Supplementary Information
Preaching Politics: How Politicization Undermines Religious Authority in the Middle East

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Abstract

A growing body of research demonstrates that political involvement by Christian religious leaders can undermine the religion's social influence. Do these negative consequences of politicization also extend to Islam? Contrary to scholarly and popular accounts that describe Islam as inherently political, we argue that Muslim religious leaders will weaken their religious authority when they engage with politics. We test this argument with a conjoint experiment implemented on a survey of more than 12,000 Sunni Muslim respondents in 11 Middle Eastern countries. The results show that connections to political issues or politically active religious movements decrease the perceived religious authority of Muslim clerics, including among respondents who approve of the clerics' political views. The article's findings shed light on how Muslims in the Middle East understand the relationship between religion and politics, and they contribute more broadly to understanding of how politicized religious leaders can have negative repercussions for religion.

Contents

A   Summary Statistics by Country

Table 1: Morocco

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	28.9	17.0	16.3
% Female	43.2	50.6	50
% Casablanca	25.3	9.4	-
% Sunni	96.2	99	99.9
% Tertiary Education	62.4	33.9	23.4
% Unemployed	16.2	10.6	14.5
% Pray Daily	82.3	-	60.4
N	2990	35,740,000	1200

Table 2: Tunisia

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	24.1	14.0	12.0
% Female	38.0	50.4	50
% Tunis	27.4	9.6	-
% Sunni	97.7	99	92.8
% Tertiary Education	73.3	32.1	18.1
% Unemployed	15.8	15.3	15.8
% Pray Daily	67.1	-	63.7
N	798	11,530,000	1200

Table 3: Egypt

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	26.8	18.9	12.7
% Female	39.9	49.8	49.4
% Cairo	35.4	20.0	-
% Sunni	98.2	94.9	-
% Tertiary Education	76.6	34.4	16.6
% Unemployed	6.2	11.9	3.2
% Pray Daily	73.6	-	59.9
N	3013	97,550,000	1200

Table 4: Jordan

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	28.7	20.1	14.5
% Female	44.9	49	50
% Amman	55.3	41.3	-
% Sunni	99.1	97	-
% Tertiary Education	71.7	31.7	21.1
% Unemployed	14.9	18.5	14.1
% Pray Daily	78.6	-	77.6
% N	778	9,702,000	1500

Table 5: Lebanon

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	25.9	16.4	15.8
% Female	38.6	49.2	50
% Beirut	46.9	31.5	-
% Sunni	80.7	45-55	45.2
% Tertiary Education	61.0	38.1	24.8
% Unemployed	13.2	6.2	7.7
% Pray Daily	65.6	-	49.5
% N	228	6,082,000	1500

Table 6: UAE

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	16.3	13.5	
% Female	38.6	29.9	
% Dubai	46.7	33.4	
% Sunni	93.5	90	
% Tertiary Education	79.2	-	
% Unemployed	5.4	1.7	
% Pray Daily	81.2	-	
% N	2011	9,400,000	

Table 7: Saudi Arabia

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	14.1	18.6	16.1
% Female	39.8	42.5	49.6
% Riyadh	32.3	15.7	-
% Sunni	93.5	85-90	95.9
% Tertiary Education	69.5	66.6	46.5
% Unemployed	10.5	5.8	4.8
% Pray Daily	91.8	-	88.6
% N	2010	32,940,000	1404

Table 8: Qatar

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	11.8	12.4	19.3
% Female	31.8	23.5	54.0
% Doha	73.1	36.2	43.7
% Sunni	98.3	90	-
% Tertiary Education	82.0	16.4	44.3
% Unemployed	5.3	0.1	9.8
% Pray Daily	74.1	-	-
% N	245	2,639,000	1060

Table 9: Bahrain

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	19.2	15.65	21.2
% Female	40.1	37.8	45.0
% Manama	16.4	10.5	25.7
% Sunni	65.7	25-35	-
% Tertiary Education	62.7	45.5	24.1
% Unemployed	7.3	3.7	8.9
% Pray Daily	82.0	-	-
% N	177	1,493,000	1200

Table 10: Kuwait

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	9.1	15.1	16.0
% Female	27.2	40.2	49.4
% Al-Ahmadi	14.4	15.4	-
% Sunni	98.3	75-80	-
% Tertiary Education	83.1	32.6	31.0
% Unemployed	2.9	2.1	13.2
% Pray Daily	82.4	-	69.2
% N	243	4,137,000	1021

Table 11: Turkey

Demographic	YouGov Survey (2017)	Population (2017)	Arab Barometer (2016)
% 15-24	-	16.0	18.1
% Female	34.3	50.9	51.4
% Sunni	92.7	85-90	-
% Tertiary Education	68.7	95.4	19.4
% Unemployed	7.3	10.4	4.8
% Pray Daily	28.4	-	46.5
% N	1972	79,810,000	1605

B Robustness Checks for Main Effects

B.1 Regression Table for AMCE Effects in Full Sample

Table 12: Conjoint Regression Models

	Authority Binary	Authority Scalar	Sermon Binary
Age: 45	0.014**	0.017	0.004
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Age: 70	0.023***	0.006	0.007
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Engineering BA	−0.001	0.002	0.009
	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.007)
Islamic Fiqh BA	0.054***	0.082***	0.049***
	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.008)
Engineering Doctorate	0.007	0.033**	0.028***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Islamic Fiqh Doctorate	0.091***	0.141***	0.066***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Hafiz	0.098***	0.165***	0.078***
	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.005)
Iraqi	−0.116***	−0.210***	−0.112***
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Saudi	−0.059***	−0.109***	−0.071***
	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.006)
Government TV	0.017**	0.024	0.008
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Satellite TV	0.015**	0.018	0.018**
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Mosque registered w/ Gov	0.031***	0.076***	0.019**
	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.007)
Mosque not registered w/ Gov	0.008	−0.006	0.002
	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.007)
Followers: 50,000	0.010*	0.011	0.010*
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Followers: 500,000	0.017***	0.028**	0.021***
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Muslim Brotherhood	−0.142***	−0.331***	−0.133***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.008)
Salafi	−0.120***	−0.242***	−0.106***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Sufi	−0.158***	−0.371***	−0.134***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.008)
Shiite	−0.359***	−0.739***	−0.329***
	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.007)
Meets with US Embassy	−0.024***	−0.058***	−0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.007)
Criticizes US	−0.010	−0.024	−0.005
	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.007)
Supports Armed Resistance Against US	−0.074***	−0.153***	−0.076***
	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.007)
Supports Gov	−0.024***	−0.042***	−0.022***
	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.006)
Criticizes Gov	−0.031***	−0.056***	−0.028***
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.006)
Constant	0.645***	1.486***	0.652***
	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.012)

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
SEs clustered by survey respondent

