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IMPACT OF REPRESSION THREAT ON COLLECTIVE ACTION TENDENCIES: MODERATION EFFECTS OF REPRESSION THREAT SEVERITY, POLITICIZED IDENTIFICATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION TYPE

by
CAROL WADIH ABI GHANEM

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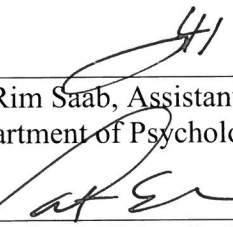

Dr. Rim Saab, Assistant Professor — Advisor
Department of Psychology

Dr. Fatimah El Jamil, Assistant Professor — Member of Committee
Department of Psychology

Dr. Charles Harb, Professor — Member of Committee
Department of Psychology

Date of thesis/dissertation defense: September 26, 2017

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Social psychological research (Earl, 2003; Earl, 2011) has offered little quantitative empirical evidence on collective action in repressive contexts. The proposed study aimed to experimentally investigate if repression *threat* has a deterring effect, a radicalizing effect, or no effect on collective action tendencies and if this depends on severity of the repression threat, the type of collective action under consideration, and politicized identity. The experiment investigated the question in the context of a student versus administration conflict. Undergraduate students from the American University of Beirut were led to believe that the administration will be restricting undergraduate students' access to Wifi, and that it will repress (or not) protests and sit-ins against this policy. The results showed a deterrence effect of repression threat on actions that were explicitly punishable, but no effect on other normative actions either immune or susceptible to punishment. Repression threat deterred a non-normative action susceptible to punishment but only among participants who were severely repressed. Politicized identification mostly predicted normative rather than non-normative action, and there was no evidence for the moderating role of politicized identification on collective action when faced with repression threat. The results suggest that in the present context, repression threat operates in a deterring fashion particularly on normative actions that are punishable, and even some non-normative actions. However, this deterrence effect is not generalizable to all actions. Furthermore, when faced with repression threat, students who have stronger politicized identities are more likely to take collective action than those with weaker politicized identities, particularly normative forms of actions.

CONTENTS

TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the Arab uprisings, when Egyptian protesters took to the streets demanding a civilian rule in 2011, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces employed different repression strategies such as trying 12,000 civilian activists in military courts, or alienating women from the protests by sexual harassment of detainees under the guise of "virginity tests" (Josua & Edel, 2015). Similarly when protesters took to the streets in São Paulo in January 2016, they were met with 30 stun grenades within a 15 seconds timeframe. A peaceful protest was violently suppressed by state agents (police) rather than a state concession to the demands of the people (Amnesty International, 2016). In a more private institutional setting, in a British university in 2013, students protesting against job regulations of outsourced workers were dispersed brutally, and banned from protests on campus by court order (Dutilleul, 2014). As these examples illustrate, repression of protests happens in different forms, by different agents and to various degrees around the world.

Throughout the years, repression by authorities has received increasing attention in terms of both theorizing and empirical evidence of its triggers, effects and dynamic relationship with social movements and opposition groups struggling to redefine the socio-political status-quo. After more than 20 years of research on repression primarily in the sociological and political science literature, findings remain inconclusive, especially regarding the deterring or escalating effects of repression on collective action (Earl, 2003, 2011). Although psychological research is uniquely placed to contribute to the study of the effect of repression on collective action through the examination of such effects in more

controlled, experimental settings, research studies in this area are scarce. The present research therefore aims to experimentally examine the effect of repression (threat) on collective action and explore potential moderators by building on a recent experimental study on this topic by Ayoub and Saab (2014). We begin by defining collective action and repression, which we follow with an overview of the literature on the link between the two and potential moderators of this link.

Collective action is typically defined in the social psychological literature as action undertaken by group members with the aim of bettering the conditions of that group (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). This includes peaceful actions such as petitions, protests, sit-ins, strikes, but also violent action such as riots. In response to collective action, which may be a direct challenge to the current political power, authorities can either crush the movement altogether (Opp, 1991) or provide a fraction of the public good in demand, in which case collective action leads to social change (Lichbach, 1987). Action in its collective forms can either be congruent with the wider society's values and norms thereby making it a *normative* action (e.g. a peaceful demonstration in a democratic system), or it can go beyond the scope of the established rules of the social system and therefore be perceived as *non-normative* (e.g. riots) (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). It is important to note that violent (e.g. vandalism, riots) and nonviolent (e.g. petitions) forms of collective action can theoretically each be considered normative or non-normative depending on the social and political context (Lichbach, 1987; Wright et al., 1990). For example from a political point of view and within states that follow a democratic political system, sit-ins and demonstrations can be considered as normative actions, whereas these same actions might be banned by autocratic regimes and therefore count as non-normative.

