

Guilt by Association: How ‘Unrightful’ Frames Undermine Public Support for Land Protests in Authoritarian Regimes

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Do dissident endorsements affect public support for land protests in authoritarian regimes? Research suggests that land protesters often engage in boundary spanning techniques such as rightful resistance, where they explicitly express fealty to the central regime leaders. A key element of this strategy is winning support from the public in order to pressure the center to intervene on behalf of the protesters. Despite the rich theoretical literature, we have little evidence as to whether “unrightful” frames by dissident endorsers impacts public support. This is an important question given the ease with which social media allows dissidents to reframe boundary spanning protests for their own more agendas. Do such “unrightful” endorsements impact public support? We theorize these endorsements will undermine support by making the protesters seem more extreme and their protests less legal. Using an Internet survey experiment in Vietnam, we find evidence to support our expectations.

What impacts public opinion toward land protests? How does the endorsement of journalists or dissidents affect public support for land protests in authoritarian regimes? A large research agenda on protests under authoritarian rule focuses on how movements evolve into large-scale, democracy movements (e.g Brancati 2016; Beissinger 2002; Tufekci 2017). However, in authoritarian regimes land protests often differ from other protests such as pro-democracy and nationalist protests. That is, land protesters typically do not attempt to foment a massive movement against the political regimes. Land protests typically occur in specific localities with demands focused on achieving limited outcomes. For example, while land protests have increased in China and Vietnam, they are mostly confined to narrow constituencies, which are connected through social ties in villages (O'Brien and Li 2006; Kerkvliet 2014; Kerkvliet 2019; Ong 2019; Heurlin 2016; Chau 2019).

Land protesters do not try to foment movements precisely because their vulnerability and/or genuine support for central level leaders leads them to engage in “boundary spanning” techniques such as rightful resistance (O'Brien and Li 2006), everyday resistance (Kerkvliet 2005; Scott 1990), and regime engaging resistance (Li 2018). In boundary spanning resistance, protesters mostly advocate for changes in policy implementation, and explicitly express their support for the established values of the political regimes. Land protesters typically attribute their grievances to corrupt local officials and aim to receive attention from the central government to address their grievances. These strategies avoid maximalist campaigns to make their protests seem more legitimate to the center (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008).

However, despite the desire to avoid fomenting a *movement*, protesters still need to generate public *awareness* in order to pressure potential allies in the regime to intervene on their behalf. This is important for two reasons. First, the center needs to be aware of their grievances.

Second, the protesters need public support to pressure the center to intervene on their behalf (O'Brien and Li 2006). Wide public support reduces the likelihood that the protest will be repressed by local governments and puts pressure on the central government to intervene and punish local authorities (O'Brien and Li 1995; O'Brien and Li 2006; Chuang 2014). This is why rightful resisters often seek assistance from lawyers, journalists, and other allies who are able to communicate their grievances to the wider public and central leaders (Heurlin, 2016; Kerkvliet, 2019). However, less appreciated is the possibility that advocates who help spread news about the protests may also have their own interests and agenda which may affect public support for land protests (O'Brien 2013). For example, lawyers who assist protesters might distort protesters' framing in favor of their own concerns about legal reforms (Woodman 2011). Journalists can report news in a way that fits with a newspaper's agenda, rather than reflect the demands of the protesters (Rosie and Gorringer 2009).

With this in mind, an important question is how a dissident's reframing or endorsement of the protests impact public support. This is a particularly important question in the Internet age, where social media outlets allow pro-democracy activists to easily co-opt boundary-spanning resistance for their own ends (Morozov 2011). For example, in 2019 when villagers in Dong Tam in Vietnam, protested against the local government's decision to claim their land, independent journalists, lawyers, and human rights activists traveled to the protest sites, live-broadcast the incident, and wrote critical comments on social media (Le 2017). Across the border, Chinese journalists have increasingly seized on protests to criticize the central government's policies regarding land demolition and eviction on the Internet (Human Rights Watch 2004). Similarly, journalists and human rights workers joined many Cambodian land rights protesters in October 2016 in the capital Phnom Penh to advocate for changes in eviction

practices (Prak 2016). One similarity that these protests share is that while protesters blamed their grievances on local authorities and explicitly displayed their support for the regime, dissidents promoted regime changes as solutions for the grievances.

Despite evidence that dissidents have used social media to co-opt land protests to advance their own agenda, there is no empirical examination of how such a connection affects public opinion toward the protests in an authoritarian context. This oversight is important because reframing the message could have a negative effect on public support for the protests. Evidence shows that violent tactics can undermine public support for protests (Lupu and Wallace 2019; Chenoweth and Lewis 2013; Edwards and Arnon 2019). However, while violence is certainly an important component of boundary spanning tactics, we also need to understand how anti-regime messages and anti-regime identities among the endorsers impacts public support.

Building off the boundary spanning protest literature, we argue that anti-regime messages, which we call “unrightful frames”, and dissident endorsements may reduce support for land protests. We argue that dissident endorsements could reduce support through two distinct channels. First, building on the large literature on “cues” from electoral politics (Popkin 1991), dissident endorsements could reduce support for the protests if respondents think the endorsers themselves are more radical or share different values. Associating a protest with a dissident could make respondents feel that the protesters are more radical or share different values. The second broad channel is how the dissident frames the reason for the protest. An unrightful frame could reduce support by making respondents feel the protests are less legal, thus undermining support. The frame could also make respondents feel the endorser is too extreme and different from them, thus undermining support for the protest. Finally, a maximalist message could make

the public think the protest is more likely to be repressed, and thus could lead to greater instability and a greater potential for violence.

We use an Internet-based survey experiment to test the effect that of a dissident endorsement and unrightful frame on public support for land protests. We examine this question in Vietnam, where boundary spanning resistance is a prevalent form of collective action. Other studies examining public support for protests have used Internet-based survey experiments in democratic contexts (Lupu and Wallace 2019; Edwards and Arnon 2019). Internet surveys more generally have been used successfully in authoritarian regimes (Truex 2017). Our results show that the identity of the dissident has little effect on support, but that the unrightful frames reduces public support for land protests regardless of who endorses the frame. A mediation analysis shows that the unrightful frame primarily operates through two mechanisms. First, it makes respondents believe that the protests are illegal. The unrightful frame also lowers the respondent's opinion of the morality of the endorser. Taken together, the findings suggest that an unrightful frame lowers support for land protests.

These findings have several important implications. First, we provide important empirical verification for a key pillar of the literature on boundary spanning protest, which is that this form of protest engenders greater sympathy than protests making more maximalist demands. Second, because successful pro-democracy movements tend to start with issues that do not directly demand regime changes, our finding that advocates who frame local resistance using pro-democracy language reduces public support for the resistance makes us rethink the conditions under which pro-democracy activists can mobilize wider public support. For example, while the Solidarity movement eventually toppled the Communist Party in Poland, it did not start as a pro-democracy movement (Grodsky 2012). Similarly, pro-democracy movements that led to the

collapse of Soviet Union started as nationalist movements (Beissinger 2002). Our survey, obviously, takes place in a context where the regime does not face a coordinated challenge, so it is likely that our results would differ if we conducted a survey at the tail end of a “wave” of mobilization (Beissinger 2002). At the same time, we think these results should generalize to contexts where the regime remains ensconced in power and speaks to the challenges of sparking a wave in the first place. Finally, these results suggest an important tradeoff protesters face as they try to win support from central allies. While they need dissidents and journalists to amplify their message, unless those dissidents and journalists faithfully frame the protests in a “rightful way”, protesters could lose support for their movement as they try to amplify their message.

Public Support for Rightful Resistance in Authoritarian Regimes

What affects public support for protests? Studies emphasize a range of factors that motivate individuals to participate in protests such as a perception of shared grievances (Gamson 1992), the availability of political opportunities and resource mobilization (Tarrow 2011), beliefs about support for protests amongst others (Hollyer, Rosendorff, and Vreeland, 2015; Kuran 1991), and an individual’s perceptions about payoffs (Shadmehr and Bernhardt 2011). Others show that violent tactics reduce public support for protests (Lupu and Wallace 2019; Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013; Edwards and Arnon 2019). The public is also less willing to support protests in which participants are perceived to come from an outgroup (Edwards and Arnon 2019).

Public support for protests also depends on how the government responds to the protests. Some suggest that repression increases public support for online dissent (Pan and Siegel 2020). With regard to repression of actual protests, others contend that this effect is conditional on other factors such as whether the protests are violent (Lupu and Wallace 2019), and whether the

government is consistent in their responses to protests (Lichbach 1987). Related, research suggests that a lenient approach to protests can increase support for the regime (Frye and Borisova 2019).

Literature on social movements contends that the extent to which social movements can attract public support depends greatly on whether activists construct collective action frames that appeal to those from whom they attempt to win support and sympathy (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow 2007; Buechler 2016). Social movements with narratives that resonate with the public's interests and values are more likely to receive wider support. The Tiananmen movement in China and pro-democracy movements in Korea in late 1980s were able to mobilize large public support because activists framed their collective action in a way that highly aligned with people's interests and beliefs (Zuo and Benford 1995; Kim 2000).

