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Survey Research in the Arab World: Challenges and Opportunities

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Author Biography

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Abstract

Survey research has steadily expanded in the Arab world since the 1980s. The Arab spring marked a watershed when surveying became possible in Tunisia and Libya, and questionnaires included previously censored questions. Almost every Arab country is now included in the Arab Barometer or World Values Survey and researchers have numerous datasets to answer theoretical and policy questions. Yet some scholars express the view that the Arab survey context is more challenging than other regions or that respondents will not answer honestly. I argue that this reflects biases of “Arab exceptionalism,” more than fair assessments of data quality. Based on cross-national data analysis, I find evidence of systematically missing data—a possible indicator of social desirability bias—in all regions and political regimes. These challenges and the increasing openness of some Arab countries to survey research should spur studies on the data collection process in the Arab world and beyond.

Keywords: Survey research * Public opinion * Middle East and North Africa

Introduction

Survey research has expanded dramatically in the Arab world since the late 1980s.ⁱ Implemented first in authoritarian regimes undergoing political liberalization—including Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine, Algeria, Iraq, Yemen, and prior to the Arab spring in Egypt—these studies, conducted as part of the World Values Survey (WVS) and Arab Barometer by Mark Tessler, Mustapha Hamarneh, Amaney Jamal, Mansoor Moaddel, Khalil Shikaki, and others, broke new ground. During the 2000s, a few Gulf countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar—were added, and a regional survey research hub, the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), was established in Qatar, joining similar institutes in Palestine and Jordan (Appendix Table A1).ⁱⁱ At the same time, the growing body of surveys left many theoretical and policy questions unanswered. Due to their sensitivity, questions on voter choice and support for Islamist movements were not included in early questionnaires. Yet, over time, additional countries and topics were added. On the eve of the Arab spring, a total of at least 30 surveys had been fielded in thirteen Arab countries, Turkey, and Iran—up from 2 in 1988 (Figure 1).

[Figure 1]

Figure 1. Growth of surveys in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

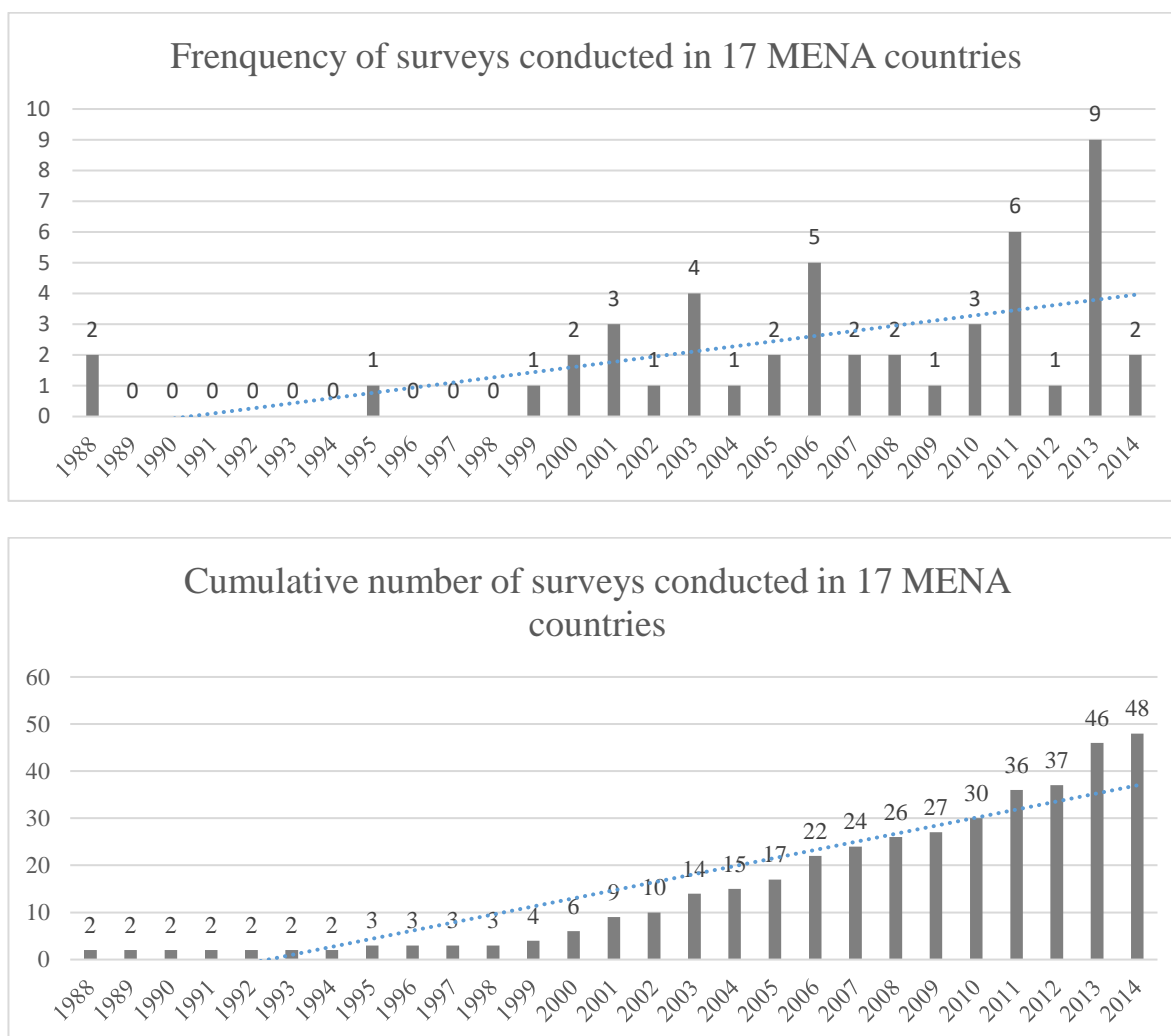


Figure 1 shows survey research in the MENA, based on the Carnegie Middle East Governance and Islam Dataset (Tessler 2016), which includes 56 surveys and more than 80,000 interviews.

Yet, the Arab spring marked a watershed for survey research, dramatically accelerating data collection and offering a suitable opportunity to reflect on past successes and future potential. Surveys were conducted for the first time in Tunisia and Libya following their 2011 uprisings. Due to its political openness and expanding survey capacity, Tunisia became rich terrain for social scientists as it transitioned to a minimalist democracy. Countries such as Morocco and Jordan experienced limited political reform, but public opinion reacted to regional events there as well. Support for democracy declined in several

countries (Benstead and Snyder 2017), and attitudes toward foreign policy issues shifted in theoretically interesting ways as well (Benstead 2017b).