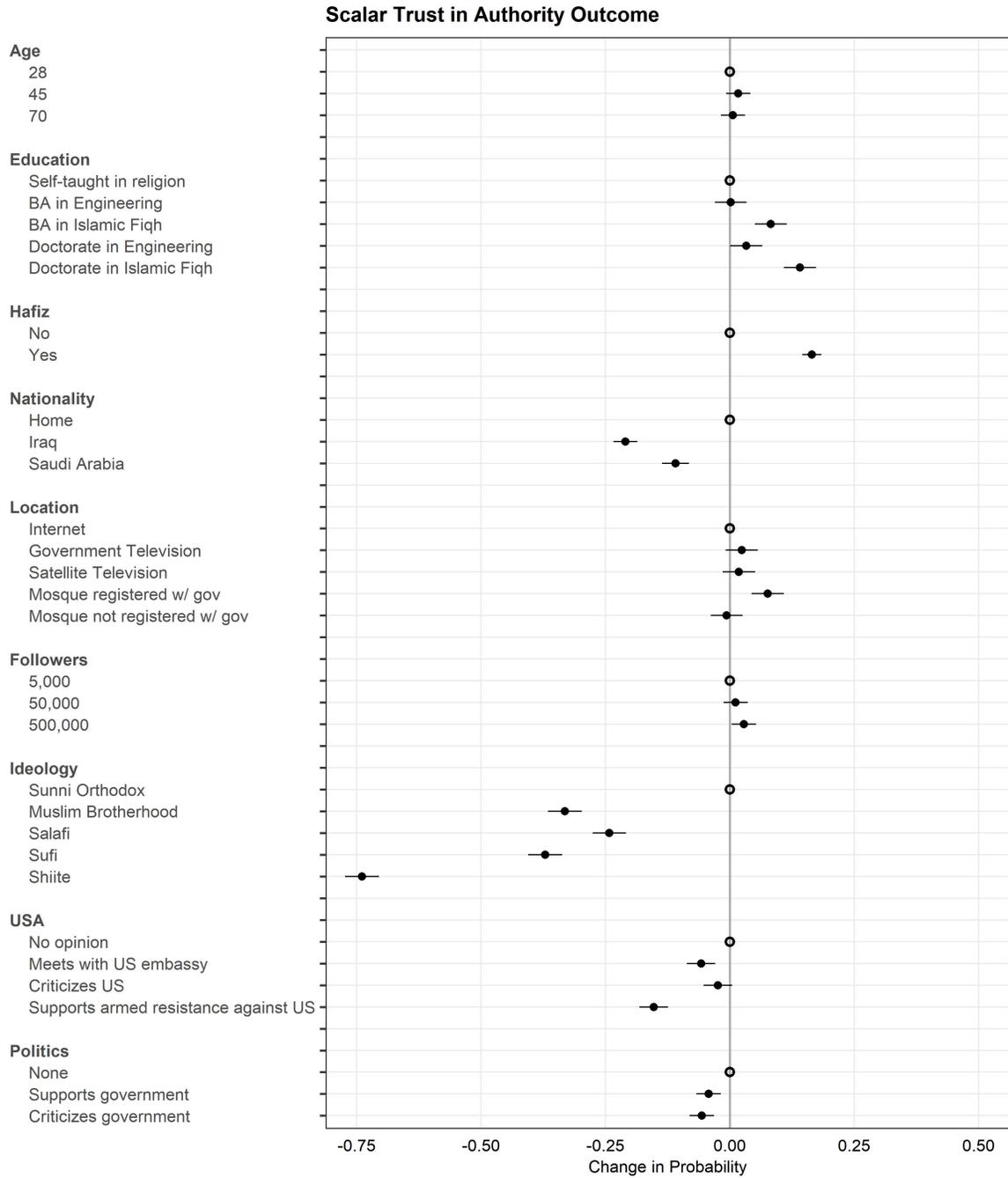## B.2   Marginal Means for Full Sample

Figure 1: Marginal Means
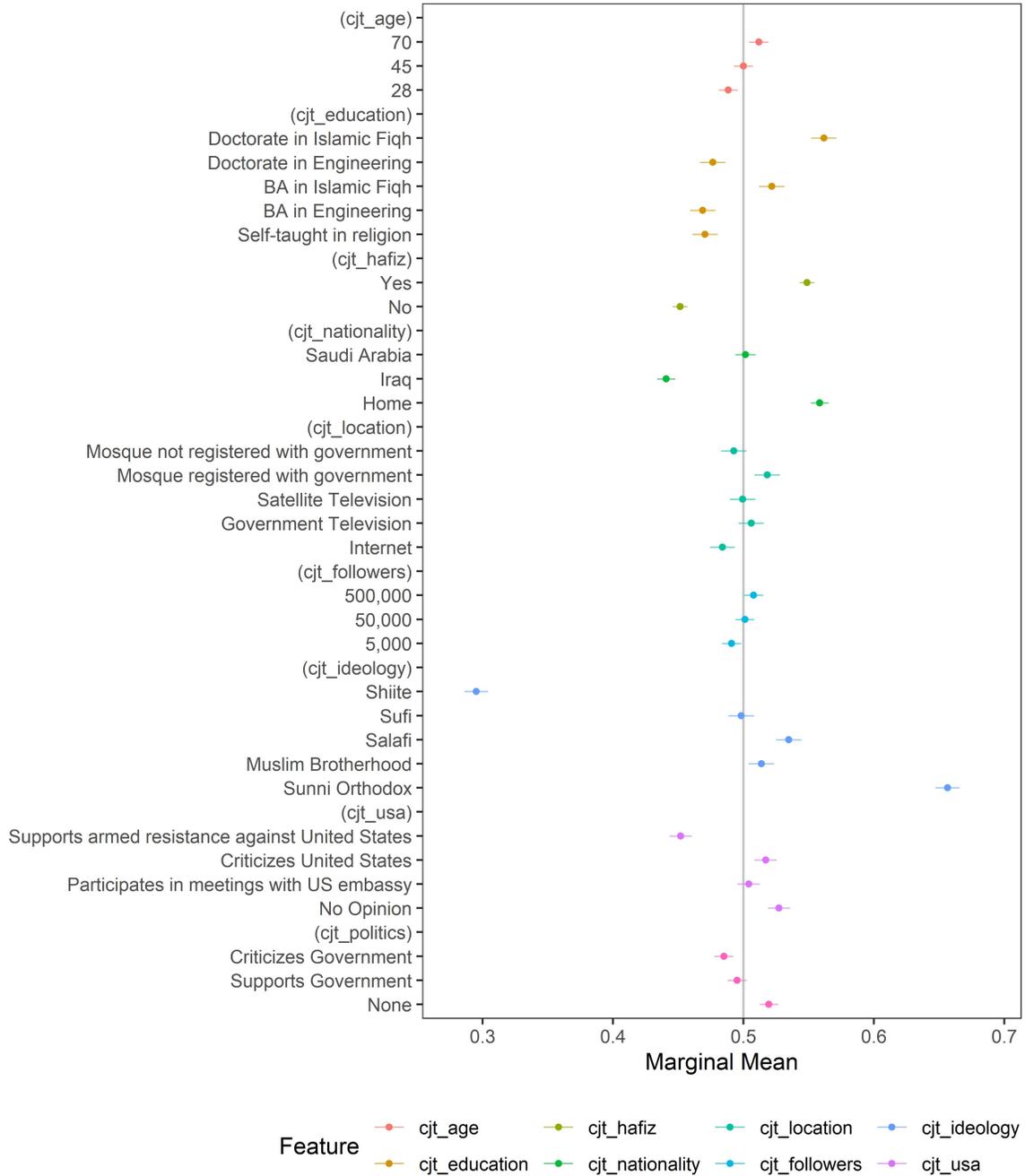
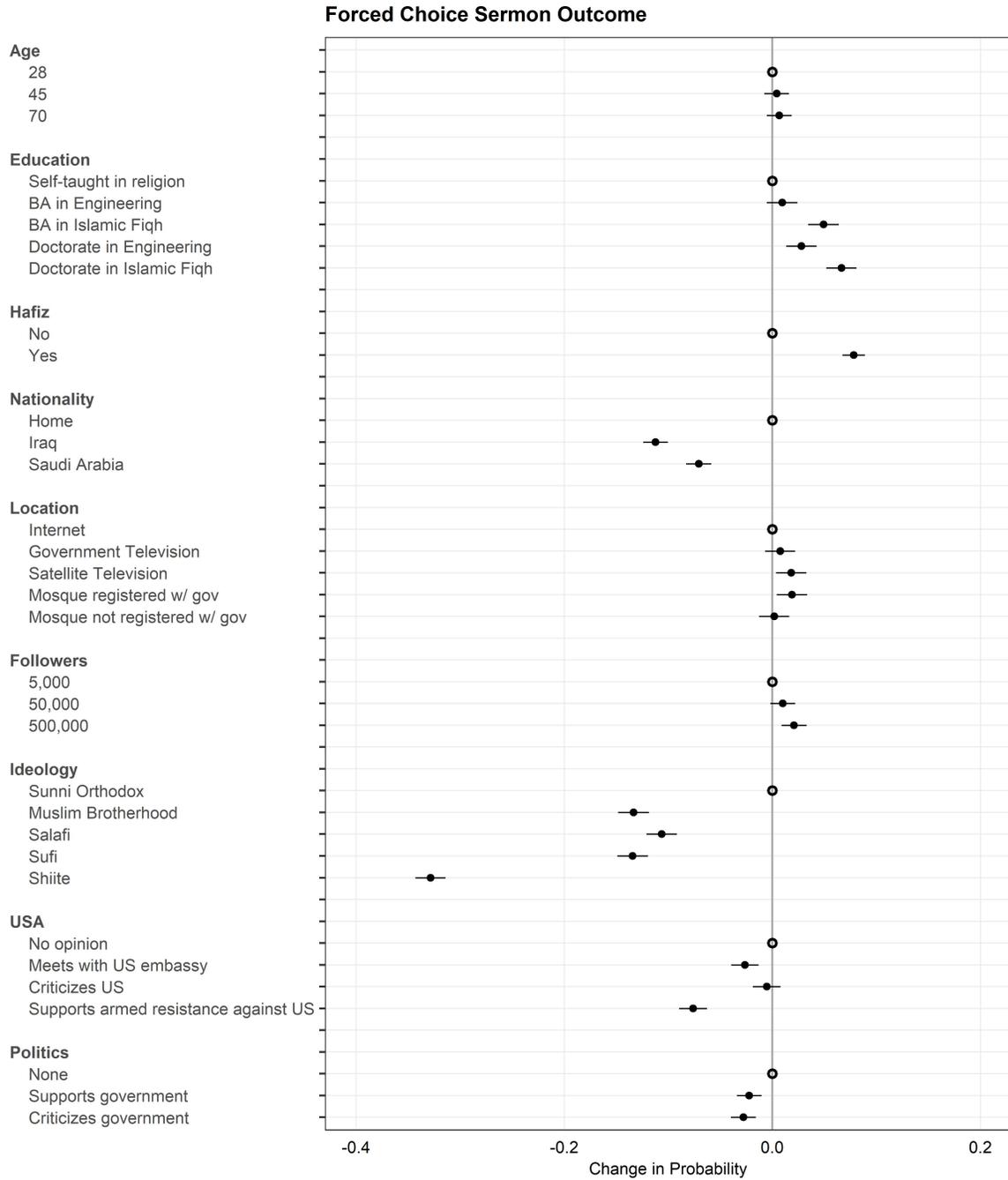*Note: Probability that a profile with each attribute level is selected by the respondents.*

B.3 AMCE with Scalar Outcome

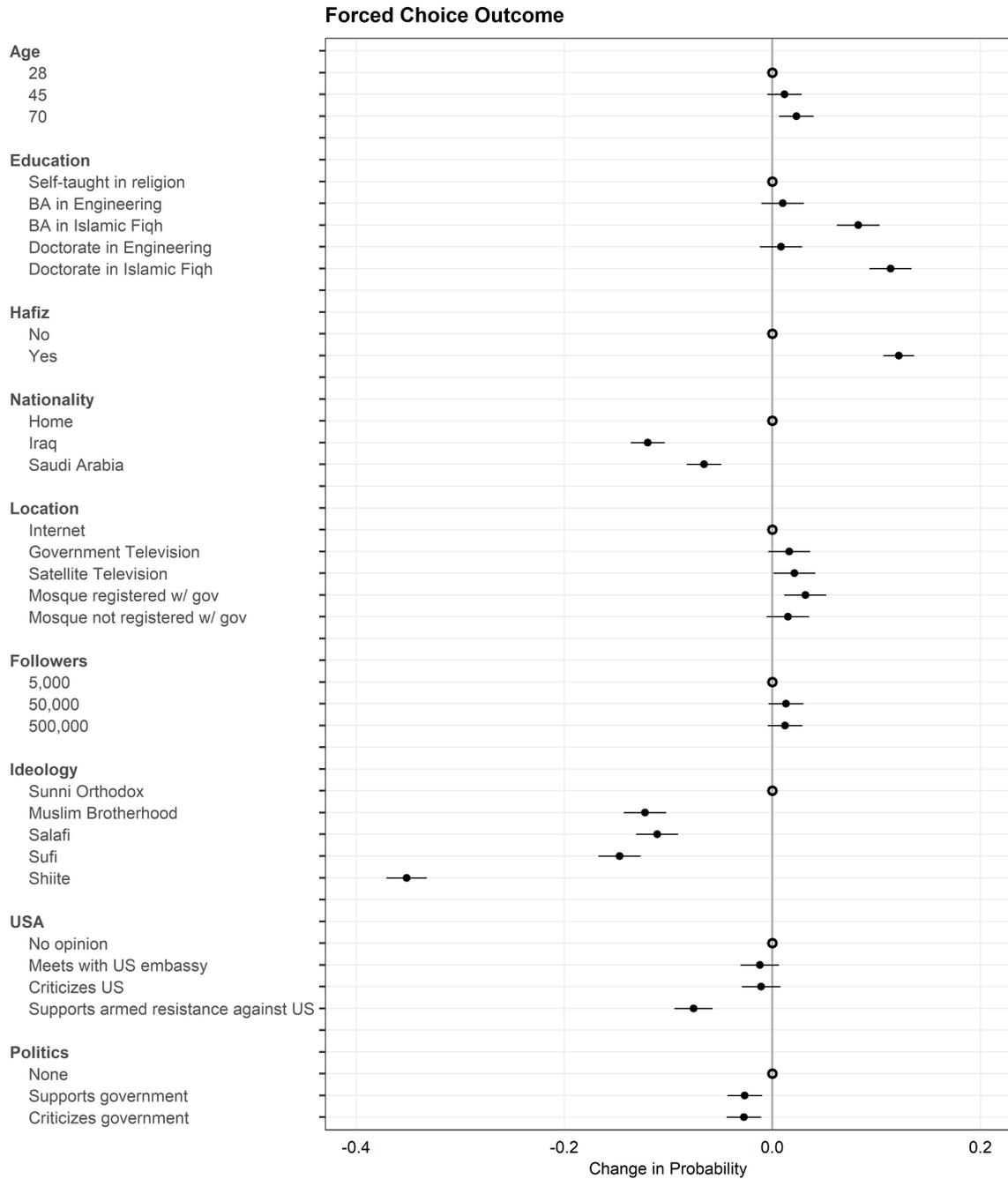Figure 2: AMCEs on Trust in Authority Scale with Full Sample