While valuable, this impressive body of research focuses on issues or dynamics that differ markedly from land protests under authoritarian rule. With regard to research on social movements, land protests under authoritarian rule deliberately avoid making maximalist claims that challenge the legitimacy of the center. Land protesters typically focus on having their limited demands achieved, such as reducing land fees, receiving appropriate compensation, and protecting their land. In many cases, protesters may even agree with the overall objectives of the state and just want to receive remuneration (Chau, 2019; Harms, 2012). The "twin" purpose of receiving public support and not mobilizing a movement leads resisters to construct collective action frames that appear congruent with the regime's values and ideologies. First, protesters typically attribute their grievances to disloyal government officials and show their loyalty to the regime. Resisters often cite laws, policies and other officially promoted values to defy disloyal political and economic elites (O'Brien and Li 2006). Second, unlike movements that demand

political regime changes, land protesters frame their collective action around policy implementation. Thus, the resistance is often episodic, localized and issue specific. Protesters attempt to receive sympathy and support from beyond the community, and participation from within the community, to halt or to change *policy implementation*.

Additionally, unlike the research focus on the determinants of participation in protests, this study is not primarily concerned with participation, but rather passive support from the general public. While newer work does examine how *violent* frames can impact support (Edwards and Arnon 2019; Lupu and Wallace 2019), in this paper we are interested in how the *rightful* frame impacts support. In that way, our study is more consistent with research from the US showing that media frames can impact public support for the protester's goals and tactics. For example, in the US support declines when the media frames the protests as "episodic" rather than "thematic" (Iyengar 1991) or as "breaking the status quo" (McLeod and Detenber 1999). While compelling, such research from democracies does not capture a key element of rightful resistance in autocracies, which is the degree to which the message explicitly challenges the legitimacy of the center. Indeed, these types of protests are particularly important in a "closed regime," where institutionalized channels for protest inhibit more direct challenges to the center (Robertson 2010, 22). Additionally, closed regimes are more likely to respond to rightful resistance than more aggressive forms of contention both to encourage information provision and discourage more disruptive protests (Lorentzen 2017; Steinhardt 2017).

Despite the lack of attention, examining the roots of public support is crucial in autocracies in order to help protesters achieve their goals. In order to rein in high-ranking regime elites, resisters need to connect with *allies* whose interests diverge from abusive officials (O'Brien and Li 1995; O'Brien and Li 2006). However, in order to do so, they need to catch the

attention of the center and put pressure on them to take their side. Research on land protests in China suggests that accused cadres typically attempt to mute peasants' voices (Chuang 2014) and discredit protesters' rightful claims by demeaning their contention as merely "rebellion against the government" and even "counterrevolutionary group" (O'Brien and Li 2006). This is why journalists, NGOs, lawyers are critically important, and protesters often seek help from these actors to communicate their grievances to the public (Kerkvliet 2019; O'Brien and Li 2006; O'Brien 2013). Without attention, rightful resisters cannot reach their allies. Public support further assists the protesters because it helps convince allies to take the protesters' side once the issue is brought to their attention (Cai 2008a; Cai 2008b; Heurlin 2016).

This leads to what some call a "strategic dilemma," which is the fact that attention-getting devices, including the tactics and the message, can also undermine public support (Jasper 2004, 9, quoted in O'Brien and Li 2006, 85). Unfortunately, the theory that an *anti-center frame* reduces support has so far remained untested. This gap in our understanding is important because the potential amplifiers of the messages of protesters may reframe rightful resistance protests for their own purposes. This problem is inherent in any type of coalition building in an authoritarian setting. While building a relationship with opposition parties can afford pro-democracy activists' access to government resources, it is risky because the opposition parties might be willing to change their positions to advance their own interests (Rucht 2004).

Because of complex relationships between protests and elite supporters, it is important to understand how dissidents' endorsement and framing of land protests affects broader public support. Furthermore, understanding these effects is even more important given that the rise of the Internet and social media has facilitated the connection between protesters and the wider public in authoritarian regimes. (Tucker et al, 2017; Diamond 2010; Castells 2012). Indeed, the Internet

allows these individuals to actively communicate rightful resistance's collective action and grievances to the public. As recent evidence shows, it also gives them the opportunity to reframe the protests.

Theory: Guilt by Association

With this in mind, how will a dissident endorsement impact public support for land protesters attempting to engage in rightful resistance? Building off a large literature on framing and the importance of cues, we theorize that dissident endorsements of protests may lead to “guilt by association” and decrease public support through two channels. First, the way the dissident *frames* the protest could decrease support. Second, the cue associated with the *identity* of the dissident could impact support for the protest.

Starting with the frame, there are several mechanisms through which an unrightful frame might decrease support. A key element of an “unrightful frame” is that instead of affirming support for the center, the protest attributes some of the blame for the local wrongdoing to the center. For instance, a dissident could emphasize that the protest also results from a broader lack of democracy or freedom of speech. How would this undermine support for a land protest?

One possible mechanism is that an anti-regime message makes land protests appear unlawful. The term “boundary spanning” indicates that the protests operate on the boundary of what is legal and illegal in an authoritarian context (O'Brien and Li 2006). On the one hand, in contexts like Vietnam and China it is legal for citizens to protest violations of the law by local officials. On the other hand, protesters are frequently prosecuted for anti-state propaganda. Advocating for change to the center may suggest to citizens that the protests have crossed that hazy line between legal and illegal. Because citizens, even in democracies, are less likely to

support protests that are illegal (McLeod and Detenber 1999, 6), such concerns with illegality could decrease support for the protest.

Second, anti-regime demands may create negative perceptions amongst the public regarding those who engage in land protests. In authoritarian regimes, those that spread anti-regime messages and pro-democracy messages are often portrayed as disrupting social stability and going against the national interests (Kerkvliet 2019; Brancati 2016). Research on environmentalism finds evidence that negative perception of environmental activists reduces public support because people are unwilling to associate with extreme or unlikeable individuals (Bashir et al. 2013; Stenhouse and Heinrich 2019). Indeed, as Lohmann (1994; 2000) suggests, when the public perceives participants in a protest to be “extremists”, they are more likely to abstain from supporting the protest. By advocating more maximalist demands, the protesters themselves may seem different in the eyes of the public.

Third, respondents may feel that the protests are more likely to be repressed if they engage in more provocative demands. The public may believe that more extreme demands could lead to more punitive punishment. Given the established findings suggesting an aversion amongst the public for violence (Lupu and Wallace 2019; Edwards and Arnon 2019), it is possible that citizens could anticipate that the unrightful frame will increase the probability of repression, thus leading to greater instability.

In sum, the unrightful frame could reduce public support for land protests because they (1) make the protest appear less legal; (2) create negative perceptions of those who engage in land protests; and (3) might lead to repression. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Endorsements with anti-regime messages will reduce public support for land protests in Vietnam

Dissident identities and public support for land protest

A dissident endorsement may also impact support because of the cues associated with the identity of the dissidents themselves. There are two distinct channels here. First, similar to the logic regarding the frame, the identity of the dissident could signal something about the likeability or trustworthiness of the dissident and the protesters. If dissidents are seen as extreme or immoral, their identity may lead citizens to associate them (and the protests) with extreme views. Indeed, as research on electoral politics in the US shows, the public perception of a person or party endorsing a candidate can have a profound “cuing” effect on how voters evaluate the candidate (Popkin 1991).

Second, a literature on intergroup dynamics suggests that people tend to have a more favorable attitude towards their in-group members, thus, viewing their in-group members’ actions more favorably (Brewer 1999). This explains why, for example, what is considered terrorism is subjective, depending on whether the observers share group affiliation with those who implement the act (Huff and Kerzer 2018). In addition, people are more likely to support the government’s repression strategies towards protests in which participants are perceived as coming from an out-group (Edwards and Arnon 2019). If dissidents are associated with an outgroup, their endorsement may reduce support for the protests. Dissident may be perceived of as an outgroup if they are seen as elite, more educated, associated with an ethnic group, or from a particular region. Based on this logic, the logic of the theory on intergroup dynamics suggests that less educated, members of the regime party, and residents of regions with more regime supporters are more likely to oppose domestic dissidents.

These mechanisms lead to the following hypotheses:

H2: Endorsements (domestic and foreign) associated with dissidents reduce public support for land protests compared to a protest solely supported by the village leader.

H3: Elite dissident allies reduce public support for land protests compared to a protest solely supported by the village leader more for the less educated (versus educated), party members (versus non-party members), or northern (versus southern).

Land Protests in Vietnam

We test these hypotheses in Vietnam. Vietnam is a relevant context for this study both because land disputes between citizens and local government officials in Vietnam have been a common form of boundary spanning contention and because regime dissidents have increasingly relied on the Internet and social media to co-opt land protests for their own agenda (Kerkvliet, 2019). Land use and land distribution has always been a contentious political issue in Vietnam, where villagers have relied on different boundary spanning strategies to make themselves heard. During collectivization from 1954 to late 1970s, farmers often engaged in everyday resistance, which included “quiet, mundane and subtle” and non-confrontational opposition against collective farming (Kerkvliet 2005).