In some cases, opportunities to conduct surveys were fleeting. Egypt returned to authoritarian rule and Libya's civil war continued, making survey research difficult, due to instability. In addition, although the World Values Survey and Arab Barometer have not been conducted in Syria, many scholars and organizations are conducting surveys in Syria and among displaced Syrians.ⁱⁱⁱ

Yet, dozens of datasets exist. As shown in Table 1, almost every Arab country is included in the WVS, Afrobarometer, and Arab Barometer (Jamal and Tessler 2008; Tessler, Jamal, and Robbins 2012). In addition, survey research conducted by the Transitional Governance Project (TGP 2017),^{iv} the Program on Governance and Local Development (GLD 2017),^v and other researchers and projects has also increased.

[Table 1]

Table 1. Nationally-representative surveys in the Arab world

	World Values Survey	Arab Barometer (Wave)	Afro Barometer	Constituent Survey & Transitional Governance Project (TGP)	Program on Governance and Local Development (GLD)
Morocco	2001/2007/2011	2006 (1)/2013- 2014 (3)	2013	2007	
Algeria	2002/2013	2006 (1)/2011 (2)/2013 (3)	2013	2007	
Tunisia	2013	2011 (2)/2013 (3)	2013	2012/2014	2015
Libya	2014	2014 (3)	2013	2013	
Egypt	2001/2008/2013	2011 (2)/2013 (3)		2011/2012	
Jordan	2001/2007/2014	2006 (1)/2010 (2)/2012-2013 (3)			2014
Iraq	2004/2006/2012	2011 (2)/2013 (3)			
Syria					
Palestinian Territories	2013	2006 (1)/2010 (2)/2012 (3)			
Lebanon	2013	2007 (1)/2011 (2)/2013 (3)			
Kuwait	2014	2014 (3)			
Qatar	2010				
United Arab Emirates					
Bahrain	2014	2009 (1) ¹			
Oman					
Saudi Arabia	2003	2011 (2)			
Yemen	2014	2007 (1)/2011 (2)/2013 (3)			
Sudan		2010-2011 (2)/2013 (3)	2013		

¹500 respondents (Tessler 2016). Appendix Table A1.

Interest in survey research is also increasing among Middle East political scientists. As shown in Figure 2, the number of papers presented at Middle East Studies Association (MESA) annual meetings using survey data increased from 12 (2009) to 33 (2016)—by almost three times—while presentations at the American Political Science Association (APSA) annual meeting grew from 1 (2009) to 10 (2016). These include survey experiments, which combine probability sampling with random assignment, and vary photos, question

wording, and frames (Benstead, Jamal, and Lust 2015; Bush and Jamal 2015; Bush and Prather Forthcoming; Corstange and Marinov 2012; Nugent, Masoud, and Jamal 2016; Shelef and Zeira 2015).

[Figure 2]

Figure 2. MESA (left) and APSA (right) presentations

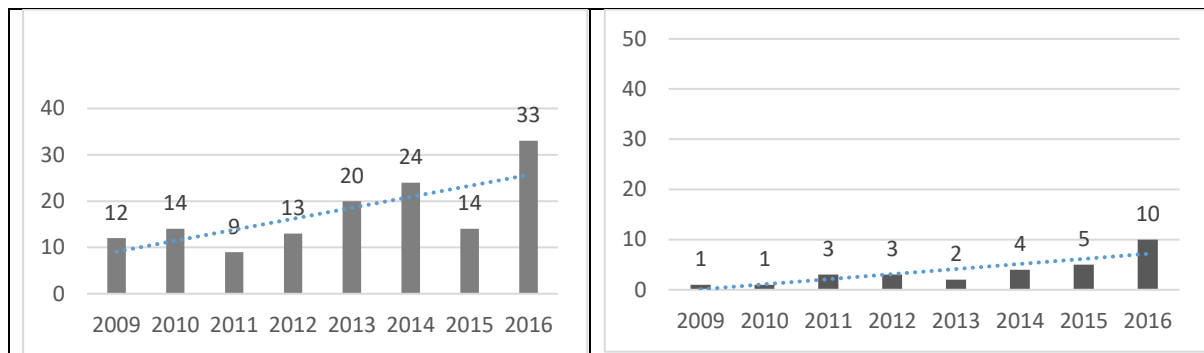


Figure 2 (left) shows papers presented at MESA annual meetings, based on a search for “survey” in abstracts, where the term refers to opinion rather than archival or qualitative surveys. Figure 2 (right) shows papers and posters presented at APSA based on titles. (Appendix Table A2).

At the same time, the range of topics has also expanded to include transitional politics in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Among the questions scholars can explore include:^{vi}

1. Why did citizens participate in the uprisings? (Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur 2015)
2. How do regimes reconsolidate after transitions? Are the same voters engaged before and after revolutions?
3. What explains support for Islamist and non-Islamist parties? (Pellicer and Wegner 2015)
4. To what extent does vote-buying occur? Why do citizens respond to clientelistic and programmatic appeals?
5. Why do Arab citizens vary in their support for a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine?

6. Why do citizens support globalization, trade, and foreign direct investment? How do citizens respond to western interference in internal politics? (Nugent, Masoud, and Jamal 2016).

In order to expand existing research and answer these questions, it is important to address concerns raised by some conference participants and reviewers about data quality in the Arab world. These concerns stem from the threat of preference falsification in authoritarian regimes (Kuran 1997), and, to a lesser extent and largely anecdotally, from worries about the difficult survey environment, due to political instability in some countries.^{vii} Yet, based on analyses of existing cross-national datasets, I find evidence of systematically missing data—a possible indicator of social desirability bias—in Arab cases, but in other regions as well. I argue that worries that the Arab world is a more challenging survey context—or that citizens answer dishonestly—reflect biases of “Arab exceptionalism,” more than fair assessments of data quality. These challenges should spur methodological research to understand the data collection process. This paper discusses Arab survey context, including the impact of authoritarianism on data quality, and highlights ethical issues arising from Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), one of several tools to study and address bias.

The Arab Survey Context

A growing literature focuses on how observable interviewer traits, including religious dress and gender, and the apparent research sponsor, affect participation and responses in the Arab world (Blaydes and Gillum 2013; Corstange 2014). This research shows that social desirability bias is at least as pronounced in the Middle East as in other regions, due to the politicization of issues like religion and women’s rights. For instance, female interviewers receive more egalitarian responses to questions about gender equality in the U.S. and Mexico

(Kane and Macaulay 1993; Flores-Macias and Lawson 2008), but effects are large and interact with interviewer religious dress and respondent traits in the Arab countries (Benstead 2014a, b; Blaydes and Gillum 2013).