B.4 AMCE with Sermon Outcome

Figure 3: AMCEs on Binary Prefer Sermon Outcome with Full Sample

B.5   AMCE with First Conjoint Only

Figure 4: AMCEs for First Conjoint Only

Forced Choice Outcome

B.6   Results by Country

Figure 5: AMCEs for Egypt, Jordan, Gulf, and Morocco Samples
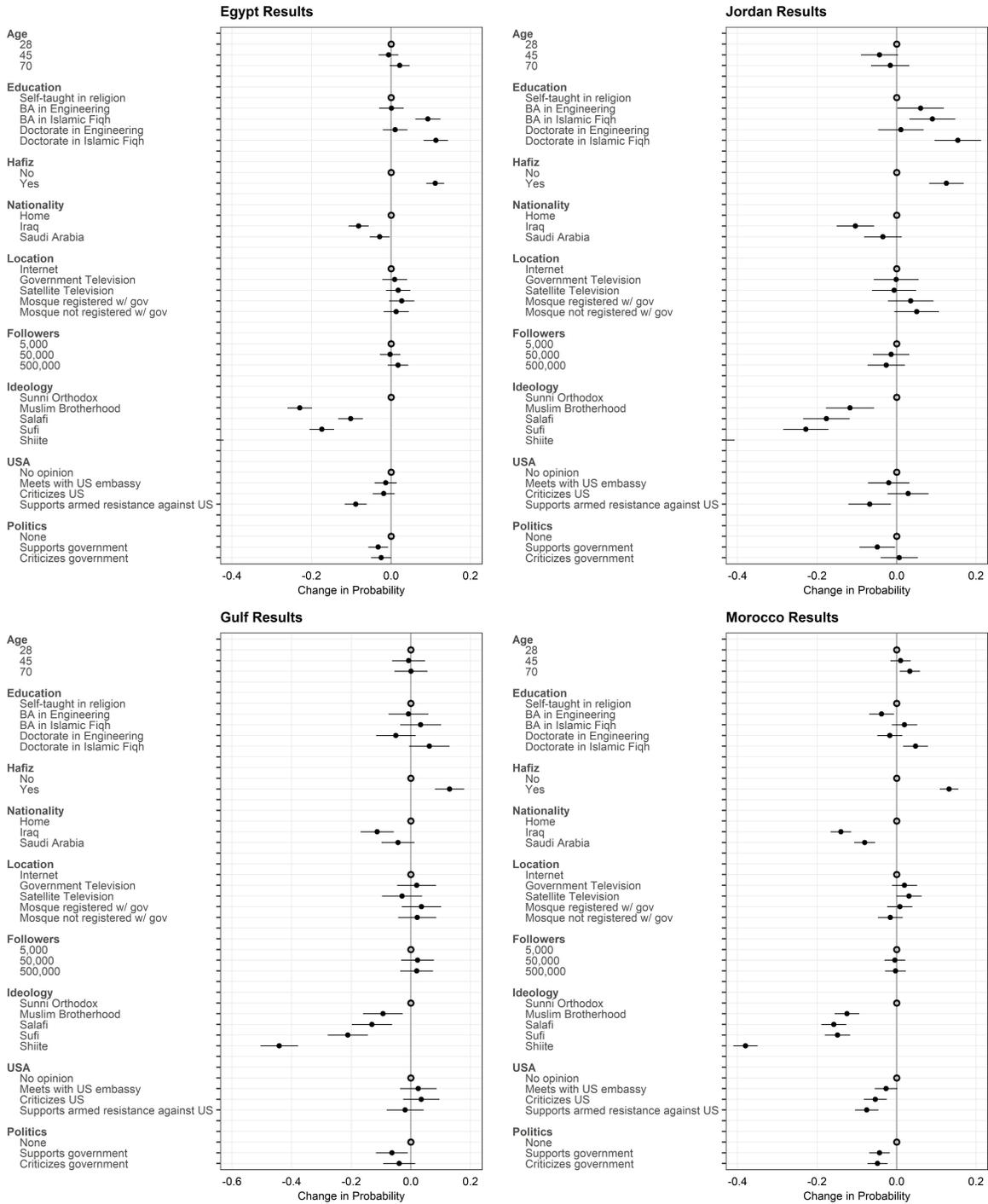
Figure 6: AMCEs for Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey, UAE Samples
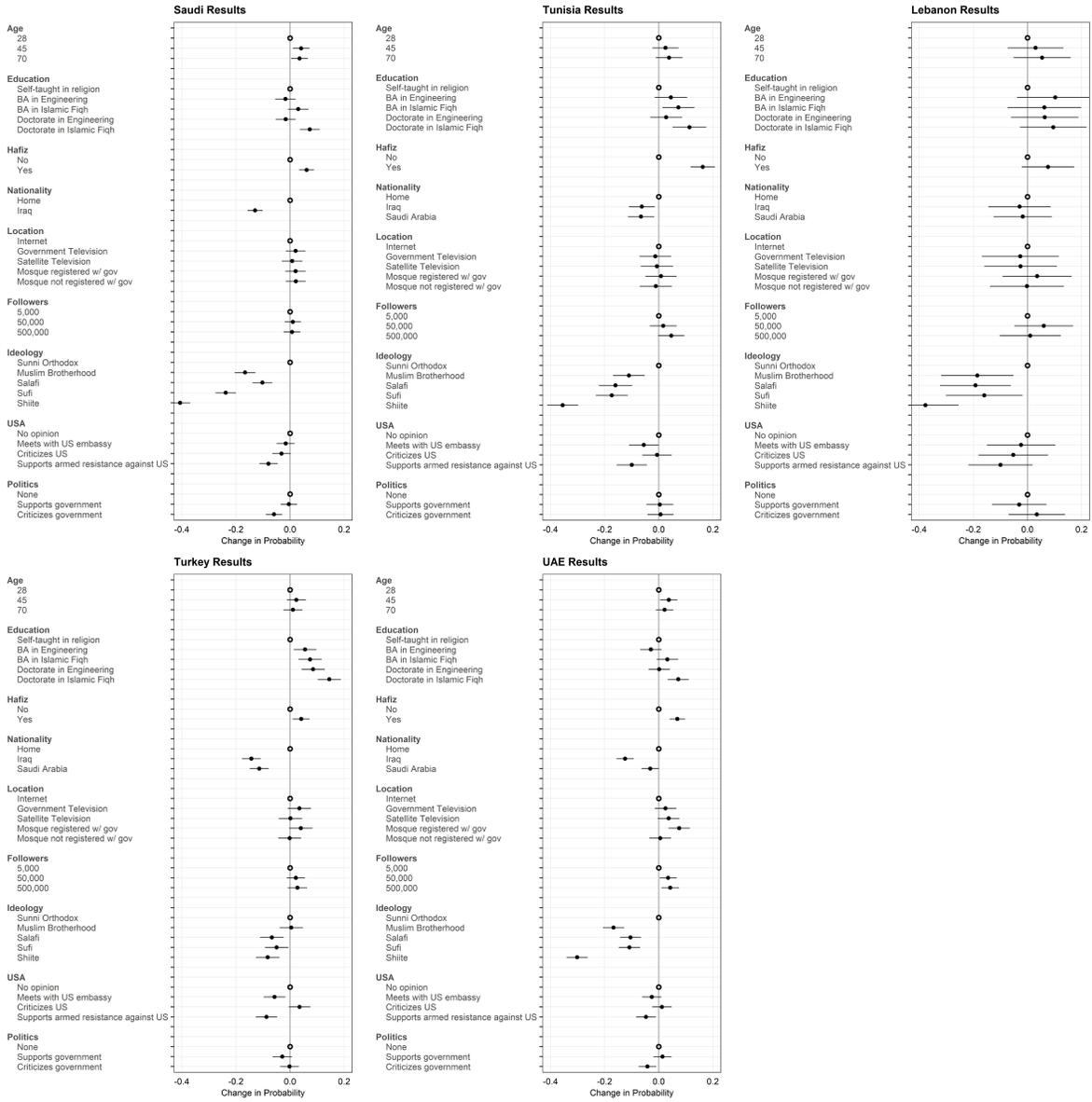
B.7 AMCE with Country Fixed Effects

Age45	0.014**
	(0.006)
Age70	0.023***
	(0.006)
Education BA in Engineering	−0.001
	(0.007)
Education BA in Islamic Fiqh	0.054***
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Engineering	0.007
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Islamic Fiqh	0.092***
	(0.007)
Hafiz Yes	0.098***
	(0.005)
Nationality Iraq	−0.117***
	(0.006)
Nationality Saudi Arabia	−0.060***
	(0.006)
Location Government Television	0.017**
	(0.007)
Location Satellite Television	0.015**
	(0.007)
Location Mosque registered with government	0.031***
	(0.007)
Location Mosque not registered with government	0.008
	(0.007)
Followers 50,000	0.010*
	(0.006)
Followers 500,000	0.017***
	(0.006)
Ideology Muslim Brotherhood	−0.142***
	(0.007)
Ideology Salafi	−0.120***
	(0.007)
Ideology Sufi	−0.158***
	(0.007)
Ideology Shiite	−0.359***
	(0.007)
USA Participates in meetings with US embassy	−0.024***
	(0.007)
USA Criticizes United States	−0.010
	(0.007)
USA Supports armed resistance against United States	−0.074***
	(0.007)
Politics Supports Government	−0.024***
	(0.006)
Politics Criticizes Government	−0.031***
	(0.006)
Constant	0.652***
	(0.013)
Country Fixed Effects	✓