Since collectivization ended, land disputes have become more visible, but still largely “rightful” in the sense that they affirm the legitimacy of the center (Kerkvliet, 2014; Chau, 2019). Villagers who are engaged in land disputes typically target corrupt local authorities and seek regime leaders’ intervention to advance their claims. Although several land controversies contributed to significant unrest, most have avoided challenging the political system. For example, while the large protests that spread throughout the northern province of Thai Binh in 1997 were large and caused changes to central regulations, villagers focused their blame on local officials’ mismanagement of land and power abuse (Nguyen 2017). Since then, “land protests

have become common feature of the Vietnamese landscape” (Wells-Dang 2010). For example, many villagers have been engaged in “extremely rightful” tactics in which protesters do not even criticize local authorities and just “humbly ask for help from a benign, caring and respected superior” (Chau, 2019, p.358). In addition, villagers have creatively combined their demand for fairness and justice by basing their claims on existing laws, rules and regulations (Kerkvliet 2014).

Additionally, reflecting the ability of endorsers to amplify protests, villagers actively seek assistance from lawyers and journalists to help them file the complaints and spread their grievances to the public (Kerkvliet 2014). At the same time, outside groups, especially pro-democracy activists, have increasingly relied on the Internet and social media to co-opt land protests (Wells-Dang 2010). For example, Viet Tan marched alongside villagers in a land demonstration in Ho Chi Minh City in 2007, and used their website to publicize villagers’ grievances (Wells-Dang 2010). Similarly, immediately after Dong Tam villagers in the suburban Hanoi protested against the local authorities’ decision to withdraw their land for an industrial project, some dissidents travelled to the site, live broadcast the protests, and spread the news about villagers’ grievances on social media (Le 2017). These outsiders often “posted protesters’ photos, letters, and other materials on the Internet” (Kerkvliet 2019, p.53).

An important question amongst scholars of Vietnam is whether these endorsements or associations help or hurt the protesters’ causes. Wells-Dang (2010) suggests that those outsiders do little to help protesters’ causes because they are considered extreme groups who only used land protests to draw attention to their own purposes. Some have also suggested that rightful resisters no longer completely control their own narrative (Labbe 2015). On the other hand, Thayer (2009) suggests pro-democracy groups will play a more critical role in addressing

villagers' grievances. In short, the questions asked in this project are central to understanding the dynamics of public support for protests in Vietnam.

Research Design

To test these hypotheses, we use an online survey experiment administered to a sample of 1,056 Vietnamese Internet users through Qualtrics in April 2020. Online survey experiments have been used in authoritarian regimes to study the effects of satirical information on political participation (Shao and Liu 2019), propaganda on regime resilience (Huang 2018) and participatory reforms on regime legitimacy (Truex 2017). Survey experiments allow us to infer the causal effects of protest frames and dissidents' identities. Recent work suggests that respondents tend to respond to survey experiments honestly (Mummolo and Peterson 2019). Furthermore, given the potential for preference falsification in a survey about support for protests (Cantoni, et al. 2019), conducting them online potentially mitigates these concerns (Mutz 2011).

One drawback of online surveys, which we address in the empirical section, is the degree to which the sample is representative of the population. Although we attempt to mitigate some of the biases of online samples by specifically targeting older and rural respondents, the online sample still likely differs in ways that we can and cannot measure from a fully representative sample of the Vietnamese population. In particular, our sample contains a higher proportion of party members than exist in Vietnam. While this is not ideal and is a drawback of most online survey work, recent work comparing convenience samples to representative samples suggests that such samples may generalize to the broad public if the findings do not vary across groups (Coppock, Leeper and Mullinix 2018). As we discuss in our results section, we think our

findings should generalize to the full Vietnamese population given the lack of heterogeneous effects of the treatment across different groups in our sample.

Regarding the survey instrument, all online respondents were first asked several questions on demographic characteristics such as age, educational level, occupation, profession, and income. We also asked some behavioral and attitudinal questions that might impact willingness to protest such as political awareness, national pride, willingness to take risks. After these questions, respondents read the following description of a hypothetical land protest:

“Imagine that you are living in Nam An village, An Hong commune, An Khang province. In recent days, Nam An villages have been gathering near the An Hong Commune’s People Committee to protest against the commune’s decision to withdraw 70 hectares of agricultural land for an industrial project. The villagers have used this land for a long time”

We use a hypothetical protest instead of a real-life situation so that our analysis will not be influenced by respondents’ existing beliefs and perceptions of an event that actually happened. Additionally, a hypothetical protest also helps reduce the sensitivity of the study. At the same time, in the interest of generalizability, our example is designed to be as similar to a land protest in Vietnam as possible. Our example mirrors what Kerkvliet describes as “typical” protest in Phu Son village in Dong Nai, where villagers opposed the compensation levels for the creation of an industrial park (2019, 36).

To identify the impact of unrightful frames and allies, we use a 2x4 factorial design. The first dimension varies the message between rightful and unrightful frames. The second factor varies the identity of the endorser. In each condition, participants read a Facebook post.¹ In the post, half of the respondents receive the rightful frame, where the Facebook poster attributes the

¹ We created a Facebook account and wrote posts related to the protest. Then we show a screenshot of the Facebook page. This made the treatment look real to respondents. We do not use dissidents’ real names to avoid appearing as if we were mobilizing public support for specific dissidents.

land protest to corrupt local government while expressing support for the central government (See Appendix 2 for an example of a Facebook page). In our analysis, we consider those receiving the rightful frame to be the control group given that this is the most common frame chosen by the protesters themselves (Chau 2019; Kerkvliet 2019).

For the half receiving the unrightful frame, in line with the rightful resistance literature, the Facebook post makes more maximalist demands, by challenging the legitimacy of the central government (See Appendix 2 for an example of the Facebook page). Rather than showing support for the center, the unrightful frame explicitly attributes blame to the political system. To ensure that any difference driven by the unrightful frame is not a function of any particular wording choice, we include two different unrightful frames (see Appendix 3 for a list of the wording for each of the conditions). The first attributes the protests to a lack of democracy in Vietnam; the second attributes the protests the lack of a free press. For our main analyses we aggregate both of these frames into a single unrightful category. In our robustness section, to ensure that the wording choice did not drive the results, we analyzed each frame separately.

For the protest endorser identity dimension, we divided the endorser into four different groups. The first endorser is the village leader. This endorser is rightful in the sense that the leader has not attempted to cross jurisdictional boundaries to win support. Additionally, the village leader should be a more sympathetic character and one sanctioned by the regime to represent the interests of villagers. For this reason, a village leader leading the protests should cohere with how the party has designed the system to work, thus corresponding to rightful resistance. We also included two alternative endorsers that would fit into the rightful frame, who sometimes also endorse protests. Specifically, we include retired and current officials as other potential regime-sanctioned, rightful endorsers.

The unrightful endorsers are the *independent dissident* endorsers. Similar to the to the unrightful message, we included several dissident endorsers to ensure that any effect is not the result of a specific endorser. The dissident endorsers included independent journalists, independent lawyers, foreign journalists, and foreign lawyers. Once again, these correspond with typical profiles for dissidents in Vietnam (Kerkvliet 2014). Table 1 displays all eight conditions and the number of observations in each cell (see Appendix 3 for a list of the specific wording for each condition).

Table 1: Experimental conditions

	Identity of Endorser			
	Villager leader	Retired provincial secretary	Current provincial secretary	Independent dissidents
Rightful Resistance Frame	Group 1 (N=102)	Group 2 (N=112)	Group 3 (N=105)	Group 4 (N=191)
Unrightful Message	Group 5 (N=111)	Group 6 (N=113)	Group 7 (N=111)	Group 8 (N=235)

For the dependent variables, we asked the degree to which the respondent supported the protests and the degree to which the protest was justified. We included two outcomes because respondents may be more willing to say they support the underlying cause of the protests than to say they support the protests themselves. The responses for each were on a six-point scale from complete unsupportive/unjustified to completely supportive/justified.

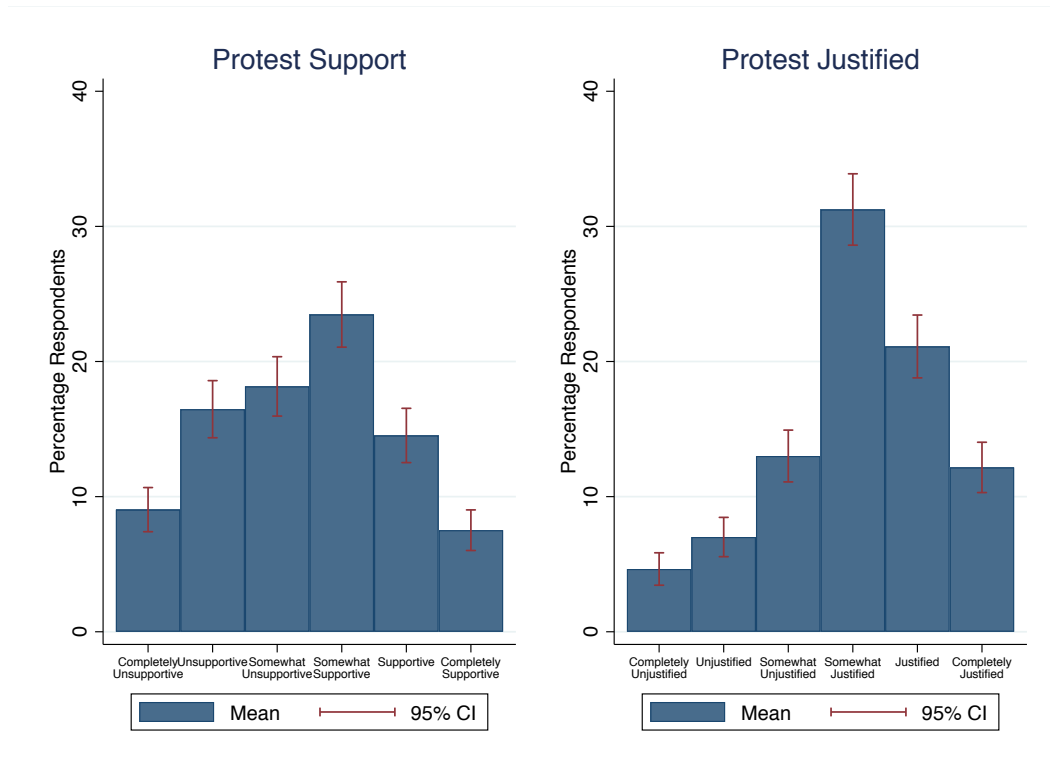
1. *Support: To what extent do you support or not support the protests by the villagers in Nam An?*²
2. *Justification. To what extent do you think the reason for why villagers in Nam An, An Hong commune are protesting is justified?*³

Figure 1 shows variation on both, but as predicted, a higher proportion felt that the protest is justified than express support for the protests.