Yet, while the nature and magnitude of interviewer effects vary cross-regionally, social desirability impacts survey data in all world regions (Flores-Macias and Lawson 2008; Sudman and Bradburn 1974; Gmel and Heeb 2001; Streb et al. 2008). So too, instability, poor infrastructure (e.g., electricity), and difficulties drawing a representative sample are challenges in many Arab countries, just as they are in other international contexts (Seligson and Morales 2017).

Importantly, authoritarianism in many Arab countries also raises concerns about whether respondents will answer honestly (Kuran 1997).^{viii} In authoritarian regimes, citizens may feel compelled to participate in surveys and, when answering, conceal their opinions for fear of retaliation or a loss of benefits if they do not support the regime. Moreover, concerns about preference falsification do not disappear in democratic transitions. In a polarizing transition such as Tunisia's, respondents may no longer fear criticizing the authoritarian regime, but they may hesitate to admit that they did not vote for the governing party (Benstead and Malouche 2015).

Concerns about preference falsification in authoritarian survey contexts appear to be widespread among political scientists. For instance, one anonymous reviewer wrote in 2017 about a manuscript that used Gallup data from several Arab countries, including Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Bahrain:

“The study is based on survey data, collected two years prior to the uprisings, from citizens who live under authoritarian regimes with no freedom of expression and hefty penalties for speaking up. Therefore, I don't believe that the people surveyed were telling the truth with no fear of retribution from the government given the abundant number of informants lurking everywhere.”

Yet, preference falsification is not limited to the Arab region. Studies in authoritarian regimes, including Russia (Kalinin 1996), China (Jiang and Yang 2016), and Africa (Tannenbergh 2017), find that respondents misrepresent their views on sensitive issues (Kuran 1997). It is therefore critical to conduct methodological research to understand when and why social desirability shapes participation and responses. Rather than avoiding survey research, scholars should employ list experiments, interviewer effects studies, or mode studies to understand where and why preference falsification occurs.

Despite these concerns, research on preference falsification in the Arab world has looked only obliquely at the phenomenon and found mixed results. In transitional Tunisia, Bush and Prather (2017) found that opposition members did not report more favourable views of the majority party, Ennahda, when the enumerator used CAPI rather than PAPI, even though tablets may induce fears of surveillance. So too, Bush, Erlich, Prather, and Zeira (2016) find no effect of authoritarian iconography on compliance or support for the regime in an experiment in the United Arab Emirates. However, interviewer effects studies suggest possible preference falsification in Morocco and Tunisia, where secular-appearing male interviewers, who are more likely to be associated with the state, received higher participation and lower item non-response rates (Benstead 2014a, b; Benstead and Malouche 2015).

Data Quality Assessment

Comparison of response distributions across surveys conducted at similar times and an examination of missing data provides a reasonable, if not wholly satisfying approach to assessing data quality. Poor feedback and probing, mistakes in questionnaire application (such as skip patterns), and imprecise response recording all lead to missing data and can produce inefficiency and bias in statistical analyses. Missing data also stems from question sensitivity and indicates social desirability or conformity bias.^{ix}

Yet, in an analysis of missing data, the Arab world does not stand out dramatically from other regions in terms of the amount of missing data or the extent to which it is related to independent variables which are correlated with many outcomes of interest (e.g., attitudes about democracy or gender equality). For instance, the overall proportion of missing data for support for democracy in cross-national surveys in the Arab world are shown in Figure 3. More than half of surveys have 10% or fewer cases missing for this question. But over 20% of observations are missing in some Tunisian, Saudi Arabian, Iraqi, and Algerian surveys; 36% of responses are missing in Morocco in 2011 and 30% in 2005.

There are many possible reasons why the proportion missing varies across time and between the WVS and the Regional Barometers; these include increasing or decreasing political tension (such as the Arab spring) and improvements in survey capacity. While there is no standard for how much missing data is acceptable, high levels can generally be addressed with improved monitoring and interviewer training, including training on standardized survey interviewing techniques (i.e., probing non-response and giving feedback).

[Figure 3]

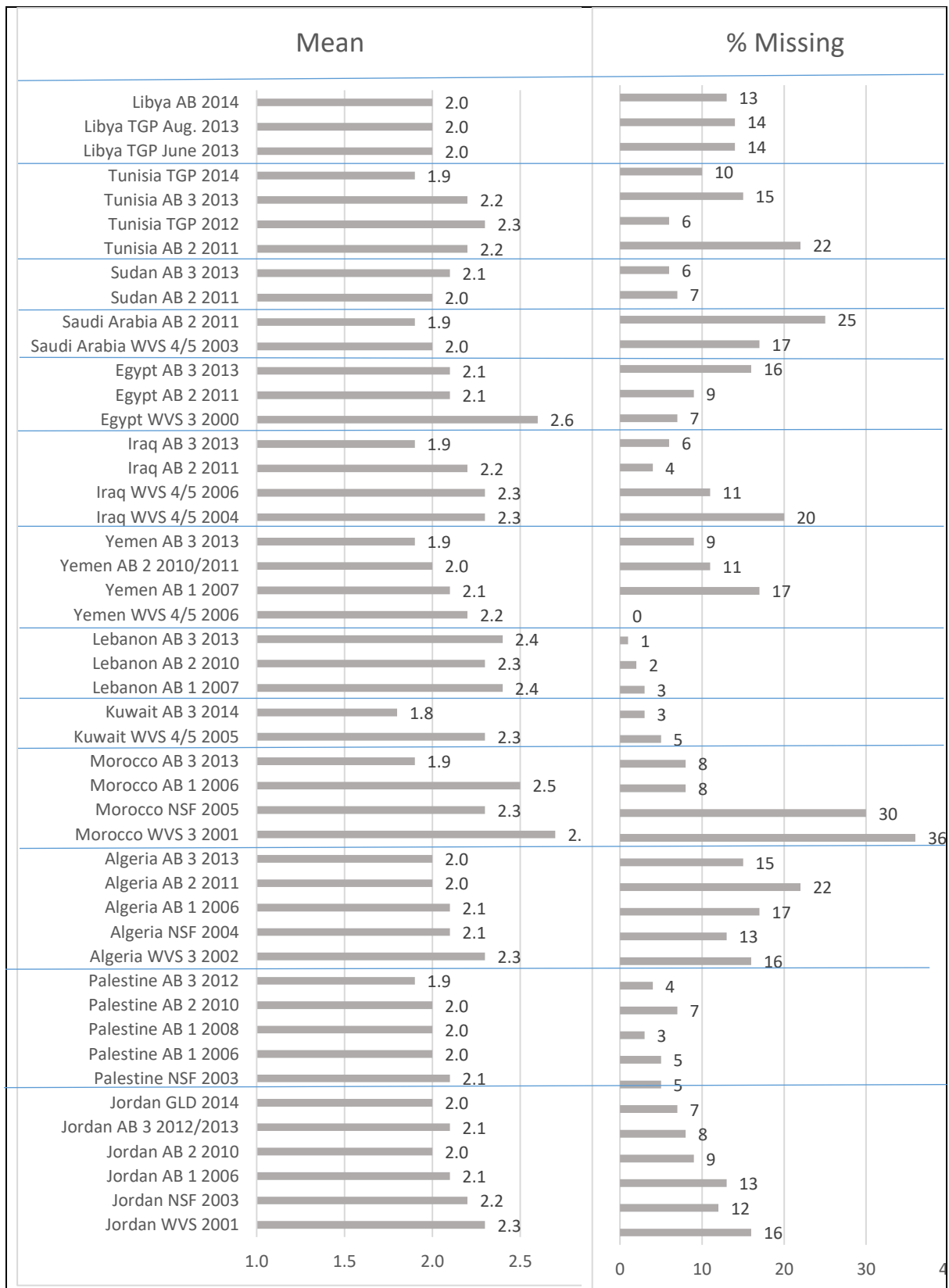
Figure 3. Mean support for democracy and proportion missing