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

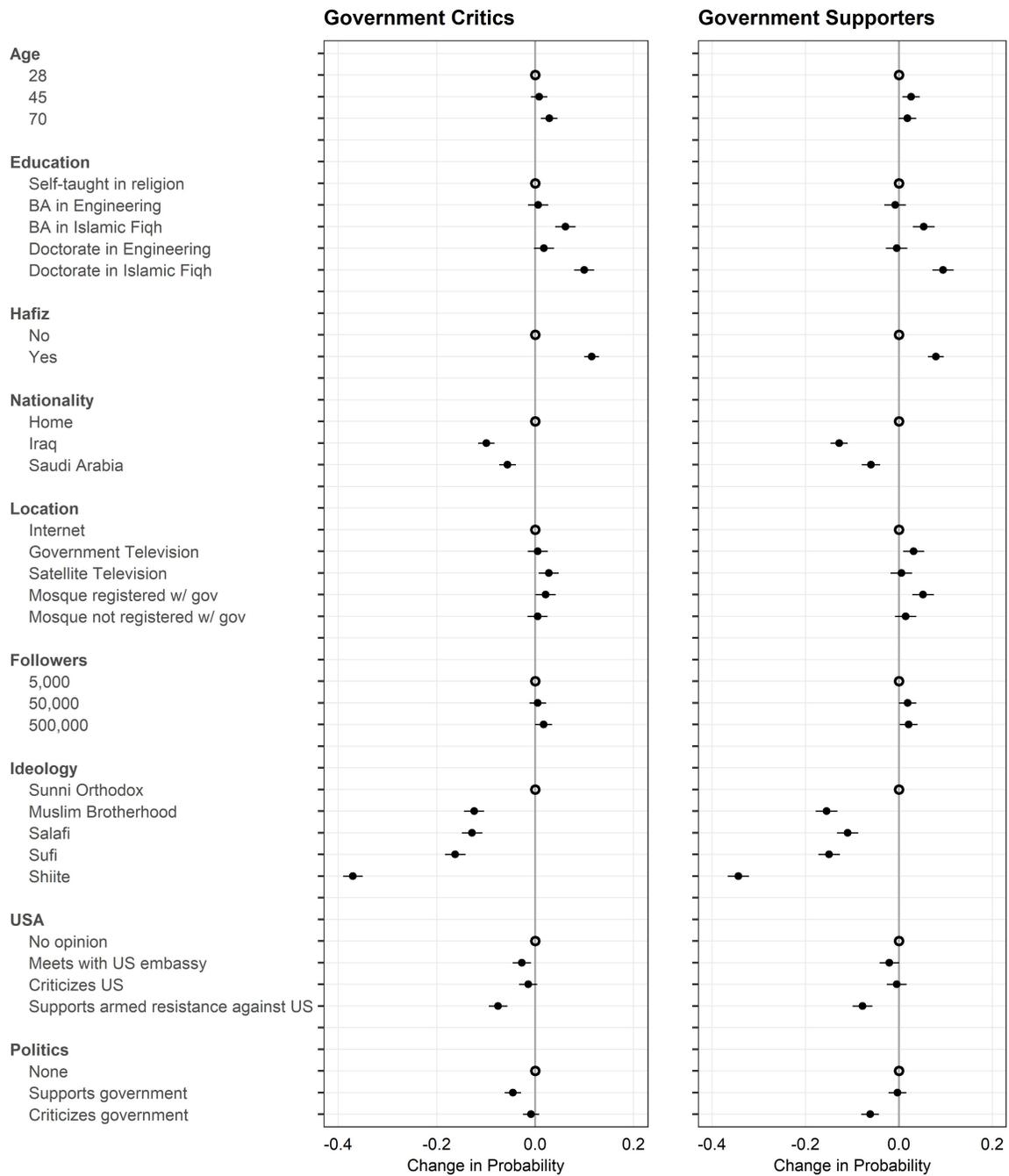# C Full Results for Subgroup Analysis

C.1 AMCEs for Islamists and Non-Islamists

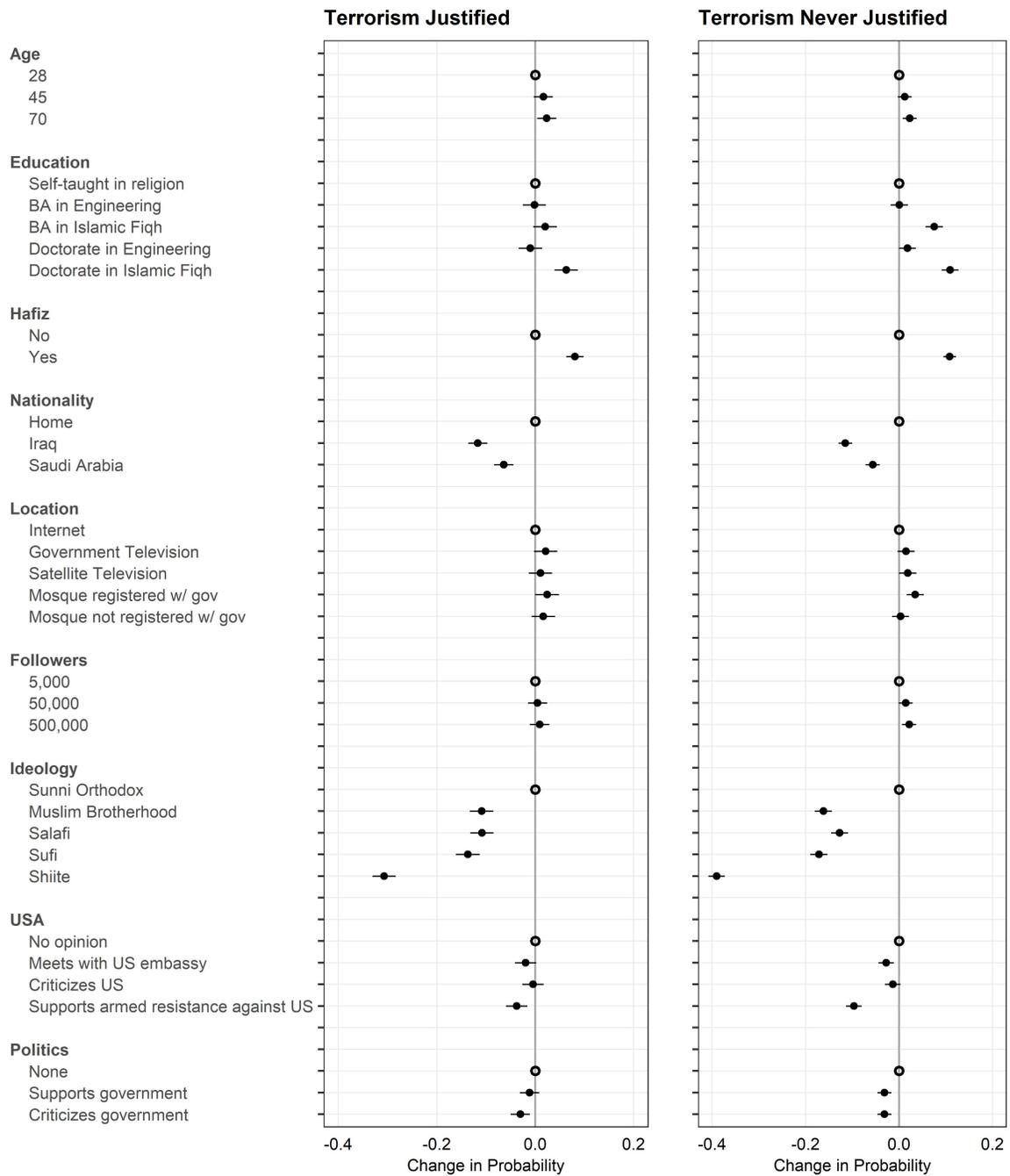Figure 7: AMCEs for Islamists and Non-Islamists
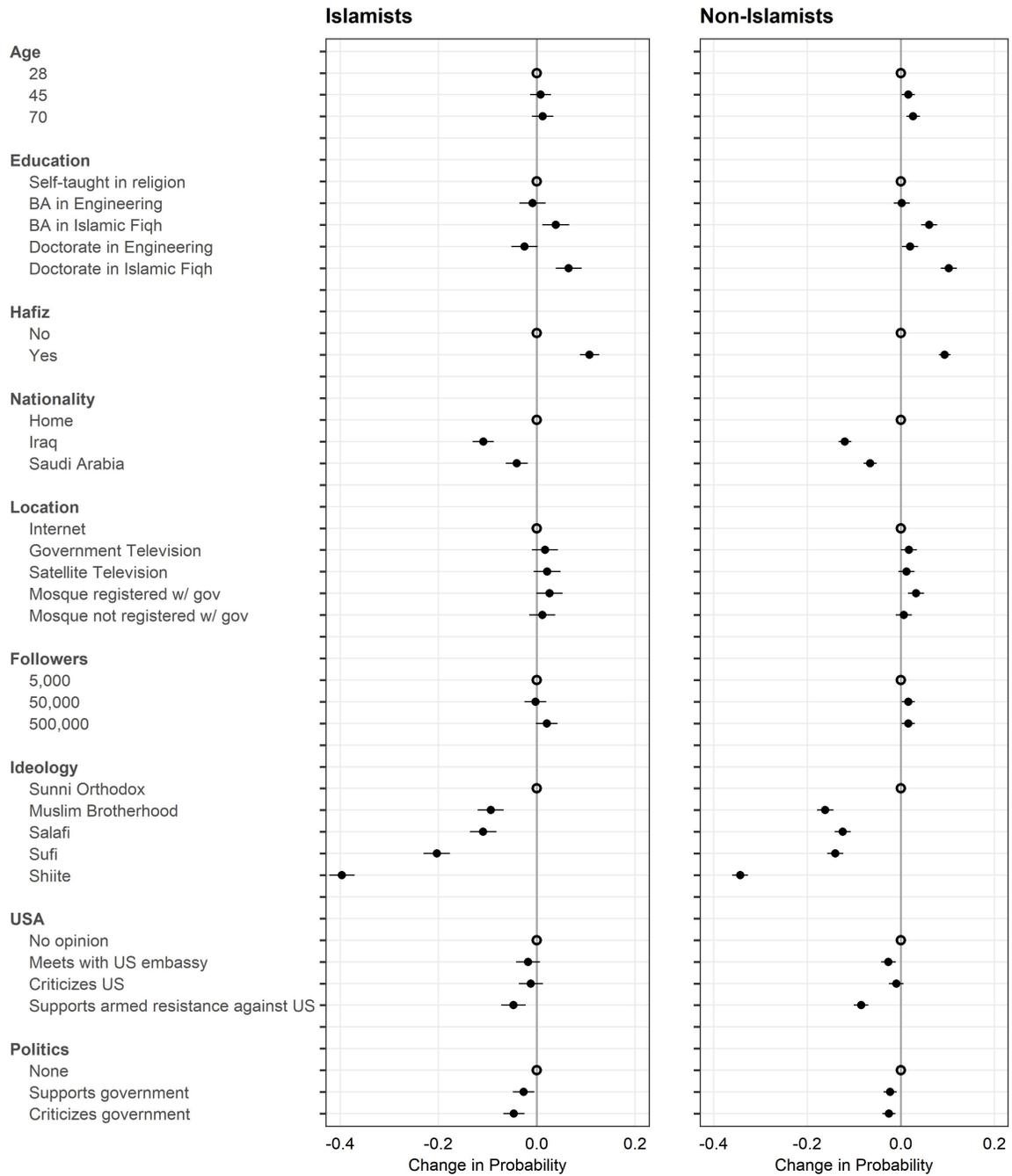
C.2 AMCEs for Government Opponents and Supporters