² Responses on a six point scale: (1) Completely unsupportive (2) unsupportive (3) somewhat unsupportive (4) somewhat supportive; (5) supportive; (6) completely supportive.

³ Responses on a six point scale: (1) Completely unjustified (2) unjustified (3) somewhat unjustified (4) somewhat justified; (5) justified; (6) completely justified.

Figure 1: Distribution of Support for Protests, Belief that Protests Justified



Note: This figure shows the distribution of respondents expressing support for the hypothetical protests and those that feel the protests are justified.

To probe possible mechanisms underlying respondents’ support for the protest, we asked a series of follow-up questions. The first mechanism links to the perceived legality of the protests. We also assessed whether the respondent felt the protest would be repressed or how moral the respondent felt the endorser to be. These are the specific questions used to test the mechanisms.

1. *Legality: To what extent you think the protest in Nam An village, An Hong commune is legal?*
2. *Fear of repression: To what extent do you think the government will repress the protest in Nam An village?*
3. *Morality: To what extent does the Facebook poster share your morals?*

We also measure a number of covariates in our survey to assess the degree of bias in our sample, ensure that Qualtrics randomization generated balance across our randomization, and measure potential heterogeneous effects. In particular, we measure the gender, age, party membership, level of interest in politics, education level, risk acceptance, degree of national pride, and self-reported income level. We also ask whether the respondent was born in northern or southern Vietnam to account for possible regional differences. As Table 2 below shows, our sample skews male, with about 59% of our sample comprised of men. We have a high number of party members at 27 percent of the sample, which far more than the estimated 5-6 percent of the adult population in Vietnam, who are members of the Communist Party. This is likely because online samples tend to be more educated and empirical analysis shows that current party members in Vietnam are on average more educated than the general population (Markussen and Ngo 2019).

As Table 2 below suggests, there is balance across all the covariates with regard to the message framing, with the exception of education level. For education level, those receiving the unrightful treatment were slightly more educated. Appendix 1 shows the balance across the randomized ally groups. Again, there are no significant balance issues.

Table 2: Balance of Covariates Across Message Treatment

Variable	Rightful Message	Unrightful Message	Difference
Female	0.410 (0.492)	0.402 (0.491)	-0.008 (0.030)
Age	34.596 (11.894)	34.726 (10.670)	0.130 (0.687)
Party Member	0.269 (0.444)	0.279 (0.449)	0.010 (0.027)
Born in Northern VN	0.508 (0.500)	0.537 (0.499)	0.029 (0.030)
Interested in Politics	0.784 (0.412)	0.781 (0.414)	-0.004 (0.025)
Education Level	8.590 (2.015)	8.860 (1.793)	0.269** (0.116)
Risk Acceptance	2.143 (1.351)	2.232 (1.386)	0.088 (0.083)
National Pride	4.265 (0.918)	4.326 (0.891)	0.062 (0.055)
Income Level	1.424 (0.742)	1.442 (0.702)	0.019 (0.044)
Observations	510	570	1,184

Note: This table shows the means of the different covariates according to whether they receive the rightful or unrightful frame. The difference column shows the t-value of a T-Test of differences in means between those receiving the rightful and unrightful messages.

Results

Before looking at the results, we first conduct a manipulation check to ensure that respondents paid attention to the treatment. After receiving the treatment, we asked respondents the identity of Facebook poster was and the main stated reason for the protest. As the manipulation check in Appendix 4 shows, the treatment was successful in conveying the identity of the protest endorser and the message. In a post-treatment response, most were able to correctly recollect the identity of the Facebook poster and how they framed the protests.

To test our main hypotheses (H1 and H2), our main model is an OLS regression with support for the protests and the perception that the protests are justified as the outcome and dummy variables for the randomized frames and ally identities as the independent variables. In our main analysis, we leave all respondents in the sample regardless of whether they pass the manipulation check to avoid biasing the results (Aranow, Baron and Pinson 2019). Therefore, this is essentially an “intention to treat” (ITT) design.

Panels A and B of Figure 2 shows the effect of the message frames on the two outcomes (see Appendix 5 for the table of results). As Panel A shows, there is a statistically significant effect of the message from on support for the protests. While the effect is only a .14 standard deviation shift in the mean value of support for the protest, the unrightful frame shifts the distribution from a mean that is supportive of the protests (above 3.5 on the six point scale for the dependent variable) to a mean that is negative (below 3.5 on the six point scale dependent variable). Panel B shows the effects of the message frame on whether respondents felt the protests were justified. Here the effect of the unrightful message is larger, moving the distribution .22 standard deviations downward, again at standard levels of significance.

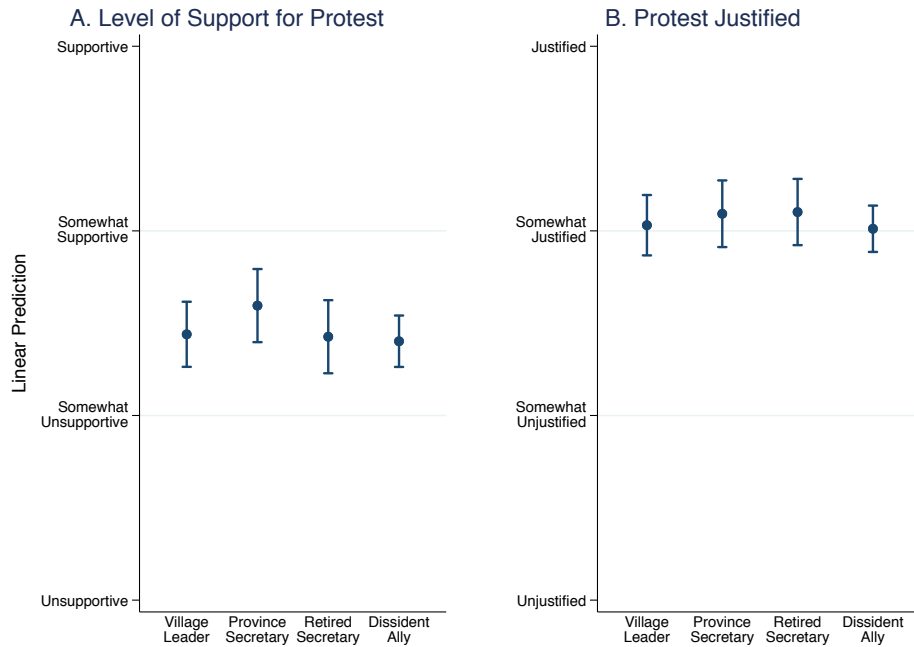
By contrast, as Panels C and D show, the ally treatments have no significant effect on the outcome (see Appendix 5). Varying whether the Facebook poster is a village leader, provincial party secretary, retired provincial party secretary, or dissident does not shift support for the protests or feelings that the protests were justified at statistically significant levels. The main findings indicate that it is the more maximalist message and not the messenger that impacts support for the protests.

Figure 2: Effects of Message Frame on Support for Protests and Justification of Protests



Note: Figure 2 shows effect the Facebook post frames on support for the protests and perception that the protests are justified based on the models in Appendix 5. The highest and lowest values of the scale (Very Unsupportive/Supportive and Very Unjustified/Justified) to better observe the effects.

Figure 3: Effects of Allies on Support for Protests and Justification of Protests



Note: Figure 3 shows the predicted effect of the identity of the Facebook poster frames the protest on support for the protests and perception that the protests are justified based on the models in Appendix 5. The highest and lowest values of the scale (Very Unsupportive/Supportive and Very Unjustified/Justified) to better observe the effects.

One potential concern with these findings could be that the effect of the frame or that the lack of a finding on dissident endorser randomization is driven by a specific wording of the frame or a particular dissident. To account for this, in our experimental design we included two unrightful frames and four types of dissidents. For the unrightful frames, we included both support for freedom of press and support for greater democracy. For the dissident endorsers, we varied the identity between foreign lawyer, domestic lawyer, foreign journalist, and domestic journalist. As Appendix 5A shows, there is little difference in the effect size of the two frames. This provides greater confidence that the result is a function of the concept of more maximalist claims and not a function of the specific claim being made. For the dissident identities, none are significant (Appendix 5B and 5C). The one identity that nears significance and could have potentially had a small effect given a larger sample size is domestic journalist. Domestic journalist endorsers led to an estimated .13 standard deviation decline in support for the protest and a .1 standard deviation for feeling that protest is justified. However, this results is not robust, suggesting that the findings operate primarily through the unrightful frame.