Figure 3 shows mean and proportion of responses missing: “Despite its problems, democracy is the best form of government. Strongly disagree=1-strongly agree=4.” Tessler (2016), GLD (2017), and TGP (2017). Data unweighted. Not asked in the Afrobarometer (2017).

Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, surveys conducted by different research groups find similar results for levels of support for democracy in all Arab countries in which surveys were conducted within a one-year time period, offering confidence in the data. In Libya, the August 2013 Transitional Governance Project (TGP) and the 2014 Arab Barometer estimated mean support for democracy of 2.0 on a four-point Likert scale. The 2007 Arab Barometer in Yemen found mean support for democracy of 2.1, while a year earlier the WVS estimated 2.2. The 2006 Arab Barometer estimated mean support of 2.5 in Morocco, while a year earlier, the National Science Foundation survey estimated 2.3 (Tessler 2016). The 2014 GLD survey estimated a mean of 2.0 in Jordan, shortly after the Arab Barometer found a mean of 2.1. Public opinion can shift over the course of a year, but these comparisons are encouraging, given the myriad of systematic and unsystematic errors that can affect survey estimates.

When asking about another topic—whether men make better political leaders—levels of item-missing data in the WVS are similar in the Arab world and other regions: Sub-Saharan Africa (4%), West Asia (5%), North and South America (5%), Europe (6%), East Asia (7%), and Oceania (8%). In the Arab world, only 4% of the responses are missing, but rates are high in two Moroccan waves (17%; Appendix Table A4).^x

The same is true of the Regional Barometers (Appendix Table A5). On average, 1% of responses to the question “Men make better political leaders” are missing in the Afrobarometer (2017), 2% are missing in the Arab Barometer (2017), and 5% are missing in the Latinobarometer (2017).

Systematically Missing Data

Item-missing data is also systematically related to respondent sex, education, and religious practice in a large number of countries in the WVS (Appendix Table A4). For instance, in the 212 World Values Surveys (2017) that have been conducted worldwide,

missing data is systematically related to respondent gender in 48 surveys (23%), education in 81 surveys (38%), and religiosity in 54 (25%).

Most often, data is missing for women and less educated respondents in surveys worldwide. But, data are no more likely to be systematically missing in the Arab world than in other regions. About half of the surveys in any given region have systematically missing data related to respondent sex, education level, or religiosity. In East Asia, 47% of surveys have systematically missing data for at least one variable (i.e., sex, education, or religiosity). In Oceania, 50% of surveys have systematically missing data for at least one of the three respondent variables, compared to South America (53%), Sub-Saharan Africa (53%), West Asia (57%), Middle East (57%), North America (59%), and Europe (65%).

There is also variation within the Arab world in terms of the extent to which missing data is systematically related to these variables. In the Levant (e.g., Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq), which have a long experience of survey research, only 25% of surveys have systematically missing data for one or more of these respondent variables, compared to 70% of surveys in North Africa and 80% in the Gulf.

The extent of systematically missing data worldwide—and, the higher rate in the Gulf and North Africa—underscore the need for methodological research worldwide to understand the survey interaction and address potential bias. But the analysis offers little evidence that the Arab world is exceptional with regard to systematically missing data.

Ethical Issues

In addition, use of CAPI, which has been shown to improve data quality by reducing data recording errors, especially with skip patterns and randomization (Benstead et al. 2017; Caeyers, Chalmers, and De Weerd 2012; Bush and Prather 2017), is also increasing. Unlike standard paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI), where the interviewer records responses on

paper and manually codes them into a computer, interviewers using CAPI record answers onto a digital device.

Although CAPI has important benefits for reducing error, they must be weighed against potential risks to participants posed by the tablets' GPS function, especially in authoritarian regimes. For instance, in any setting, but especially in unfree countries, recording GPS location in order to measure neighbourhood effects, locate sampling units, or take photos of streets or housing units to measure socio-economic status, could expose participants to risk should electronic files be obtained by authorities or data released with identifying information. Even though no such breaches of participant anonymity or confidentiality are known, it is important to be cognizant of heightened risks presented by CAPI. It is also important to be aware that similar risks exist in PAPI, in that some survey firms record personal information on survey paper forms in order to monitor interviewers and sampling, and thus PAPI could also put confidentiality at risk. When identifying information is captured in the form of a GPS location, it may be more easily copied, intercepted, or released without the researchers' or respondents' knowledge than when paper copies are used and destroyed, following human subject's protocols. Accordingly, the necessity of recording and downloading identifiable information should be carefully assessed in human subject protocols and avoided when possible.

To address confidentiality concerns, CAPI users can disable GPS or view it to verify that the unit is in the correct sampling area, but not record the location on the device. If GPS location is recorded, the added benefit versus risk must be established through human subjects' protocols. Researchers can also consider using two practices to protect research subjects. First, they should download the data without GPS coordinates, unless it needed for a specific research or monitoring reason. Files containing GPS coordinates should be handled and safeguarded only by members of the research. Second, researchers can use applications

such as CS Pro, which allow data to be accessed by the study team but no others. In contrast, data stored by many commercially-available programs like SurveyToGo may be accessed by non-study members, such as those who manage data storage. Other best practices include bolstering content about respondents' rights in introductory scripts (e.g., emphasizing that participation is voluntary), removing GPS location before data release, and specifying in survey provider agreements that governments cannot access data before files are anonymized. In collaboration with investigators, repository managers should ensure that deposited files contain no identifiable information.