Figure 8: AMCEs for Government Opponents and Supporters

C.3 AMCEs for Terrorism Opponents and Supporters

Figure 9: AMCEs for Terrorism Opponents and Supporters

D Interaction Models for Subgroup Analysis

D.1 Conjoint with Islamist Interaction

Age45	0.014**
	(0.006)
Age70	0.022***
	(0.006)
Education BA in Engineering	−0.001
	(0.007)
Education BA in Islamic Fiqh	0.054***
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Engineering	0.007
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Islamic Fiqh	0.092***
	(0.007)
Hafiz Yes	0.098***
	(0.005)
Nationality Iraq	−0.116***
	(0.006)
Nationality Saudi Arabia	−0.059***
	(0.006)
Location Government Television	0.018**
	(0.007)
Location Satellite Television	0.015**
	(0.007)
Location Mosque registered with government	0.031***
	(0.007)
Location Mosque not registered with government	0.008
	(0.007)
Followers 50,000	0.011*
	(0.006)
Followers 500,000	0.017***
	(0.006)
Ideology Muslim Brotherhood	−0.162***
	(0.009)
Ideology Salafi	−0.124***
	(0.009)
Ideology Sufi	−0.140***
	(0.009)
Ideology Shiite	−0.343***
	(0.009)
USA Participates in meetings with US embassy	−0.024***
	(0.007)
USA Criticizes United States	−0.010
	(0.007)
USA Supports armed resistance against United States	−0.074***
	(0.007)
Politics Supports Government	−0.024***
	(0.006)
Politics Criticizes Government	−0.031***
	(0.006)
Islamist	0.010
	(0.010)
Ideology Muslim Brotherhood : Islamist	0.068***
	(0.016)
Ideology Salafi : Islamist	0.015
	(0.016)
Ideology Sufi : Islamist	−0.064***
	(0.016)
Ideology Shiite : Islamist	−0.053***
	(0.016)
Constant	0.642***
	(0.012)

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

D.2 Conjoint with Government Critic Interaction

Age45	0.016**
	(0.006)
Age70	0.024***
	(0.006)
Education BA in Engineering	−0.0005
	(0.008)
Education BA in Islamic Fiqh	0.058***
	(0.008)
Education Doctorate in Engineering	0.008
	(0.008)
Education Doctorate in Islamic Fiqh	0.097***
	(0.008)
Hafiz Yes	0.099***
	(0.006)
Nationality Iraq	−0.113***
	(0.006)
Nationality Saudi Arabia	−0.058***
	(0.006)
Location Government Television	0.017**
	(0.008)
Location Satellite Television	0.018**
	(0.008)
Location Mosque registered with government	0.034***
	(0.008)
Location Mosque not registered with government	0.009
	(0.008)
Followers 50,000	0.011*
	(0.006)
Followers 500,000	0.019***
	(0.006)
Ideology Muslim Brotherhood	−0.138***
	(0.008)
Ideology Salafi	−0.120***
	(0.008)
Ideology Sufi	−0.157***
	(0.008)
Ideology Shiite	−0.359***
	(0.008)
USA Participates in meetings with US embassy	−0.025***
	(0.007)
USA Criticizes United States	−0.010
	(0.007)
USA Supports armed resistance against United States	−0.077***
	(0.007)
Politics Supports Government	−0.003
	(0.010)
Politics Criticizes Government	−0.062***
	(0.010)
Critic	−0.003
	(0.007)
Politics Supports Government : Critic	−0.042***
	(0.013)
Politics Criticizes Government : Critic	0.054***
	(0.013)
Constant	0.640***
	(0.013)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

D.3 Conjoint with Terrorism Interaction

Age45	0.014**
	(0.006)
Age70	0.023***
	(0.006)
Education BA in Engineering	−0.001
	(0.007)
Education BA in Islamic Fiqh	0.054***
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Engineering	0.007
	(0.007)
Education Doctorate in Islamic Fiqh	0.091***
	(0.007)
Hafiz Yes	0.098***
	(0.005)
Nationality Iraq	−0.116***
	(0.006)
Nationality Saudi Arabia	−0.059***
	(0.006)
Location Government Television	0.017**
	(0.007)
Location Satellite Television	0.015**
	(0.007)
Location Mosque registered with government	0.031***
	(0.007)
Location Mosque not registered with government	0.008
	(0.007)
Followers 50,000	0.010*
	(0.006)
Followers 500,000	0.017***
	(0.006)
Ideology Muslim Brotherhood	−0.142***
	(0.007)
Ideology Salafi	−0.120***
	(0.007)
Ideology Sufi	−0.159***
	(0.007)
Ideology Shiite	−0.359***
	(0.007)
USA Participates in meetings with US embassy	−0.019*
	(0.011)
USA Criticizes United States	−0.004
	(0.011)
USA Supports armed resistance against United States	−0.037***
	(0.011)
Politics Supports Government	−0.024***
	(0.006)
Politics Criticizes Government	−0.031***
	(0.006)
Terror Never	0.020**
	(0.009)
USA Participates in meetings with US embassy : Terror Never	−0.008
	(0.014)
USA Criticizes United States : Terror Never	−0.010
	(0.014)
USA Supports armed resistance against United States : Terror Never	−0.059***
	(0.014)
Constant	0.633***
	(0.013)

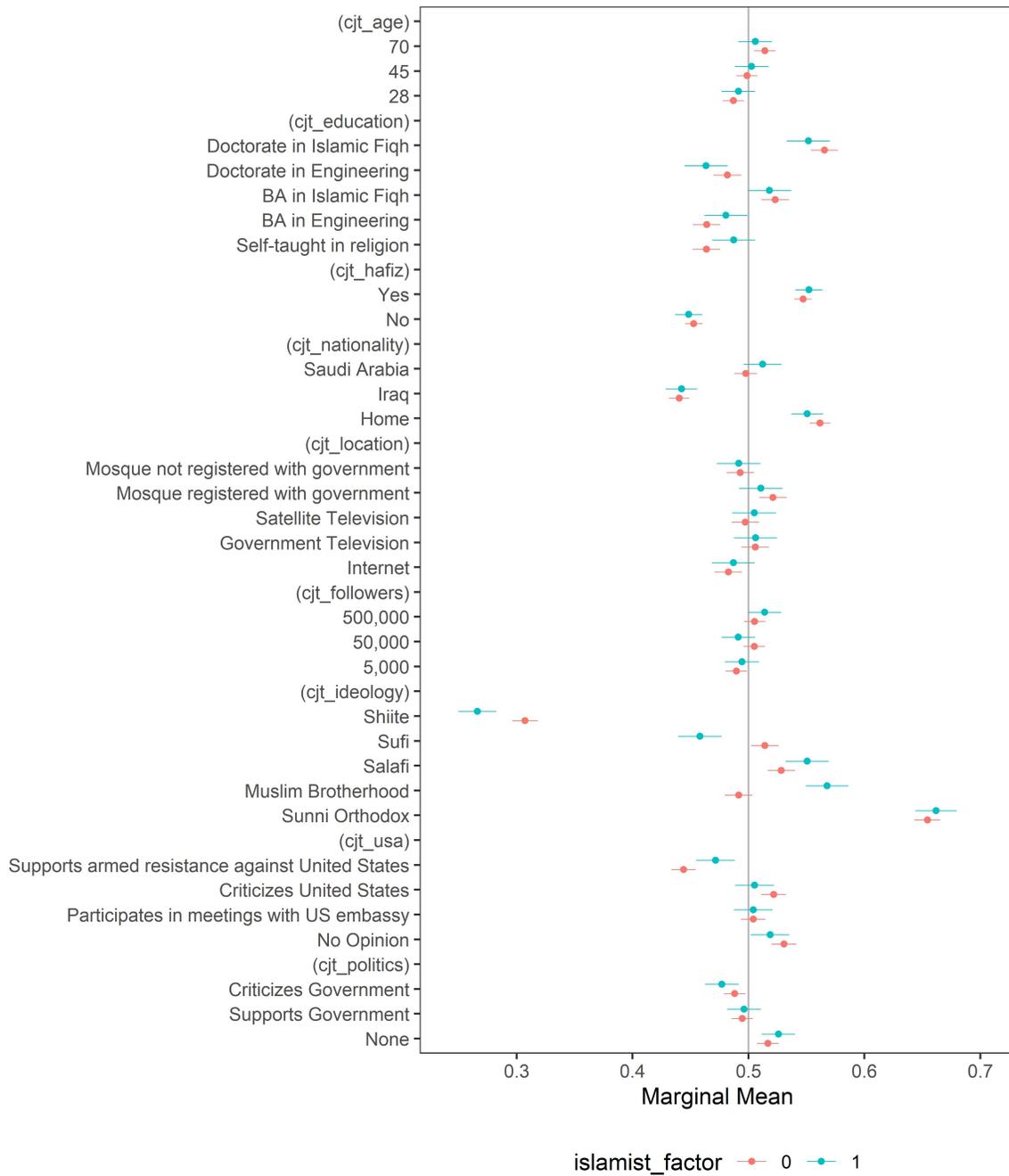|	
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