Another potential concern is with the factorial design. Recent work suggests that factorial designs are potentially problematic given potential interactions between the different treatments (Muralidharan, Romero and Wuthrich 2019). To address this, we interacted our treatment arms together to assess whether a specific interaction is driving the results on the protest frame. As Appendix 6 shows, the effect of the unrightful message is consistent across the different endorsers. The unrightful message reduces support for the protests by similar levels whether endorsed by a village leader or a dissident.

An additional concern is the possibility that through bad luck in the randomization, the lack of balance on some potentially important covariates drives the findings. To account for this,

Appendix 7 includes the results from a model including the control variables in Table 2. These include education, age, gender, whether the respondent was born in northern Vietnam (versus southern Vietnam), party membership, income level, interest in politics, and level of national pride. As Appendix 7 shows, the effect of the frame remains even when including the covariates.

Another concern with the null finding on the dissident allies could be the inclusion of respondents that did not pass the manipulation check. Perhaps there is a stronger effect for those that did pass the check. Although recent work cautions against testing only on those that pass the manipulation check (Aronow, Baron and Pinson 2019), we conduct a speculative analysis where we drop those that do not correctly identify the name of endorser or the reason for the protest. As Appendix 8 shows, the results remain even after dropping those that did not respond to the treatment. Along with the other checks, this provides greater confidence that the unrightful message led to a small, but robust decline in support for the protests and the feeling that the protests were justified.

Heterogeneous Effects and Generalizability

This section assesses potential heterogeneous effects for the treatment. An examination of the heterogeneous effects is useful for several reasons. First, our additional hypotheses above suggest that certain groups – those in northern Vietnam, those in rural areas, and the less educated – might be more responsive to the treatment. Related, we may also have concerns that the results from the online sample do not generalize to the greater population. An analysis of heterogeneous effects can help assess whether the online sample might generalize to the larger population (Coppock, Leeper and Mullinix 2018). As they show, online samples tend to generalize to larger populations in contexts where the effects are not specific to a subset of the

population. This is particularly concerning given the high number of party members in our sample. It could be that party members, react more negatively to unrightful messages than non-party members. The full model with covariates in Appendix 9 does show, for example, that party members are less likely to support protests and find protests less justified than non-party members.

Appendix 9 shows the results of the heterogeneous effects analysis. Interacting the unrightful frame with party membership, education, and northern heritage, the results show that neither of these groups are more or less affected by the unrightful frame. The interaction effects for each of these groups on the unrightful frames are insignificant. While this fails to support H3, it does lend greater support to the generalizability of our findings, suggesting that the effects we find in our online sample should generalize to a more fully representative sample of the Vietnamese population.

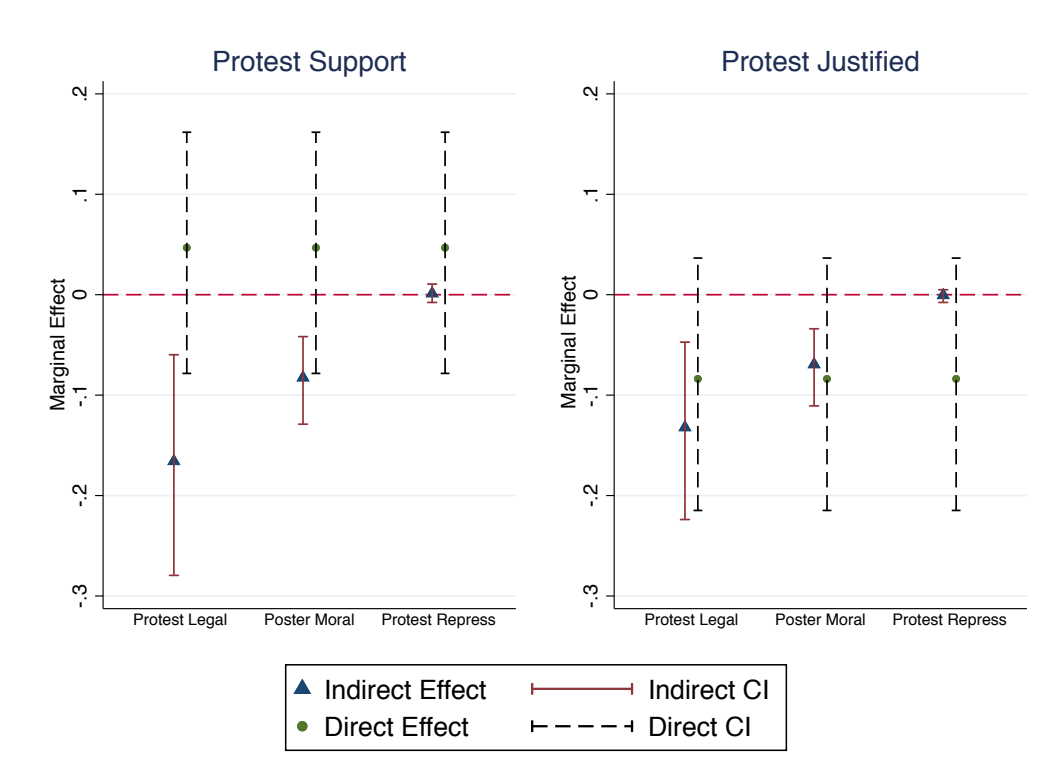
Morality, Legality, or Fear? A Mediation Analysis of Mechanisms

The foregoing analysis shows that the unrightful frame decreased support for the protests and the feeling that the protests were justified. Turning to the mechanisms, this section asks why respondents were less likely to support the protests and find them justified. We examine three possibilities in the theory section. First, it is possible that the unrightful message decreased the perception of the *legality* of the protests. Second, it is possible that respondents thought the unrightful frame would lead to greater contention and instability in the form of retribution by the government. Third, it is possible that the unrightful frame signaled something about the morality or character of the Facebook poster.

To assess these possibilities, we conduct a causal mediation analysis using the non-parametric method outlined by Imai, Yamamoto and Tingley (2011). To implement this, we conduct two OLS regressions. The first regresses the impact of the message frame on the mediating variable, while the second regresses the two dependent variables on the message frame as well as the mediating variables. Then, we assess the direct effect and the degree to which the effect is mediated through each of the candidate mediating variables. Because we have multiple potential mediators, we tested each mediator while including the other mediators in the second stage regression.

Figure 4 shows the marginal effects of the mediating variable and the direct effect of the message frame on support for protests. The results first show that the perception of the protests being legal has the strongest mediating effect on the outcomes. The unrightful frame has a strong first stage effect on the respondent's perception that the protests are legal and the perception that the Facebook poster is a moral. The unrightful message, however, had no impact on whether the respondent thought the protest was likely to be repressed. In the second stage, once accounting for the mediating effect of the protests being legal and the morality of the protest, we find no direct effect of the message, suggesting that the effect runs entirely through changed perceptions of the legality of the protests and perceptions of the morality of the endorser.

Figure 4: Mediation Effect of Legality of Protests, Morality of Poster, and Prospect of Repression on Support for Protests



Note: Figure 4 shows the estimated indirect effects of the mediators (on the X axis) on support for the protests and the feelings that the protests are justified. The bars are the 95% confidence intervals.

To assess the sensitivity of these results to possible violations of the sequential ignorability assumption (Imai, Keele and Tingley 2011), we conduct a sensitivity test of these results. The test shows the degree to which a correlation in the errors of the mediation model and the errors of the outcome model would impact the estimated mediated effect. As the analysis shows (see Appendix 10), the perception that the protest is legal is the most robust against potential violations of this assumption. The perception of the morality of the endorser is more sensitive to a potential correlation of error terms. Based on this analysis, we have a high degree of confidence that the unrightful message signals that the protest is illegal, which decreases support. We find additional evidence, though more speculative, that that the unrightful message

also impacts the perception that the endorser is moral and shares the values of the respondent, thus reducing support for the protests.

Conclusion

Does rightful resistance work for land protesters in an authoritarian setting? Is there a risk to lodging more maximalist demands? Could cooptation by urban dissidents undermine support for rural protesters? Our theory and results suggest that unrightful frames decrease public support for protesters through two channels. The rightful frame convinces the public that the protests are more legal, which then increases the degree to which they find the message justified and support the protests. Second, a rightful frame improves perceptions of the morals of the endorser and consequently support for the protests that the dissident has coopted. This suggests that rightful resisters may indeed face a strategic dilemma (Jasper 2004), where attempts to garner attention by enlisting dissident allies can undermine support.

With that said, there are some important limitations of our design and scope conditions to keep in mind when assessing the generalizability of these findings. First, and most importantly, our findings pertain to land protests. We could find variation with other types of protests such as nationalist protests and labor protests. It is theoretically possible that the public is more tolerant of maximalist claims for protests over those issues. With that said, given the prominence of land protests under authoritarian rule the degree to which rightful resistance is employed as a strategy for these protests, our findings still relate to an important form of contention.