Given the methodological challenges involved in measuring actual collective action engagement and correlating it with social psychological constructs, it is often operationalized in the field as willingness to engage in collective action in the future (Van Zomeren et al., 2008a). Note that collective action tendencies have emerged as good predictors of actual engagement in action (deWeerd & Klandermans, 1999). Thus, following previous research (see VanZomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2012), the present paper will also focus on collective action tendencies as an outcome variable.

Repression has been defined as any means that state/private agents or institutions use in order to undermine collective action (Davenport, 2007; Earl, 2011; Lichbach, 1987). In the social movement literature, repression is typically examined as state coercion which varies in severity, such as in the form of daily surveillance, free-speech censorship, or the use of violence against protesters (Carey, 2006). Earl (2003, 2011) distinguishes between various forms of repression based on three main factors: identity of the repressive agent, type of repression, and visibility of repression. More specifically, a repressive agent can either be a public (state) agent or a private institution. Repression can be either of the coercive type (e.g. use of tear gas, arrests) or of the channeled type (e.g. restrictions on social movement activities, martial law). Thirdly, repression can be either overt/observable or covert/unobservable. According to Earl (2003, 2011), the combination of these three factors should result in different forms of repression. However, the sociological and political science literature (which have studied repression effects the most) have focused mainly on forceful and observable repression by state agents, and given little attention to other types of repression by private institutions such as private companies or universities, which constitute our research focus in the present work.

Though some scholars have focused on repression as a byproduct of collective action (Ritter & Conrad, n.d.), the present research is concerned with the effect of repression on collective action (Lichbach, 1987; Opp, 1994). In particular, under which circumstances does repression deter or escalate collective action? To help answer this question, we aim to examine the effects of repression on collective action tendencies using an experimental setting and explore potential moderators of this effect. It can be difficult and unethical, however, to elicit collective action in the lab and subject participants to actual repression (which can trigger psychological distress). In order to mitigate any potential harm to the participants, we therefore focus on *repression threat* (rather than actual repression), defined as the expectation that a certain action is going to be repressed by an opposing agent. Although repression threat is different than actual repression, it is similar in that it aims to deter collective action and as such likely operates on the same psychological mechanisms. In repressive contexts, individuals' intentions to engage in collective action are indeed governed by their understanding that their actions are potentially at risk of being met with repression. Repression threat is operationally defined in the literature as likelihood of repression and is used interchangeably with the perceived probability, expectation of repression and certainty of repression (Opp, 1994; Opp & Roehl, 1990). On the other hand, severity of repression, which is one of our moderators, is referred to as magnitude (Opp, 1994; Opp & Gern, 1993) and is used interchangeably with the costliness of repression, and strength of repression. Our approach to severity of repression essentially refers to the extent to which the negative consequences would affect an individual should he/she engage in action. For example, Opp (1994) asked participants how bad it would be for them to be arrested, or fired from work due to protesting.

In the present research, we are interested in examining the effect of repression threat on collective action tendencies by building on an experimental paradigm developed by Ayoub and Saab (2014), and to examine whether this effect depends on the following moderators: repression threat severity, type of collective action, and politicized identification. As such, the subsequent sections aim to provide an overview of the available literature on the effect of repression (threat) on collective action, followed by the effects of severity of repression on collective action, the potentially moderating role of politicized identification and the effects of repression on different forms of collective action. A final section will lay out the overall hypotheses.

A. Repression Threat and Collective Action

Traditionally, theorists have compared repression to punishment (Buss, 1961). Punishment is usually threatened or imposed at least in part with the aim of deterring an undesired behavior (e.g. deviant or non-normative). Repression threat is essentially a threat to punish a very specific behavior, collective action, in order to deter it in the future. The literature on punishment threat is therefore useful to consult in order to theorize the effects of repression threat on collective action. With regard to the effects of punishment at the group level, Miles and Greenberg (1993) found that when swimmers were threatened with penalty laps their group performance improved significantly more than those who were not threatened. Furthermore, Iyer, Hornsey, Venman, Esposo and Ale (2014) found that after reading a message from Al Qaeda's leader back then Ossama Bin Laden threatening the use of violence if troops were not removed from Afghanistan, participants

of the troops' countries increased support for withdrawing the troops. Accordingly, one would expect repression threat to decrease collective action since it imposes a cost on engaging in the repressed behavior.