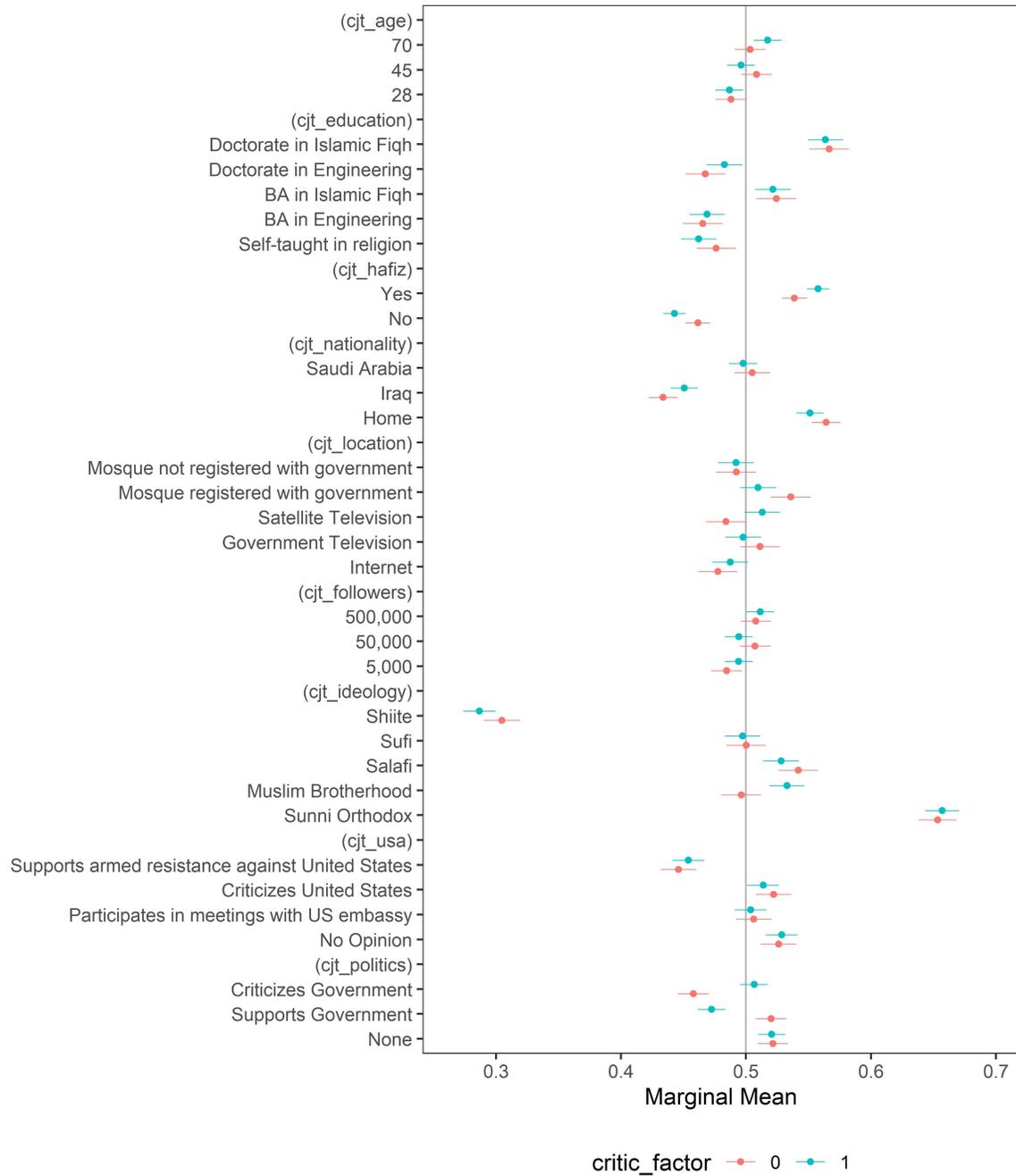# E Marginal Means for Subgroup Analysis

E.1 Marginal Means for Islamists and Non-Islamists

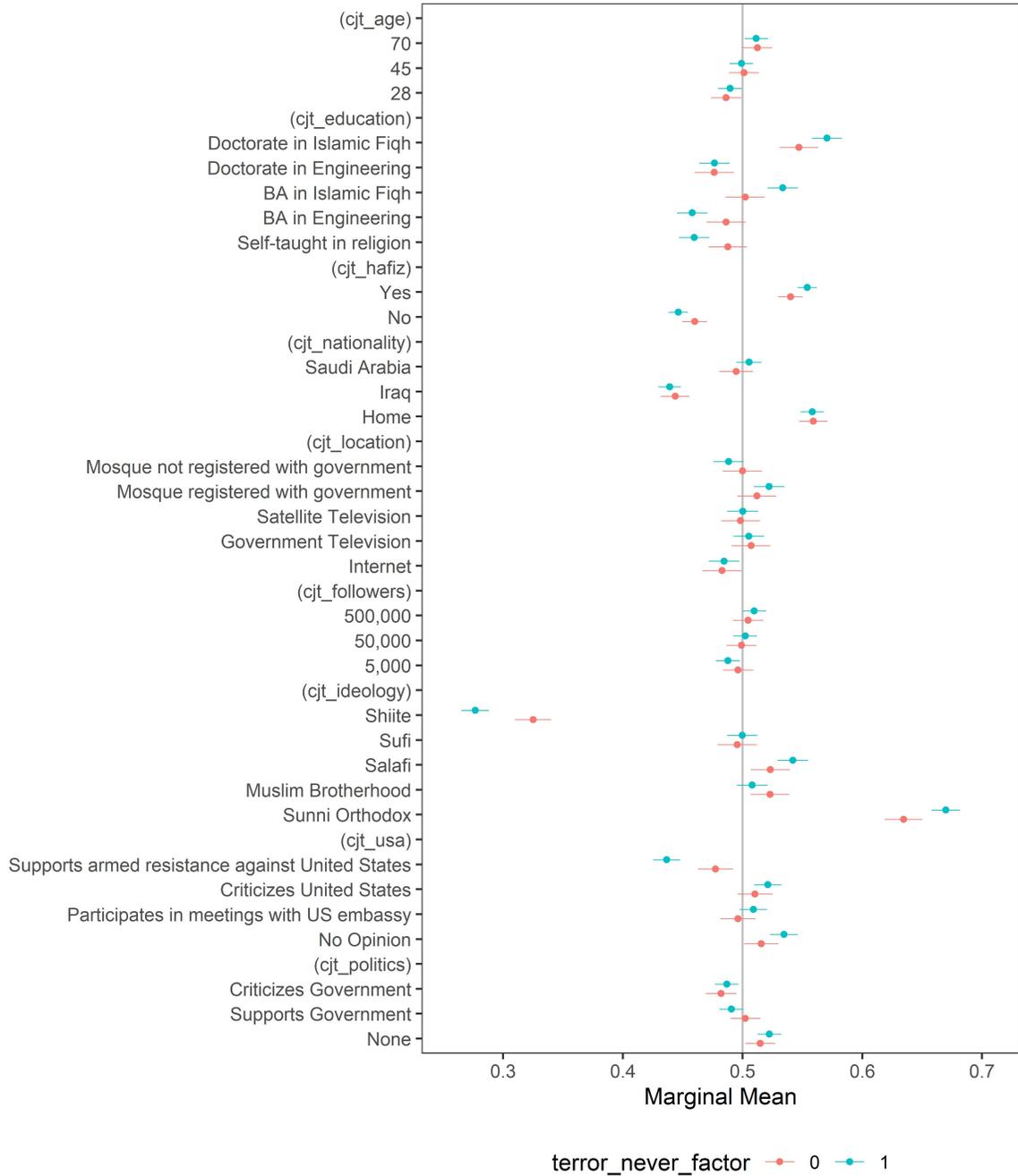Figure 10: Marginal Means for Islamists and Non-Islamists

E.2 Marginal Means for Government Opponents and Supporters

Figure 11: Marginal Means for Government Opponents and Supporters

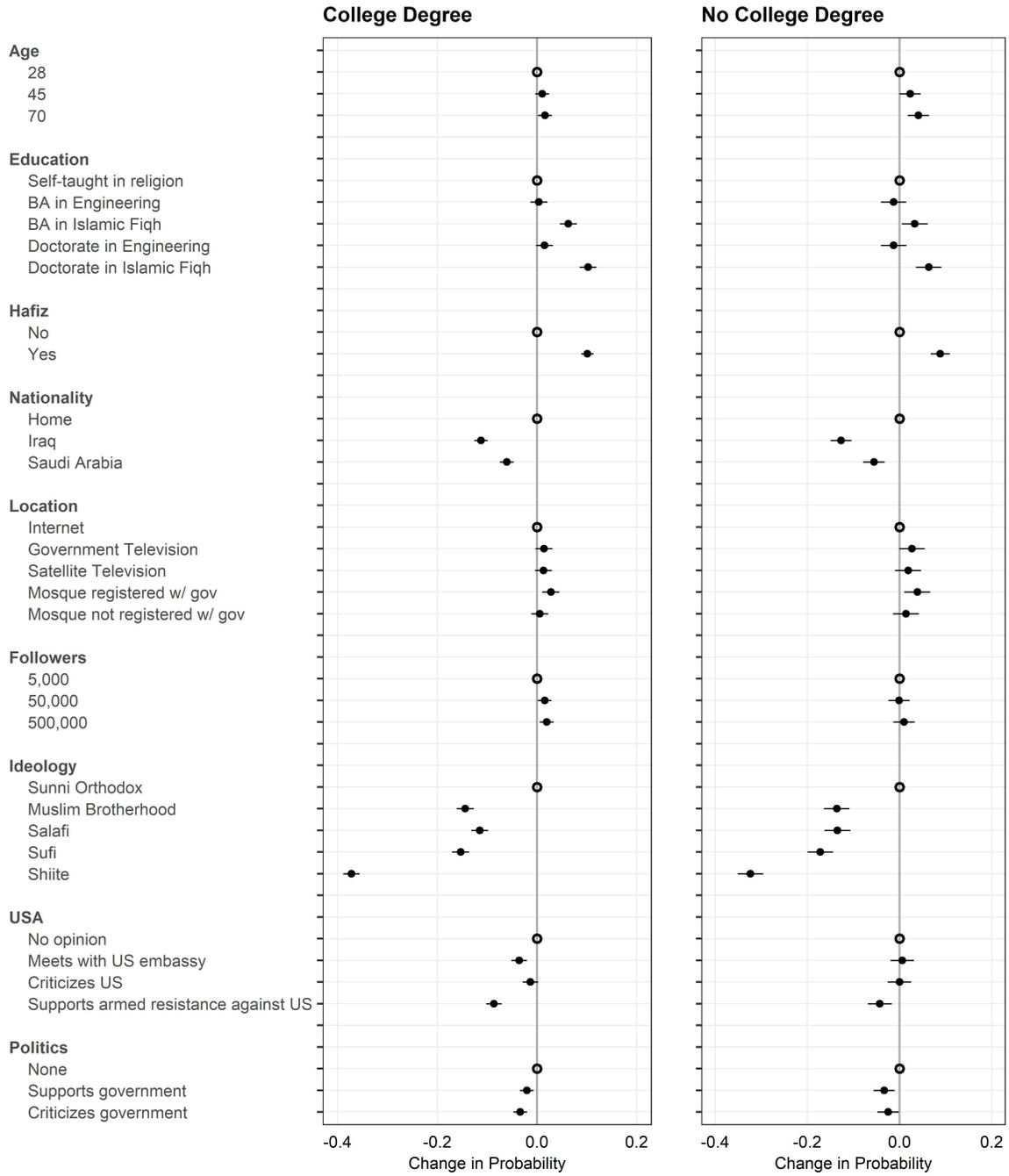## E.3   Marginal Means for Terrorism Opponents and Supporters