Second, our results explicitly apply to a single-party regime. How would our results apply to a hybrid regime context? We suggest that in other contexts, the negative effect of unrightful protest could be smaller as unrightful protest would be less likely to seem illegal and

the dissident endorsers potentially less extreme. Indeed, as Robertson suggests, rightful resistance is likely more necessary in closed regimes than it is in comparatively more open contexts such as Russia (2010).

Finally, out of necessity, we were forced in this study to use a hypothetical dissident to endorse the protest. It is possible that endorsement from a particularly well-known dissident could have different effects if citizens associate those dissidents with specific views or personal traits. Unfortunately, because of the sensitivity of the context, we could not use actual names to endorse the protests. However, we believe that at least part of the reason that a particular dissident might acquire an association as extreme would be due to the message and tactics they have advocated. Therefore, if there was an effect of a particular dissident, we think that the underlying mechanism of the extreme message leading to a perception of illegality could still operate, at least indirectly, through the identity of the dissident.

With these qualifications in mind, the findings nonetheless provide empirical support for an oft-repeated theory that rightful resistance leads to greater support than unrightful resistance. Our findings provide strong support for this theory. It also helps explain why rightful resisters may be unwilling to enlist the aid of dissidents and journalists unless they continually fail to win concessions. In short, there is no need to risk guilt by association, unless the protesters need greater attention.

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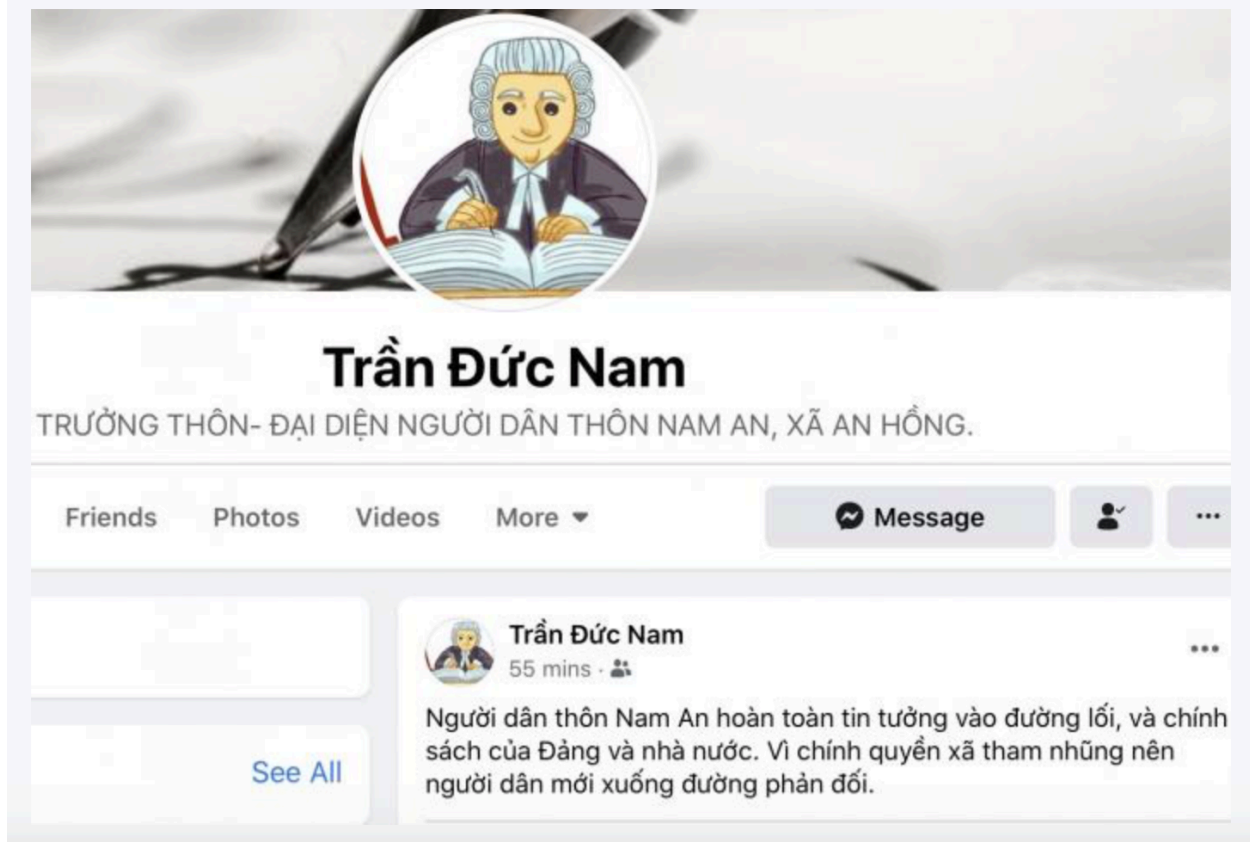
Appendix 1: Balance Tables

VARIABLES	Control: Village Head	Identity 1: Provincial Secretary	Identity2: Dissident	Identity 3: Retired Secretary
Female	0.0253 (0.0238)	-0.00699 (0.0243)	-0.00965 (0.0296)	0.00405 (0.0239)
Age	-0.00144 (0.00112)	0.000175 (0.00114)	0.00118 (0.00139)	-0.000905 (0.00112)
Party Member	-0.0133 (0.0266)	0.0305 (0.0272)	-0.0284 (0.0331)	0.00674 (0.0267)
Born in North VN	-0.0234 (0.0235)	0.00724 (0.0241)	0.0155 (0.0293)	0.0102 (0.0236)
Interested in Politics	-0.00463 (0.0291)	-0.00877 (0.0298)	-0.0129 (0.0362)	0.0859*** (0.0292)
Education Level	0.00904 (0.00609)	0.00602 (0.00623)	-0.00572 (0.00759)	-0.00145 (0.00612)
Risk Acceptance	-0.00914 (0.00845)	0.000396 (0.00865)	0.00271 (0.0105)	-0.00357 (0.00849)
National Pride	-0.00224 (0.0128)	-0.000744 (0.0131)	0.0161 (0.0160)	-0.00855 (0.0129)
Income Level	-0.0257 (0.0175)	0.0217 (0.0179)	0.00975 (0.0218)	0.0221 (0.0176)
Constant	0.233*** (0.0844)	0.108 (0.0864)	0.307*** (0.105)	0.172** (0.0848)
Observations	1,142	1,142	1,142	1,142

R-squared	0.010	0.004	0.003	0.011
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Appendix 2: Screenshot of a Sample of the Survey Prime for the Rightful Resistance

Village Leader Post



Trần Đức Nam
TRƯỞNG THÔN- ĐẠI DIỆN NGƯỜI DÂN THÔN NAM AN, XÃ AN HỒNG.

Friends Photos Videos More ▾ Message

Trần Đức Nam
55 mins · 🧑

Người dân thôn Nam An hoàn toàn tin tưởng vào đường lối, và chính sách của Đảng và nhà nước. Vì chính quyền xã tham nhũng nên người dân mới xuống đường phản đối.

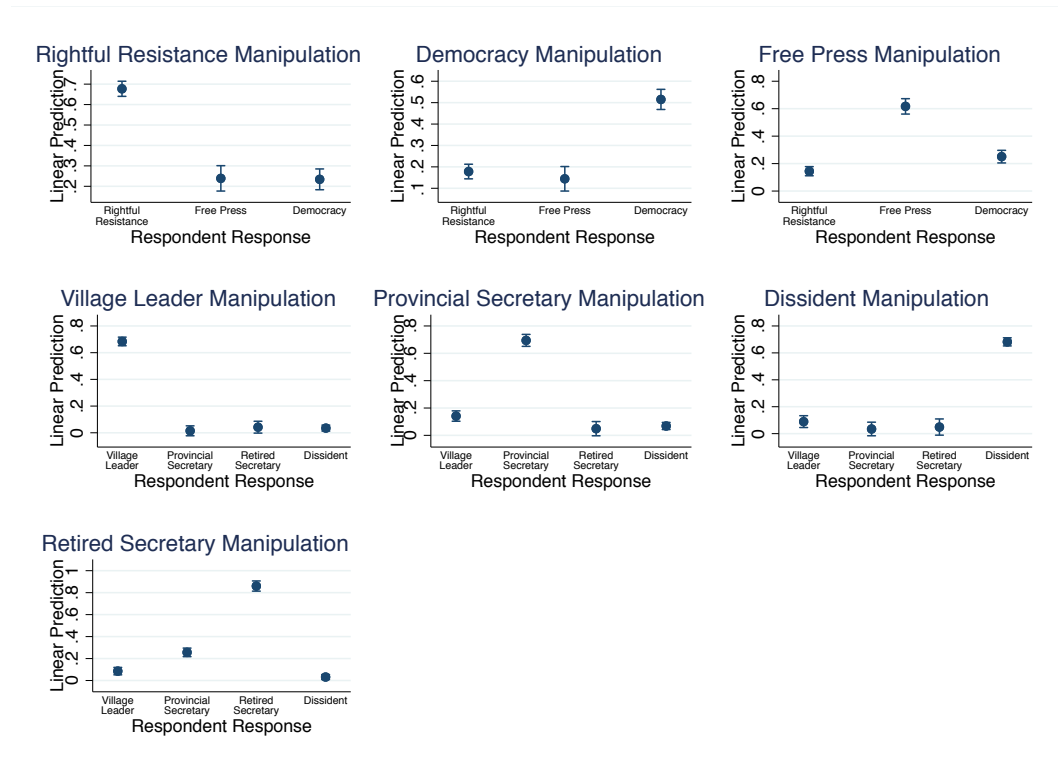
[See All](#)