Conclusions: Toward a New Watershed?

This article highlights the strides survey researchers have made in the Arab world during the past few decades. Researchers continue to improve training and monitoring. Increasingly, they add sampling weights to correct for higher refusal rates among less educated citizens. Yet, the preceding analysis shows that bias arising from preference falsification is likely in authoritarian and transitional environments in the Arab world, as well as in other regions and regime types. Rather than discount surveys from the Arab world or any other region, scholars should conduct more methodological studies to better understand the data collection process and address bias.

Tunisia—with its free political context—provides a particularly useful context to investigate a full range of political science research questions and design and implement methodological research. In this sense, the Arab spring is a watershed. And, as the number of Arab countries in cross-national surveys increases, there is new promise to advance understanding of important theoretical and policy questions.

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Tables (Main Text)

Optional Appendix

Table A1. Public opinion data sources (Arab world)

Publicly-available data from Arab countries:

Arab Barometer: <http://www.arabbarometer.org/>

World Values Survey: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

Afrobarometer: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>

ICPSR: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/landing.jsp> (see in particular Carnegie Middle East Governance and Islam Dataset, <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/32302>, which includes individual-level and country-level variables for surveys conducted by Mark Tessler and collaborators since 1988).

Pew Research Center has conducted surveys since 2001 in Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Kuwait. Available online at <http://www.pewglobal.org/question-search/>

Other survey-related websites:

Transitional Governance Project: <http://transitionalgovernanceproject.org/>

Program on Governance and Local Development: <http://campuspress.yale.edu/pgld/> and <http://gld.gu.se/>

Research centers and institutes:

The Social & Economic Survey Research Institute: <http://sesri.qu.edu.qa/> (Qatar)

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: <http://www.pcpsr.org/> (Palestine)

Center for Strategic Studies, <http://www.jcss.org/DefaultAr.aspx> (Jordan)

A number of non- and for-profit marketing and survey firms and research groups in the region also conduct surveys.

Table A2. Sources for Figure 2 (Papers presented at MESA and APSA)

Figure 2 (left) is based on abstracts found at:

https://mesana.org/mymesa/meeting_program.php

Figure 3 (right) is based on paper and poster titles found at:

2016:

<http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/annualmeeting/2016/2016%20APSA%20Final%20Program.pdf?ver=2016-08-16-123936-850>

2015:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=1896371&Network=no&lim=false

2014:

<http://www.apsanet.org/portals/54/Files/Programs/FinalePDFFullProgramAPSA2014.pdf>

2013:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?npage=2&form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=2282083&Network=no&SortOrder=ab_approval_date&stype=desc&lim=false&selectedOption=6

2012:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=2078735&Network=no&lim=false

2011:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=1896371&Network=no&lim=false

2010:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?npage=1&form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=1621378&Network=no&SortOrder=ab_approval_date&stype=desc&lim=false&selectedOption=6

2009:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Jeljour_results.cfm?form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=1444480&Network=no&lim=false

New Directions in Theoretical and Policy Research

Despite the recent growth in publicly available data, existing public opinion literature focuses on a few topics, leaving many other questions underexplored. (See Table A3; Benstead 2017). The most studied topic is support for democracy (Tessler 2002a, b; Tessler, Jamal, and Robbins 2012; Tessler and Gao 2005; Tezcür et al. 2012; Ciftci 2013; Tessler, Moaddel, and Inglehart 2006; Benstead 2015).^{xi} Attitudes toward gender equality and social trust have also received coverage. However, much less work has explored cross-national differences in political values, including why citizens are more or less accepting of political competition or desire different constitutional rights and freedoms.

Many projects also shed light on the gender gap in civil society participation (Bernick and Ciftci 2015) or examine political participation, especially as it relates to the relationships between civil society membership, social trust, and support for democracy (Jamal 2007a, b). Some research has examined boycotting (Benstead and Reif 2017). However, limited research examines voter choice—such as why voters support Islamist, secular, or other parties—and media consumption (Pellicer and Wegner 2015).

Researchers have used the Arab Barometer and other surveys to examine citizens' experiences with the state. For instance, some literature examines how perceptions of government performance and experiences with corruption and clientelism shape support for democracy (Benstead and Atkeson 2011). A limited number of studies also assess the extent to which women and minorities are able to access services from elected officials (Abdel-Samad and Benstead 2016; Benstead 2015, 2016). At the same time, there is still a need to understand how clientelism and corruption affect citizens' interpersonal trust and confidence in state institutions and how these outcomes affect demand for freer elections.

Some studies also examine values and identity, with most focusing on gender equality (Alexander and Welzel 2011; Norris 2009) and identity (Benstead and Reif 2013). Yet, few

explain social and political values, including tolerance, religiosity, and attitudes toward controversial issues, such as dress choice, minorities' political rights, and state violations of human rights in the name of security.

Attitudes about international and regional issues have also been the subject of some studies (Tessler and Robbins 2007), but despite their timeliness, much more work should be done on attitudes toward other international issues and bodies like the Arab League and the United Nations. Research might also explore how citizens explain the Arab world's economic and political challenges, their perceptions of the motivations for and effectiveness of US democracy promotion, the extent to which citizens support a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine, and the impact of living in western countries on attitudes.

Table A3. Topics in the Arab Barometer

<i>a. Topics and literature</i>	<i>b. Theoretical and policy questions</i>
<u>Attitudes toward political regimes</u>	
Preferences for political regimes (Tessler 2002a, b; Tessler, Jamal and Robbins 2012; Tessler and Gao 2005; Tezcür et al. 2012; Ciftci 2013; Benstead 2015; Al-Ississ and Diwan 2016)	Why does support for democracy develop and change? Why do citizens define democracy differently? Why do citizens demand secular versus religious democracy? Why are some political and economic reforms likely to be more effective than others for strengthening support for democracy?
Political values (Hoffman and Jamal 2012)	Why are some citizens more supportive of greater political competition and debate? How do youth values differ from those of older generations?
<u>Political participation</u>	
Civil society membership, political knowledge, and engagement (Jamal 2007a, b; Bernick and Ciftci 2015; Hamanaka 2017; Robbins and Jamal 2016)	How does civic participation relate to trust, government legitimacy, and support for democracy? What explains participation in campaign rallies, petitions, and protests, including gender gaps in these forms of engagement? Why do gender gaps exist in political knowledge and how does this impact participation? How do citizens perceive the reasons for the Arab spring and the extent to which they were achieved?