Figure 12: Marginal Means for Terrorism Opponents and Supporters
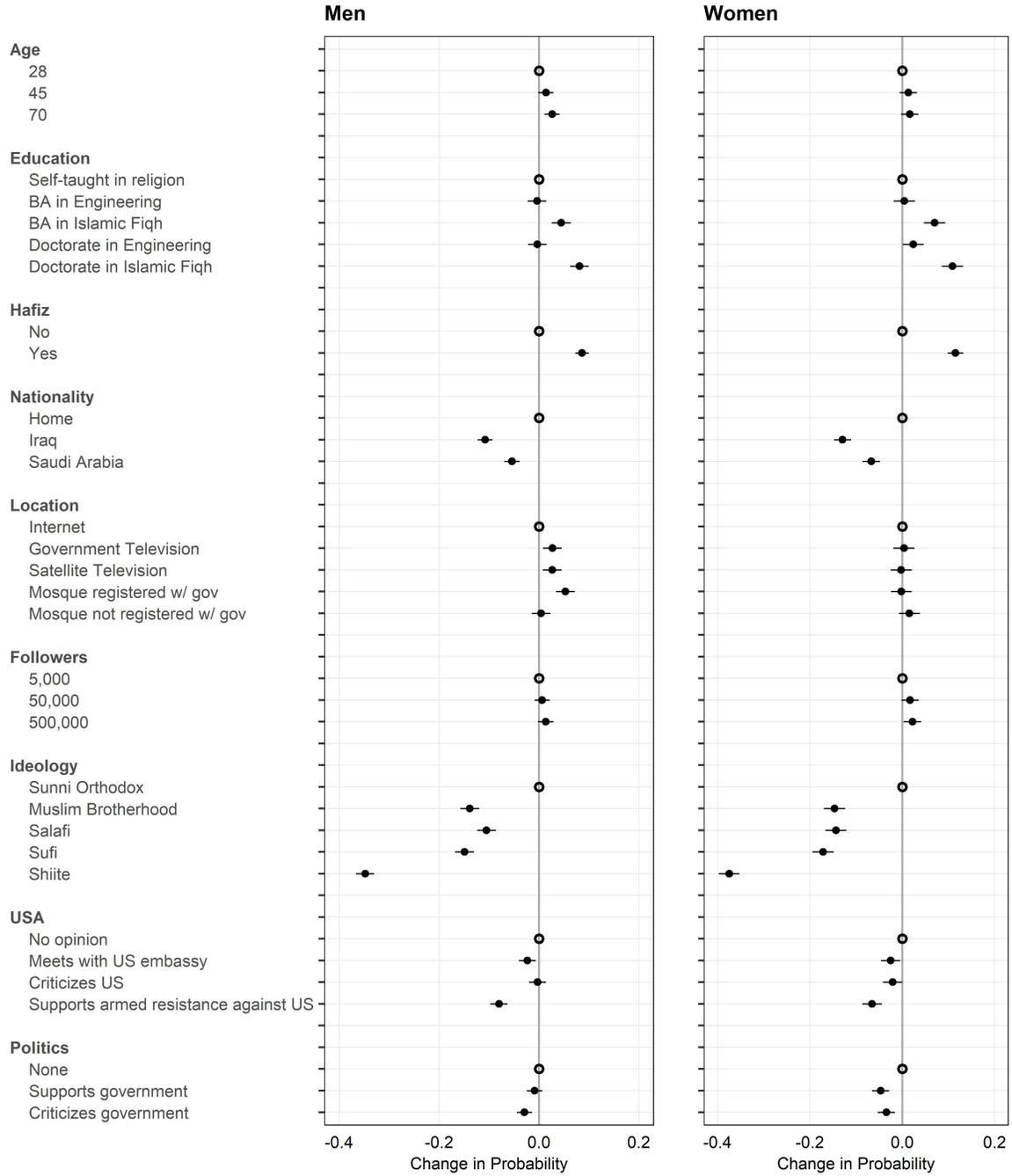
F Additional Subgroup Analyses

F.1 Conjoint Results by Education

Figure 13: AMCEs for College and Non-College Respondents

F.2   Conjoint Results by Gender
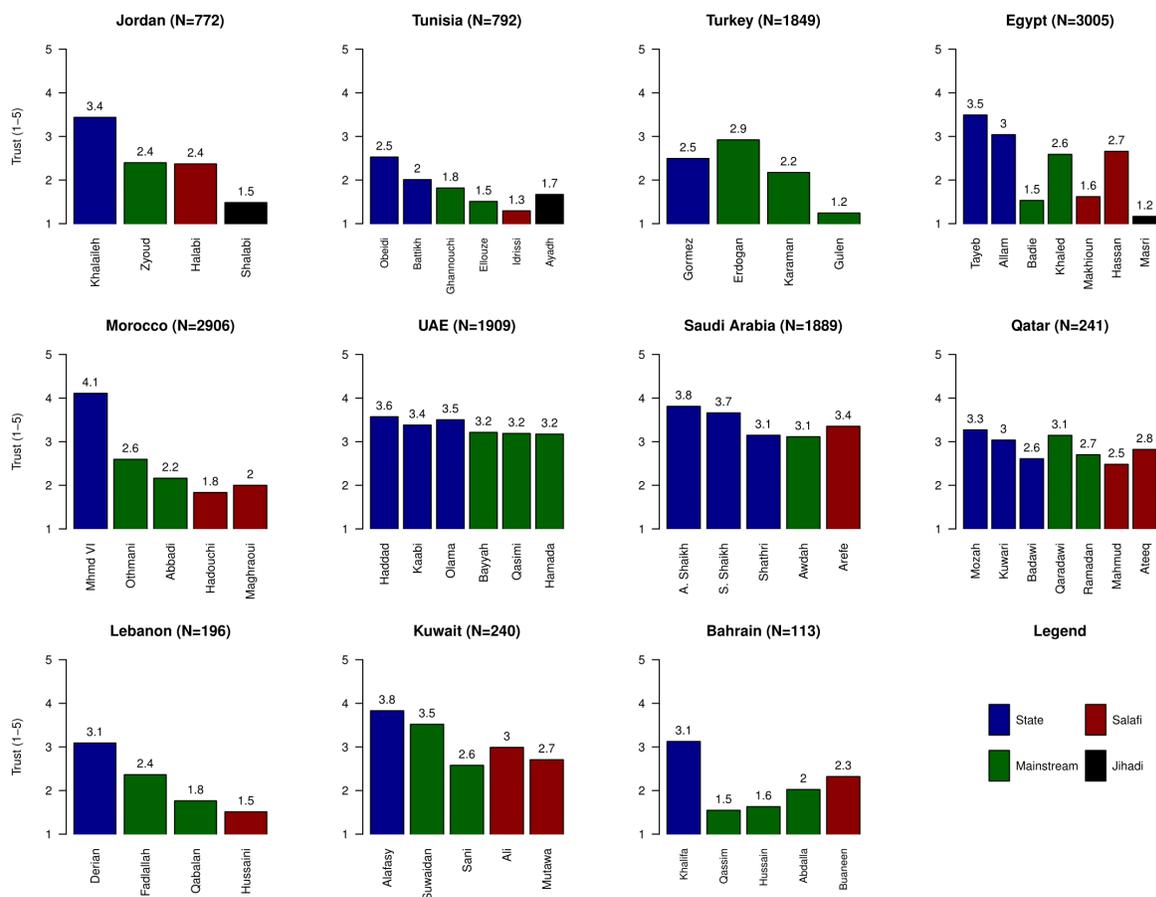
Figure 14: AMCEs for Men and Women

