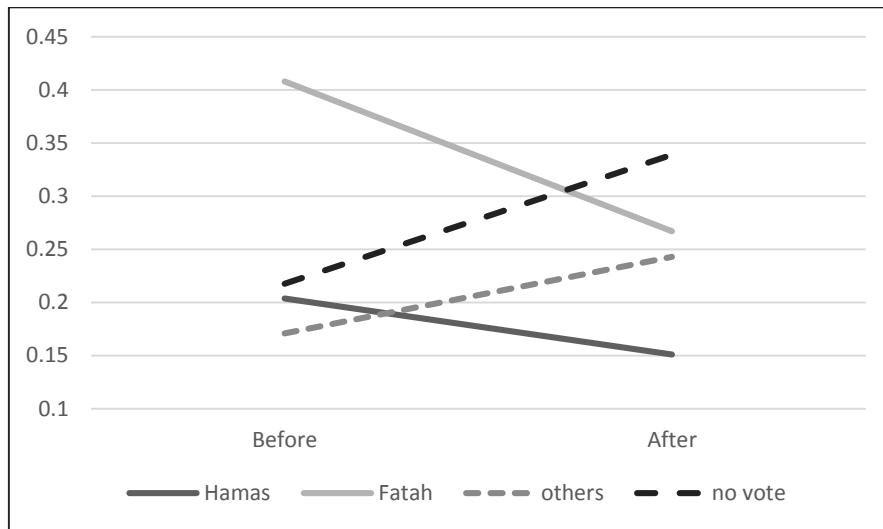


Figure 1. Change in the Probability of voting attitude in the DD model

Table 4 indicates that the coefficient of Year_Gaza on voting for Hamas is statistically significant in Model 1, 2, and 4 but the significance of the interaction disappears in Model 3. However, each sign of the difference-in-differences estimator ($\hat{\delta}$) is consistently negative in Table 4. In the case of voting for Fatah, Table 5 presents the effect of the interaction estimated as the same as it is for Hamas in each model. Figure 1 gives an intuitive understanding of the DD model on the voting attitudes toward Palestinian political parties in the estimation of Model 4. The estimated probability of voting for Hamas was 0.204 in Gaza before the Arab Spring. It would decrease to 0.151 after the Egyptian policy change regarding border control. The popularity of Fatah fell by 13 percentage points from the estimation of the DD model. On the contrary, the model predicted a higher likelihood of not voting in Gaza after than before the breakdown of the Mubarak regime.

The significant control variables provide us with information on the association of party affiliation with international relations. The regression results of Models 3 and 4

indicate that Hamas followers prefer the diplomacy of Iran and have a negative image of the United States. The regression coefficient of Egypt is positive in Model 3 and that of Israel is negative in Model 4 of Table 4. The results were partial and not robust, but informative because they represent the diplomatic partnership of Hamas with Egypt. Fatah supporters prefer the diplomacy of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in tackling political issues and thus contributing to regional stability. Table 5 gives robust and similar results attributed to foreign relations regardless of the presence or absence of socio-demographic control variables.

The DD model illustrates the association between voting probability for Islamist or nationalist factions and the diplomatic changes in Egypt under reconstructing the Middle East regional order after the Arab Spring. The coefficients of the interaction variable are statistically significant without Model 3 in Table 4. This means that the evaluation of Egyptian diplomacy after the revolution may absorb the effect of Year_Gaza to explain the probability of voting for Hamas. On the other hand, the significance of the interaction coefficient revives at a 0.05 level in the full model. The results of Model 4 support the finding that the policy change in Rafah has an effect on Palestinian voting attitudes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While discussing the set of control variables, the results of Models 3 and 4 are almost consistent with the diplomatic position of both parties.

IV. Discussion

This study examined the policy impact of the post-Mubarak regime on the voting attitudes of Palestinians. In summary of the simple analysis in Table 2, we find the following results: the rate of voting for Hamas remains unchanged throughout Palestine and the rate of voting for Fatah increased 6.5 percentage points. Palestinian support for Fatah has gone up drastically by 12 points in the West Bank shown in Table 3. What produces such a change? Is it appropriate to attribute the popularity of Fatah to Egyptian mediation, which contributed to a reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah in Cairo? Did the lifting of closures on the border with Gaza change the popular perception of political parties?

Examination of the difference-in-differences analysis reveals a direct relationship between the Arab Spring and party affiliation. Figure 1 shows that the probability of voting for both Hamas and Fatah decreased after the Arab Spring in the Gaza Strip. The relationship can almost be regarded as robustness. Since the Egyptian Revolution has contributed to the Islamization of politics through the victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in parliamentary and presidential elections, we find no evidence that changes in Egyptian diplomatic policy increased the popularity of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Rather, the effect on the voting attitudes toward the two factions is negative with holding statistical significance in Tables 4 and 5.

What is the influence of the Arab Spring on Palestinian politics? We are able to support the hypothesis due to the findings. *The Arab Spring movement changed the views of the adherents of Hamas and Fatah. In particular, changes in Egyptian policy regarding Palestine had an effect on voting attitudes toward the Palestinian factions.* Changes in Egyptian diplomacy appear to have had a negative effect on the attitudes of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and it seems to have decreased the popularity of both Hamas and Fatah in Gaza.

We make an inference from the finding, which might reflect that the policy change was spurious and restrictive. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the successor to Mubarak, made it a priority to maintain the peace treaty with Israel to preserve regional order. Even the Morsi government did not establish diplomatic relations with Gaza in order to avoid confusion and maintain ties with the United States. As Verini (2012) notes, though Egypt reopened the Rafah border crossing, it still prevented young males in Gaza from coming through. The elected president, Mohamed Morsi, who wished to keep Hamas at a distance, did not pledge to help Gaza in a substantive way, as Palestinians had hoped he would. In addition, Hamas profits from the tunnel economy in Gaza. The Islamist government taxes all the materials that pass through the smuggling tunnels. "Tunnel revenue is estimated to provide Hamas with as much as \$750 million a year" (Verini, 2012, p. 59). It is not difficult to conjecture that the Hamas government in Gaza is notorious for smuggling and corruption.

Then, what explains the increasing popularity of Fatah in the West Bank after the Arab Spring? It is likely that the popular support for Fatah is the result of economic

growth and real estate development in the West Bank. Alternatively, it may also be an effect of President Mahmud Abbas's request for UN recognition of Palestinian statehood. The UN General Assembly recognized the request in November 2012. These are, however, only conjectures. Further studies of the democratic domino in the Middle East are in progress and will be reported elsewhere. Perhaps the enthusiasm of the Arab revolution does not extend to the residents of the occupied territories, at least not since the demonstrations for the independence of Palestine and the clash with the Israeli police force on the anniversary of the 1948 Nakba catastrophe in 2011. The clash may be a phenomenon of "democratic diffusion."

In summary, at least for the Palestinians in Gaza, the victory of the Egyptian revolution and resulting policy changes disappointed supporters of the two largest political factions. The division of the Palestinian Authority continues in spite of repeated reconciliation appeals from the Egyptian government. We have to understand that, in the minds of Gaza residents, there is huge disappointment in the ineffectualness of Hamas and Fatah, and therefore it is difficult to examine the direct effect of changing Egyptian diplomacy in the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring. The determinants of attitude toward political parties in Palestine are contained in the composition of foreign relations in the Middle East; however, Palestinians determine their party politics with only indirect reference to the Arab Spring.

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