Voting	Why do voters support Islamist, secular, or other parties and what explains why some voters switch their support in subsequent elections? What is the extent and impact of votebuying and clientelism? Are men or women more or less likely to sell their vote or to vote based on clientelistic relationships?
Political knowledge and the media	Who consumes various media sources and how does this choice impact values and partisanship?
<u>Citizen engagement with the state and social institutions</u>	
Institutional trust and perceptions of government performance (Benstead and Atkeson 2011)	Why do some citizens evaluate government performance more positively than others? To what extent do citizens see their governments as democratic? Why do evaluations of government performance change over time? How does clientelism and corruption affect social trust, regime legitimacy, and support for democracy?
Governance and service provision. State-society linkages and representation (Abdel-Samad and Benstead 2016)	What explains effectiveness and equity in access to services, such as security, dispute resolution, healthcare, and education?
<u>Individual orientations and identity</u>	
Gender equality (Alexander and Welzel 2011; Norris 2009; Al Subhi and Smith Forthcoming)	What explains attitudes toward different dimensions of gender inequality, such as women's status, mobility, wages, and political involvement?
Identity (Benstead and Reif 2013)	How does identity shape culture and political attitudes?
Tolerance and values (Falco and Rotondi 2016.)	Why are some citizens more supportive of greater political competition and debate? Citizens are more likely to wish to migrate? How does living in western countries impact social and political attitudes?
Religiosity and interpretations of Islam (Achilov 2016)	Why does religiosity vary within and across societies? What are individuals' views on matters such as lotteries, women's dress, apostasy, Islam and democracy, and minority political rights?
Controversial issues	To what extent does the public accept state violations of security to achieve security?
<u>International affairs</u>	
Attitudes about international and regional issues (Nugent, Masoud,	To what extent do citizens see foreign countries like Iran and the US as democratic? How do they evaluate the Arab League and other international organizations? Why do citizens assess

<p>and Jamal 2016; Tessler and Robbins 2007; Benstead and Reif 2017; Tessler and Warriner 1997; Tessler, Jamal and Robbins 2012; Tessler, Moaddel and Inglehart 2006; Isani and Schlipphak 2016; Tausch 2016)</p>	<p>differently the reasons for economic and political challenges in the Arab world? Do citizens support armed operations against US elsewhere? Why do anti- and pro- American attitudes vary across the Arab world? To what extent do citizens support a two state solution in Israel/Palestine?</p>
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Table A4. Percentage of observations missing and systematically missing data for respondent sex, education, and religiosity for “Men make better political leaders” (World Values Survey)

Country-year	a. % missing	b. Higher % missing (p<.05)	b. Country-year	a. % missing	b. Higher % missing (p<.05)
China-1995	8.0	Less educated	<i>West Asia-con't</i>		
China-2001	7.0	Female, less educated	Kyrgyzstan-2011	0.5	
China-2007	16.0	Female, less educated, more religious	Pakistan-1997	0.0	
China-2012	10.0	Less educated, more religious	Pakistan-2001	2.0	Female
Taiwan-1994	6.0	Less educated	Pakistan-2012	3.0	Female
Taiwan-2006	0.5		Turkey-1996	5.0	Female, less educated
Taiwan-2012	6.0	Less educated	Turkey-2001	3.0	
Hong Kong-2005	3.0		Turkey-2007	4.0	Less educated
Hong Kong-2013	0.6		Turkey-2011	3.0	
Indonesia-2001	5.0	Less educated, less religious	Uzbekistan-2011	2.0	Female, less educated
Indonesia-2006	3.0	Less educated, less religious	Mean-West Asia	4.6	13/23 (57%)
Japan-1995	28.0				
Japan-2000	30.0		Bahrain-2014	4.0	
Japan-2005	32.0		Kuwait-2014	4.0	Female
Japan-2010	35.0		Qatar-2010	0.3	Less educated
South Korea-1996	0.2		Saudi Arabia-2003	5.0	More religious
South Korea-2001	9.0	More educated	Yemen-2014	3.0	Female, Less religious
South Korea-2005	0.0	Less religious	Mean-Gulf	3.3	4/5 (80%)
South Korea-2010	1.0	Male			
Malaysia-2006	0.4		Palestine-2013	2.0	
Malaysia-2012	0.0		Iraq-2004	3.0	
Philippines-1996	2.0	More educated	Iraq-2006	3.0	Female
Philippines-2001	1.0		Iraq-2012	2.0	Less religious
Philippines-2012	0.0		Jordan-2001	2.0	
Singapore-2002	2.0		Jordan-2007	2.0	
Singapore-2012	0.0		Jordan-2014	2.0	
Viet Nam-2001	6.0	Female, less educated	Lebanon-2013	3.0	

Viet Nam-2006	2.0	Female, more religious	Mean-Levant	2.4	2/8 (25%)
Thailand-2007	0.5				
Thailand-2013	0.7		Algeria-2000	6.0	Less educated
Mean-East Asia	7.2	14/30 (47%)	Algeria-2013	4.0	
			Libya-2014	3.0	Female
Albania-1998	8.0	Less educated, more religious	Morocco-2001	17.0	Female, less educated
Albania-2002	8.0		Morocco-2007	7.0	More religious
Bosnia and Herzegovina-2001	2.0	More religious	Morocco-2011	17.0	Female
Andorra-2005	2.0		Tunisia-2013	4.0	Female
Bulgaria-1997	16.0	Less educated, more religious	Egypt-2001	0.5	
Bulgaria-2005	7.0	Less educated	Egypt-2008	0.2	Less religious
Belarus-1990	8.0	Female, less educated	Egypt-2013	0.0	
		Less educated	Mean-North Africa	5.9	7/10 (70%)
Belarus-1996	1.0		Mean-All Middle East	4.1	13/23 (57%)
Croatia-1996	5.0				
Cyprus-2006	0.2				
			Canada-2000	4.0	Less religious
Cyprus-2011	2.0				
Czech Republic-1998	8.0		Canada-2006	4.0	More religious
			Dominican Republic-1996	12.0	
Estonia-1996	4.0				
Estonia-2011	3.0		El Salvador-1999	8.0	Female, less educated
Finland-1996	4.0		Guatemala-2004	3.0	
Finland-2005	2.0				
			Mexico-1996	8.0	Less educated
France-2006	3.0				
Germany-1997	4.0		Mexico-2000	4.0	Female, less educated
Germany-2006	6.0	Male	Mexico-2005	1.0	Less educated
Germany-2013	3.0		Mexico-2012	1.0	
Hungary-1990	6.0	Less educated	Puerto Rico-1995	4.0	Less educated
Hungary-2009	4.0	Less educated	Puerto Rico-2001	4.0	Less educated, less religious
		Less educated, more religious	Trinidad and Tobago-2006	6.0	Male
Italy-2005	7.0				