F.3 Conjoint Results by Religiosity

Figure 15: AMCEs for More and Less Religious Respondents
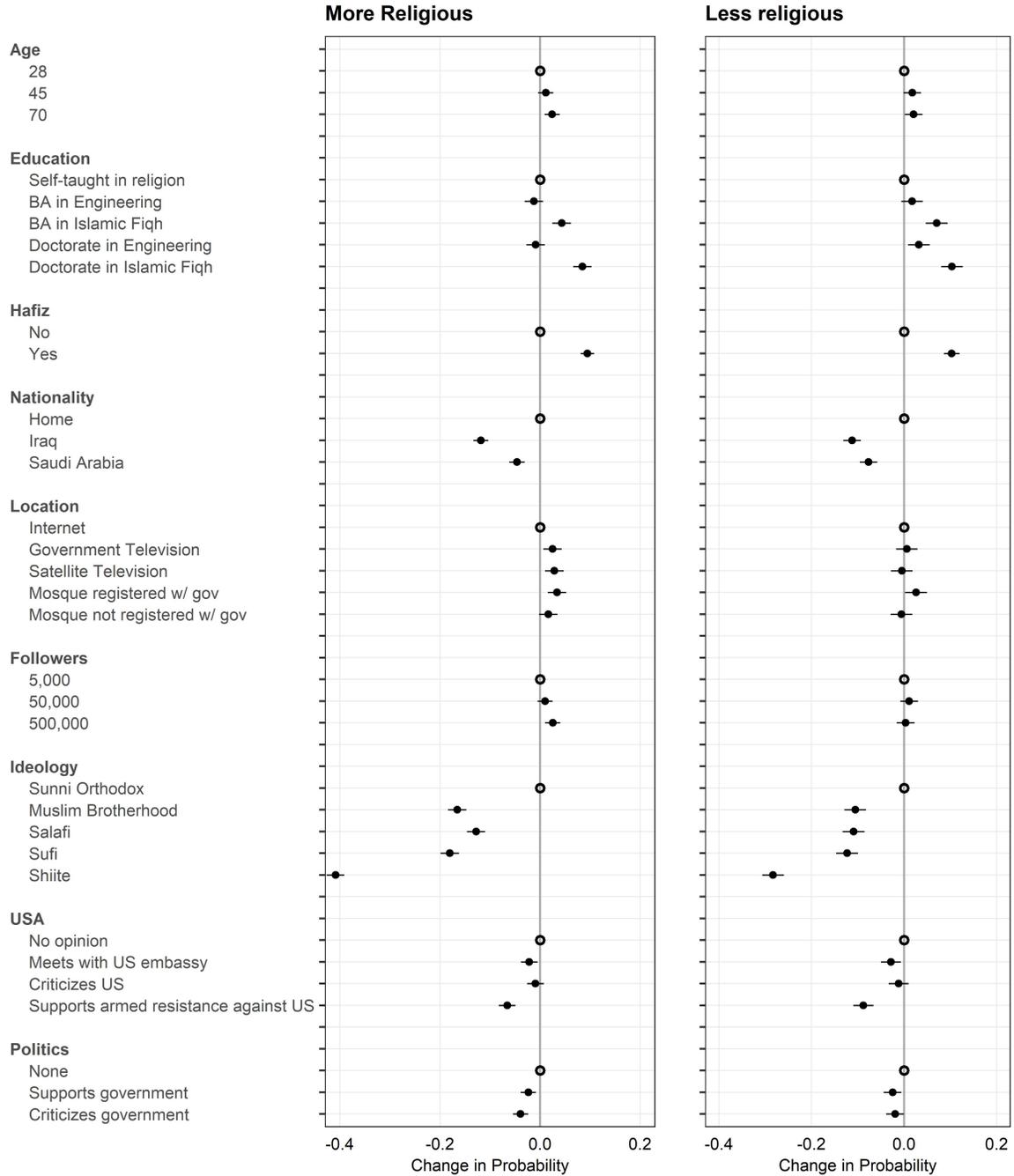
G   Descriptive Results for Religious Authority

Figure 16: Average Religious Authority Ratings by Country-Specific Religious Leaders

Note: Trust ratings for religious leaders by country on 1 to 5 scale, with 5 indicating higher trust.

We leveraged our country-specific expertise to identify prominent religious leaders from four categories of interest for these comparisons, wherever possible. Specifically, in each country we identified religious leaders affiliated with state religious establishments, "mainstream" Islamist movements (typically a member of the Muslim Brotherhood or its affiliates), Salafi currents, and Jihadist groups. While these distinctions are not always mutually exclusive, we attempted to select religious figures who fit neatly into these various groupings. In the survey questions, the religious leaders were identified by their name and their organizational position and affiliation, so that respondents could situate them more effectively. For example, in Jordan, Mohamad Khaleilah was identified as the country's Grand Mufti, while Mohamad Zyoud was identified as the Secretary General of the Muslim Brotherhood-aligned Islamic Action Front. Respondents then rated how much they trusted the religious authority of these figures on a 5-point scale, with 1 equal to no trust and 5 equal to complete trust.

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# H   Trust in Religious Leaders and Islamists in the Arab World

Figures 17 and 18 report country-level data from waves 4 and 5 of the Arab Barometer showing the percent of respondents who had "great" trust in religious leaders and Islamists. Between 2013 and 2018, the data shows declining trust in both actors in every country surveyed. Given the increased political prominence of Islamists and expanding attempts by the region's governments to control religious leaders during these years, this pattern aligns with the findings in our conjoint experiment by suggesting that politicization undermines the authority of Muslim religious leaders in the Arab world.

Figure 17: Arab Barometer Shows Declining Trust in Religious Leaders
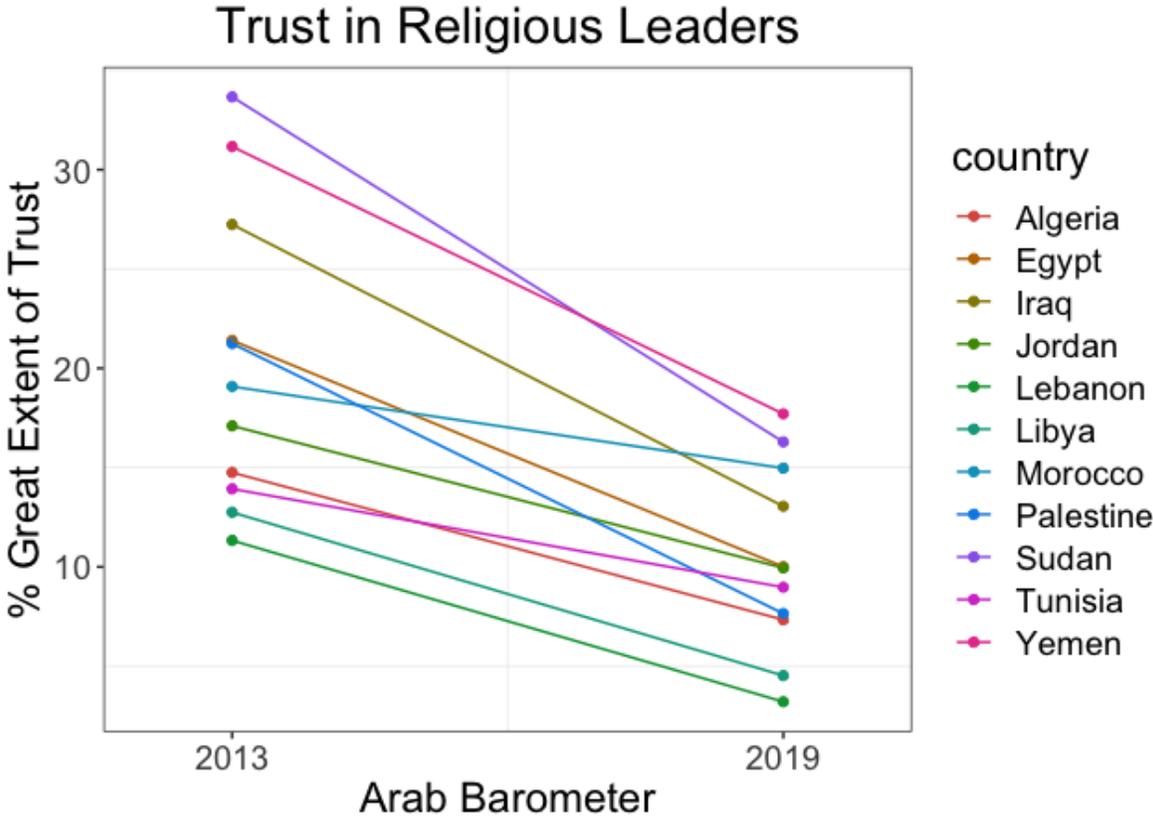
Note: Percent of survey respondents by country reporting "great" trust in religious leaders.

Figure 18: Arab Barometer Shows Declining Trust in Islamists
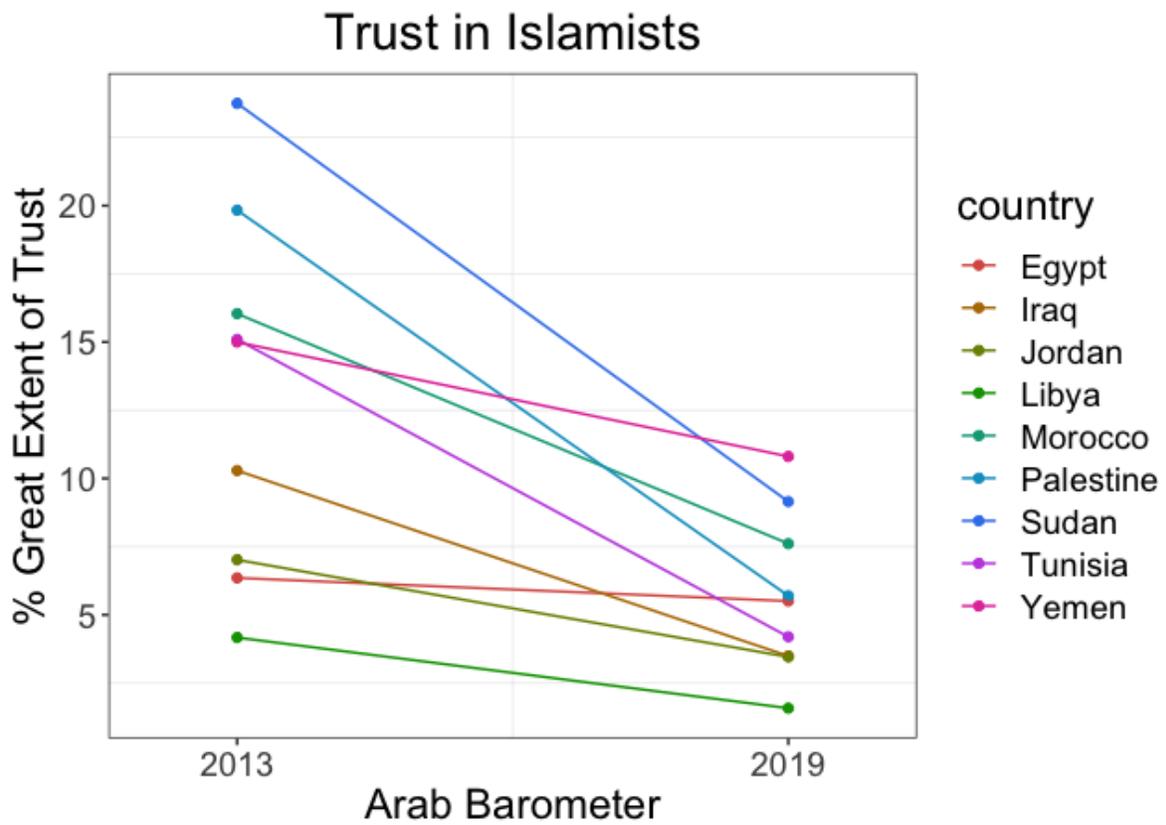
Note: Percent of survey respondents by country reporting "great" trust in Islamists.