Appendix 3: Wording of Each Frame

Group	Scenario
1	<p>Villager leader (who represents Nam An village) attributes the land protest to <i>local officials</i> on Facebook:</p> <p>“Nam An’s villagers completely believe in the guidance and policies of the Party and the state. It is because of corrupt local officials that villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw land.”</p>
2	<p>Retired Provincial Secretary attributes the land protest to <i>local officials</i> on Facebook:</p> <p>“Nam An’s villagers completely believe in the guidance and policies of the Party and the state. It is because of corrupt local officials that villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land.”</p>
3	<p>Current Provincial Secretary attributes the land protest to <i>local officials</i> on Facebook:</p> <p>“Nam An’s villagers completely believe in the guidance and policies of the Party and the state. It is because of corrupt local officials that villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land.”</p>
4	<p>Dissident (Independent Lawyer/Independent Journalist/Foreign Lawyer/Foreign Journalists) attributes the land protest to <i>local officials</i> on Facebook:</p> <p>“Nam An’s villagers completely believe in the guidance and policies of the Party and the state. It is because of corrupt local officials that villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land.”</p>
5	<p>Dissident (Independent Lawyer/Independent Journalist/Foreign Lawyer/Foreign Journalists) attributes the land protest to lack of freedom of press/lack of democracy writes on Facebook:</p> <p>“It is because of the shortcomings of the policies and guidance of the Party and the state that Nam An’s villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land. Only when freedom of press/democracy is allowed can land disputes be resolved”</p>
6	<p>Villager leader (who represents Nam An village) attributes the land protest to <i>lack of freedom of press/lack of democracy</i> writes on Facebook:</p> <p>“It is because of the shortcomings of the policies and guidance of the Party and the state that Nam An’s villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land. Only when freedom of press/democracy is allowed can land disputes be resolved”</p>
7	<p>Retired Provincial Secretary attributes the land protest to <i>lack of freedom of press/lack of democracy</i> writes on Facebook:</p>

	<p>“It is because of the shortcomings of the policies and guidance of the Party and the state that Nam An’s villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land. Only when freedom of press/democracy is allowed can land disputes be resolved”</p>
8	<p>Current Provincial Secretary attributes the land protest to <i>lack of freedom of press/lack of democracy</i> writes on Facebook:</p> <p>“It is because of the shortcomings of the policies and guidance of the Party and the state that Nam An’s villagers decided to take to the street to oppose the decision to withdraw the land. Only when freedom of press/democracy is allowed can land disputes be resolved”</p>

Appendix 4: Manipulation Checks



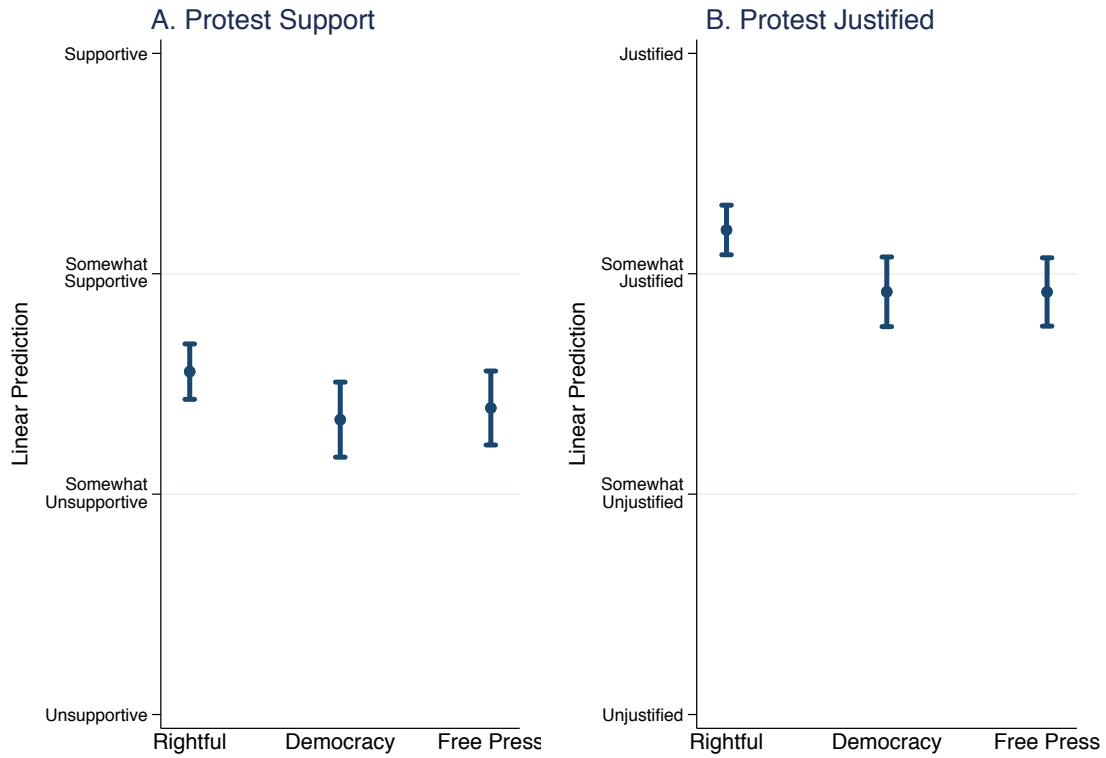
Note: The estimates are a linear prediction regression the respondents' recollections of randomly assigned identity of the Facebook poster or the Facebook poster's message on the actual random assignment. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals around the estimate.

Appendix 5: Main Results of Treatments on Support for Protests; Feeling that Protests are Justified

VARIABLES	Support Protest	Protest Justified
Unrightful Frame	-0.199** (0.088)	-0.286*** (0.080)
Provincial Secretary Ally	0.155 (0.135)	0.062 (0.124)
Retired Provincial Secretary Ally	-0.013 (0.135)	0.071 (0.124)
Dissident Ally	-0.038 (0.114)	-0.019 (0.105)
Constant	3.545*** (0.102)	4.182*** (0.093)
Observations	1,056	1,056
R-squared	0.008	0.013

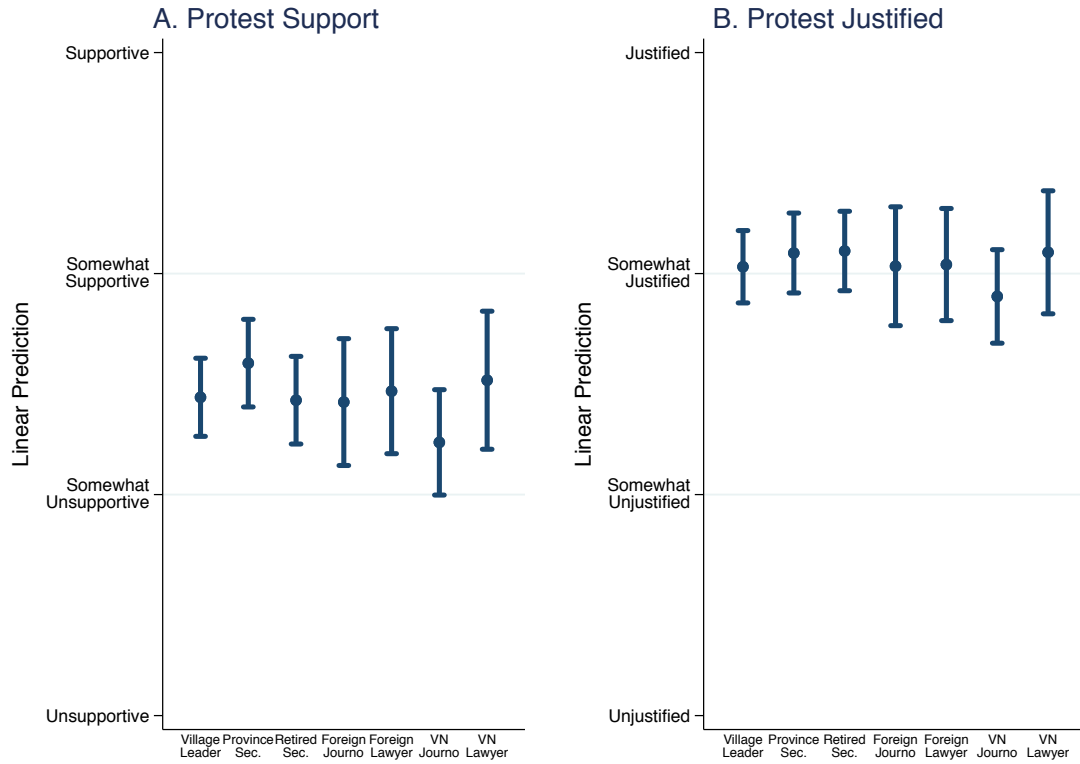
Notes: Model is OLS with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Protest support is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unsupportive) to 6 (completely supportive). Protest justified is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unjustified) to 6 (completely justified).

Appendix 5A: Impact of Different Facebook Endorsement Messages



Note: Appendix 5A shows effect the Facebook post frames on support for the protests and perception that the protests are justified based on the models in Appendix 5C. The highest and lowest values of the scale (Very Unsupportive/ Supportive and Very Unjustified/Justified) to better observe the effects.