Latvia-1996	8.0		Trinidad and Tobago-2011	10.0	
Lithuania-1997	10.0	Male, less educated	U.S.-1995	7.0	
Moldova-1996	6.0	Less educated, more religious	U.S.-1999	5.0	
Moldova-2002	8.0	Female, less educated	U.S.-2006	2.0	Less educated
Moldova-2006	3.0	More religious	U.S.-2011	1.0	
Netherlands-2006	7.0	Male	Mean-North America	5.3	10/17 (59%)
Netherlands-2012	12.0	Less educated			
Norway-1996	1.0		Australia-1995	4.0	
Norway-2007	0.4		Australia-2005	2.0	
Poland-1997	16.0	Less educated	Australia-2012	3.0	
Poland-2005	11.0	Less educated	New Zealand-1998	15.0	Male
Poland-2012	11.0	Less educated	New Zealand-2004	13.0	Male
Romania-1998	12.0	Less educated	New Zealand-2011	11.0	Male, less educated
Romania-2005	10.0	Female, less educated	Mean-Oceania	8.0	3/6 (50%)
Romania-2012	9.0	Female, less educated			
Russian Federation-1995	10.0	Female, less educated, more religious	Uruguay-1996	8.0	Less educated
Russian Federation-2006	6.0		Uruguay-2006	10.0	
Russian Federation-2011	5.0	Less educated	Uruguay-2011	9.0	
Slovakia-1998	7.0	Less educated	Argentina-1995	9.0	Less educated
Slovenia-1995	7.0	Less educated	Argentina-1999	10.0	Less educated
Slovenia-2005	6.0	More religious	Argentina-2006	10.0	Less educated, more religious
Slovenia-2011	4.0	Less educated, more religious	Argentina-2013	5.0	Male
Spain-1995	8.0	Less educated, more religious	Brazil-2006	1.0	Less educated
Spain-2000	8.0	More religious	Brazil-2014	4.0	Female
Spain-2007	5.0	Less educated	Chile-1996	6.0	More educated
Spain-2011	4.0	Less educated, more religious	Chile-2000	4.0	
Sweden-1996	6.0	Male	Chile-2006	4.0	

Sweden-2006	1.0		Chile-2011	4.0	
Sweden-2011	4.0	Male	Colombia-1998	3.0	Less educated
Switzerland-2007	2.0	Less educated, less religious	Colombia-2005	0.1	
Ukraine-1996	16.0	Less educated	Colombia-2012	4.0	Less educated
Ukraine-2006	8.0		Ecuador-2013	0.3	
Ukraine-2011	0.0		Peru-1996	6.0	Less educated, more religious
Macedonia-1998	8.0	Less educated, more religious	Peru-2001	4.0	
Macedonia-2001	4.0	Less educated	Peru-2006	3.0	Less educated
Great Britain-2005	10.0	Less educated	Peru-2012	6.0	
Serbia and Montenegro-2005	5.0		Venezuela-1996	9.0	
Serbia-1996	8.0	Less educated	Venezuela-2000	3.0	Female, less educated, more religious
Serbia-2001	12.0	Female, less educated	Mean-South America	5.3	13/23 (57%)
Montenegro-1996	13.0				
Montenegro-2001	13.0		Ethiopia-2007	2.0	
Bosnia-1998	4.0		Ghana-2007	3.0	Female
Georgia-1996	3.0	Less educated	Ghana-2012	0.0	
Georgia-2009	6.0	Less religious	Mali-2007	5.0	
Georgia-2014	5.0	Less educated	Nigeria-1995	4.0	Female, less educated
Mean-Europe	6.4	44/68 (65%)	Nigeria-2000	2.0	Female
			Nigeria-2011	0.0	
Azerbaijan-1997	6.0	Less educated	Rwanda-2007	6.0	Female, Less religiosity
Azerbaijan-2011	0.3		Rwanda-2012	0.0	
Bangladesh-1996	9.0	Female, less educated	South Africa-1996	10.0	Female, less educated
Bangladesh-2002	2.0		South Africa-2001	8.0	Less educated
Armenia-1997	5.0	Female	South Africa-2006	5.0	Less educated
Armenia-2001	3.0		South Africa-2013	4.0	Less educated
India-1995	15.0	Female, less educated, more religious	Zimbabwe-2001	6.0	Less educated
India-2001	14.0	Female, less educated, less religious	Zimbabwe-2012	0.0	
India-2006	16.0	Female, less educated, more religious	Uganda-2001	2.0	
India-2014	0.4		Tanzania-2001	2.0	

Iran-2000	11.0	Female, less educated	Burkina Faso-2007	8.0	Female, more religious
Iran-2007	0.8	Female	Zambia-2007	3.0	
Kazakhstan-2011	0.0		Mean-Sub-Saharan Africa	3.7	10/19 (53%)
Kyrgyzstan-2003	1.0		All Countries	5.6	

Table A4 (a columns) shows the proportion missing in a given survey and for all surveys in a region for the item: “Men make better political leaders. Strongly disagree=1-strongly agree=4.” WVS (2017). Data unweighted. B column shows instances in which missing data is significantly more likely to be missing a respondent sex, education level, and/or level of religious observance. Education: Lower, middle, upper education. Religiosity: “How often do you attend religious services?” More than once a week(=1), once a week(=1), once a month(=2), only on special days(=2), only specific holidays(=2), once a year(=2), less often(=3), never/practically never(=3).