Appendix 5B: Impact of Different Facebook Allies



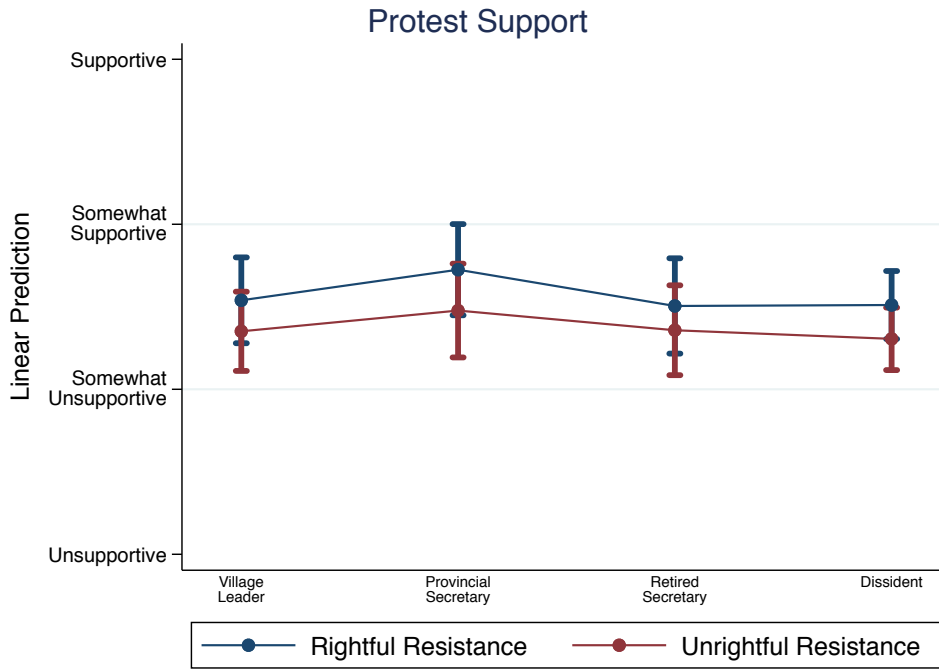
Note: Appendix 5B shows effect the Facebook allies on support for the protests and perception that the protests are justified based on the models in Appendix 5C. The highest and lowest values of the scale (Very Unsupportive/Supportive and Very Unjustified/Justified) to better observe the effects.

Appendix 5C: Impact of Different Facebook Endorsement Messages

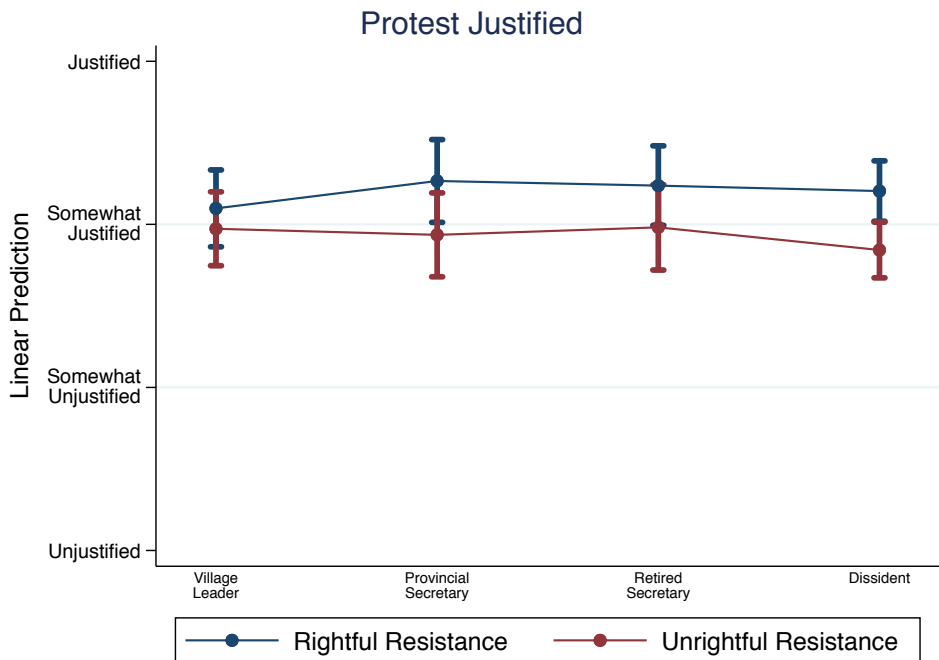
VARIABLES	Support Protest	Protest Justified
Democracy Frame	-0.218** (0.108)	-0.280*** (0.099)
Free Speech Frame	-0.165 (0.107)	-0.281*** (0.098)
Provincial Secretary Identity	0.155 (0.135)	0.062 (0.124)
Retired Secretary	-0.013 (0.135)	0.071 (0.124)
Foreign Journalist	-0.022 (0.172)	0.002 (0.160)
Foreign Lawyer	0.028 (0.170)	0.010 (0.154)
Independent Journalist	-0.204 (0.151)	-0.134 (0.137)
Independent Lawyer	0.077 (0.183)	0.065 (0.165)
Constant	3.541*** (0.102)	4.179*** (0.093)
Observations	1,056	1,056
R-squared	0.010	0.014

Notes: Model is OLS with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Protest support is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unsupportive) to 6 (completely supportive). Protest justified is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unjustified) to 6 (completely justified).

Appendix 6: Interaction of Factors



Note: The above graph shows the predicted effects of an interaction of the frame and dissident endorsers on support for the protests.



Note: The above graph shows the predicted effects of an interaction of the frame and dissident endorsers on whether the protest is justified.

Appendix 7: Impact of Message, Allies with Pre-Treatment Covariates

VARIABLES	Support Protest	Protest Justified
Unrightful Frame	-0.175** (0.087)	-0.275*** (0.081)
Provincial Secretary Ally	0.198 (0.136)	0.084 (0.126)
Retired Provincial Secretary Ally	-0.004 (0.138)	0.079 (0.127)
Dissident Ally	-0.010 (0.119)	-0.007 (0.110)
Female	0.111 (0.089)	0.135 (0.083)
Age	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)
Party Member	-0.269*** (0.100)	-0.078 (0.092)
Born in Northern Vietnam	-0.303*** (0.088)	-0.156* (0.081)
Interest in Politics	0.283** (0.113)	0.088 (0.104)
Education Level	-0.005 (0.024)	-0.023 (0.022)
Risk Acceptance	0.030 (0.032)	0.005 (0.030)
National Pride	-0.162*** (0.049)	0.002 (0.045)
Self-Reported Income Level	-0.050 (0.066)	0.045 (0.061)
Constant	4.350*** (0.335)	4.486*** (0.309)
Observations	1,056	1,056
R-squared	0.048	0.024

Notes: Model is OLS with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Protest support is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unresponsive) to 6 (completely supportive). Protest justified is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unjustified) to 6 (completely justified).

Appendix 8: Results After Dropping Those not Passing Manipulation Check

VARIABLES	Support Protest	Protest Justified
Unrightful Frame	-0.191* (0.102)	-0.230** (0.090)
Provincial Secretary Ally	0.215 (0.145)	0.113 (0.133)
Retired Provincial Secretary Ally	0.037 (0.149)	0.063 (0.133)
Dissident Ally	-0.001 (0.133)	0.008 (0.118)
Constant	3.523*** (0.108)	4.177*** (0.098)
Observations	785	785
R-squared	0.008	0.010

Notes: Model is OLS with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Protest support is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unsupportive) to 6 (completely supportive). Protest justified is a six-point variable ranging from 1 (completely unjustified) to 6 (completely justified).

Appendix 9: Heterogeneous Effects Analysis

VARIABLES	Support Protest	Support Protest	Support Protest	Protest Justified	Protest Justified	Protest Justified
Unrightful Frame	-0.239** (0.100)	-0.222 (0.428)	-0.331** (0.129)	0.250*** (0.092)	-0.351 (0.410)	0.329*** (0.121)
Party Member	- 0.407*** (0.153)			-0.035 (0.130)		
Unrightful*Party	0.160 (0.207)			-0.125 (0.186)		
Education		-0.014 (0.034)			-0.025 (0.030)	
Unrightful*Education		0.003 (0.048)			0.008 (0.046)	
Northern Born			- 0.490*** (0.127)			-0.203* (0.114)
Unrightful*Northern Born			0.273 (0.176)			0.092 (0.161)
Provincial Secretary Ally	0.176 (0.135)	0.157 (0.136)	0.173 (0.134)	0.067 (0.125)	0.065 (0.125)	0.070 (0.125)
Retired Provincial Sec. Ally	0.000 (0.134)	-0.014 (0.135)	0.008 (0.134)	0.072 (0.124)	0.070 (0.124)	0.081 (0.124)
Dissident Ally	-0.028 (0.115)	-0.040 (0.114)	-0.016 (0.114)	-0.022 (0.106)	-0.024 (0.105)	-0.010 (0.104)
Constant	3.644*** (0.105)	3.663*** (0.309)	3.777*** (0.120)	4.191*** (0.098)	4.396*** (0.275)	4.278*** (0.110)
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056
R-squared	0.018	0.008	0.024	0.015	0.014	0.017

Appendix 10: Sensitivity Analysis