Table A5. Percentage of observations missing for “Men make better political leaders” (Regional Barometers)

Country-year	% missing	Country-year	% missing
Argentina-2009	5.0	<i>Afrobarometer-con't</i>	
Bolivia-2009	5.0	Namibia-2005	0.3
Brazil-2009	2.0	Nigeria-2005	0.4
Chile-2009	4.0	Senegal-2005	1.0
Colombia-2009	4.0	South Africa-2005	1.0
Costa Rica-2009	4.0	Tanzania-2005	0.4
Dominican Republic-2009	2.0	Uganda-2005	0.0
Ecuador-2009	5.0	Zambia-2005	0.7
El Salvador-2009	3.0	Zimbabwe-2005	0.3
Guatemala-2009	3.0	Benin-2015	0.0
Honduras-2009	8.0	Botswana-2015	1.0
Mexico-2009	4.0	Burkina Faso-2015	2.0
Nicaragua-2009	8.0	Cape Verde-2015	1.0
Panama-2009	6.0	Ghana-2015	0.2
Paraguay-2009	2.0	Kenya-2015	1.0
Peru -2009	6.0	Lesotho-2015	1.0
Spain-2009	6.0	Liberia-2015	1.0
Uruguay-2009	7.0	Madagascar-2015	7.0
Venezuela-2009	4.0	Malawi-2015	1.0
Argentina-2004	4.0	Mali-2015	0.3
Bolivia-2004	7.0	Mozambique-2015	4.0
Brazil-2004	5.0	Namibia-2015	0.2
Chile-2004	5.0	Nigeria-2015	0.3
Colombia-2004	4.0	Senegal-2015	0.3
Costa Rica-2004	7.0	South Africa-2015	1.0
Dominican Republic-2004	4.0	Tanzania-2015	0.2
Ecuador-2004	2.0	Uganda-2015	0.3
El Salvador-2004	8.0	Zambia-2015	0.2
Guatemala-2004	6.0	Zimbabwe-2015	0.3
Honduras-2004	3.0	Mauritius-2015	1.0
Mexico-2004	2.0	Sierra Leone-2015	1.0
Nicaragua-2004	6.0	Niger-2015	1.0
Panama-2004	3.0	Togo-2015	1.0
Paraguay-2004	4.0	Burundi-2015	0.3
Peru-2004	4.0	Cameroon-2015	3.0
Uruguay-2004	7.0	Ivory Coast-2015	1.0
Venezuela-2004	5.0	Guinea-2015	0.3
Mean missing-Latin Barometer	4.7	Swaziland-2015	0.3
		Algeria-2015	2.0
Tunisia-2013	2.7	Egypt-2015	3.0
Tunisia-2011	3.5	Morocco-2015	3.0
Sudan-2013	1.1	Sudan-2015	2.0
Sudan-2011	1.4	Tunisia-2015	3.0
Saudi Arabia-2011	4.7	Algeria-2016	3.0
Egypt-2013	1.9	Benin-2016	0.2
Egypt-2011	0.7	Botswana-2016	1.0
Iraq-2013	2.8	Burkina Faso-2016	1.0
Iraq-2011	0.6	Burundi-2016	0.6

Yemen-2013	0.5	Cameroon-2016	0.3
Yemen-2010-2011	2.3	Cape Verde-2016	0.6
Yemen-2007	4.2	Ivory Coast-2016	0.2
Lebanon-2013	1.4	Egypt-2016	3.0
Lebanon-2010	0.3	Gabon-2016	0.4
Lebanon-2007	2.4	Ghana-2016	1.0
Kuwait-2014	0.4	Guinea-2016	0.4
Morocco-2013	3.6	Kenya-2016	2.0
Morocco-2006	3.0	Lesotho-2016	2.0
Algeria-2013	3.3	Liberia-2016	0.4
Algeria-2011	4.6	Madagascar-2016	0.4
Algeria-2006	9.0	Malawi-2016	2.0
Palestine-2012	0.3	Mali-2016	2.0
Palestine-2010	0.6	Mauritius-2016	1.0
Palestine-2006	0.6	Morocco-2016	2.0
Libya-2014	2.1	Mozambique-2016	2.0
Jordan-2012-2013	1.3	Namibia-2016	0.3
Jordan-2010	1.2	Niger-2016	0.3
Jordan-2006	2.4	Nigeria-2016	2.0
Mean missing-Arab Barometer	2.2	Sao Tome and Principe-2016	5.0
		Senegal-2016	1.0
		Sierra Leone-2016	4.0
Benin-2005	0.1	South Africa-2016	3.0
Botswana-2005	0.6	Sudan-2016	2.0
Cape Verde-2005	2.0	Swaziland-2016	0.6
Ghana-2005	0.3	Tanzania-2016	0.4
Kenya-2005	0.3	Togo-2016	1.0
Lesotho-2005	0.3	Tunisia-2016	1.0
Madagascar-2005	1.0	Uganda-2016	2.0
Malawi-2005	0.7	Zambia-2016	1.0
Mali-2005	0.7	Zimbabwe-2016	2.0
Mozambique-2005	3.0	Mean missing-Afrobarometer	1.2

Table A5 shows proportion missing: “Men make better political leaders. Strongly disagree=1-strongly agree=4.” Afrobarometer (2017); Latin Barometer (2017); Arab Barometer (2017). Data unweighted.

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ⁱ Glock and colleagues conducted surveys in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, and Jordan in 1947. The survey terrain was difficult, Iraq was abandoned in favour of Iran, and the resulting data did not lend itself to cross-country comparisons (Converse 1987, p. 290-291).

ⁱⁱ The expansion of survey research may be due to regime members' desire to avoid being singled out or to improve their image internationally. At the same time, many governments limit the questions that can be asked. With the exception of Tunisia and a few other countries, government permission is needed to conduct surveys and questions are often removed in the review process. Researchers self-censor, and their ability to conduct survey may depend on having good relations with governments. The Gulf is less politically liberalized and least covered in cross-national surveys; sensitive questions are often removed.

ⁱⁱⁱ An online search results in reports of numerous face-to-face and telephone surveys by government and non-governmental entities in Syria and among displaced Syrians.

^{iv} Lust and Benstead launched the TGP (2017) to study the transitional politics of Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt.

^v The Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI) was developed by Benstead, Landry, Malouche, and Lust to explain variation in education, health, and municipal service quality across localities by drawing large samples at the municipal level (GLD 2017).

^{vi} Appendix Table A3; Benstead 2017a.

^{vii} Concerns about the difficult survey environment, due in part to instability, are based on author's experiences participating in conference discussions.

^{viii} Freedom House did not consider any Arab country Free until 2015, when it ranked Tunisia free.

^{ix} Social desirability bias occurs when respondents engage in impression management, avoiding voicing socially unacceptable or embarrassing opinions. Conformity bias occurs when respondents avoid expressing opinions that differ from the interviewer's views, based on stereotypes drawn from the interviewer's race, class, gender, etc. (Sudman and Bradburn 1974).

^x The same is true of the Regional Barometers. On average, 1.2% of responses to "Men make better political leaders" are missing in the Afrobarometer (2017) 2.2% are missing in the Arab Barometer (2017) and 4.7% in the Latinobarometer (2017). (Appendix Table A5).

^{xi} Early publications on Arab public opinion include Nachtwey and Tessler 2002; Tessler 2000; Tessler and Warriner 1997.