On the other hand, some behaviorists argue that punishing someone out of anger or frustration might be perceived as abuse (unjust) and violate the effectiveness of the punishment (Domjan, 2003). Accordingly, the punishment literature revealed that punishment might increase rather than decrease "deviant" behavior, through the stigmatization of and alienation of perpetrators (Becker, 1963; as cited in Opp & Roehl, 1990). This reaction could be due to the perceived unfair treatment. As such, if punishment and repression share similarities, then repression may arguably increase rather than decrease dissent, because it counts as a grievance/injustice. Social psychological research shows that perceived injustices towards one's group (though not necessarily linked to repression of collective action) are indeed positively linked to collective action (see meta-analysis by Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

Most studies on the relationship between repression and collective action have been undertaken at the macro-level. That is, researchers would examine repression as the aggregate number of incidences (frequency) of arrests, executions and curfews and examine their relation with the aggregate number of protests (Almeida, 2003; Davenport, 2007; Rasler, 1996). It is generally argued that an increase in the frequency of repression increases perceptions about its likelihood of occurring; therefore frequency of repression can arguably be treated as a proxy of repression threat, i.e. how likely repression will be used (Josua & Edel, 2015). However, there are limits to this analogy for our purposes. To illustrate, Earl and Saoul (2010) were interested in examining the effect of frequency of

repression on subsequent protest rates in the United States, particularly in New York City, between 1960 and 1990. In order to test their hypotheses, they operationalized frequency of repression as the total number of different police actions and looked at their effect on collective action in left-wing and right wing groups. They found that some police actions deterred subsequent protests whereas others had no effect (Earl & Saoul, 2010). Though useful to consult, Earl and Saoul (2010) examine actual repression rather than repression threat which is our focus for this paper. Additionally, their examination was conducted on a macro-level whereas we are interested in psychological mechanisms of repression threat and collective action at the individual level. Furthermore, Earl (2011) argues that several different disciplines (e.g. sociology, history, political science) have adopted repression as a research variable thereby creating divergence in definitions. This divergence in definitions of repression makes comparisons between studies inaccurate or incomplete (Earl & Saoul, 2010). For example, failing to differentiate between the different types of repression (e.g. covert/overt, channeled/coerced) is argued to be one of the reasons why researchers have been getting mixed results about the effect of repression on collective action (radicalizing or deterring) (Davenport, 2007; Earl & Saoul, 2010).

Research on the effect of repression threat on collective action at the micro-level is rather scarce and typically confined to dealings with state institutions/agents. Opp (1994) found that an increase in the perceived likelihood of repression is associated with an increase in the sanctioned behavior. He administered a survey one year after the protests of the East German revolution in 1989 that asked participants to recall in retrospect their attitudes, impressions and behaviors. Repression threat was measured by asking respondents how likely they thought— at the time of the events – repressive measures

would be taken against them if they protested (e.g. getting arrested and/or causing problems for close family members). Collective action was measured by asking participants about their past participation in general dissenting behavior (e.g. participating in or founding an opposition group/refusal to vote/participation in peace prayers) and demonstrations such as the 9th of October, 1989 (one of the largest in the German revolution which is believed to have set the course for protests at other sites in Germany). The results showed that collective action increased with the increased likelihood of repression; however this increase became smaller with increased repression threat, a phenomenon the authors referred to as decreasing radicalization effect of increasing repression threat (Opp, 1994). This result was significant for both general dissenting behavior and demonstrations. An important limitation of this study, however, is that the data used is retrospective in nature, meaning participants are asked to recall their past attitudes and reactions, which can distort results as participants might inaccurately estimate their previous thoughts and intentions. This retrospective component and the correlational nature of the study limit any inferences about causality.

Following Opp's studies on repression in the early 90s (Opp, 1994; Opp & Roehl, 1990), we are not aware of other social psychological studies on the topic apart from two recent ones. In particular, Ayanian and Tausch (2016) examined the underlying psychological mechanisms motivating Egyptian activists to engage in collective action in risky contexts following the rise to power of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamad Morsi in 2013. The authors measured the perceived risk likelihood of protesting (e.g. likelihood of being injured, arrested, etc) and intentions to engage in collective action in the absence of a democratic transition within six months. The authors found that perceived

likelihood of risk was overall positively associated with collective action intentions, thereby lending some support to a backlash effect in response to repression. Though important, this study aims to examine repression by state authorities rather than private institutional repression using a correlational design which limits any possible inferences about causality.

To address some of the limitations of previous studies, Ayoub and Saab (2014) undertook the first experimental study on the effects of repression threat on collective action in a private institutional setting. They examined the effects of repression threat on female undergraduate students' intentions to engage in collective action against a university policy. The experiment introduced female university students to a (fake) unfair upcoming university policy affecting prospective female students and then randomly assigned them to a control (no repression threat) or experimental condition (repression threat) whereby the administration threatened to repress specific actions (i.e. protests, sit-ins and strikes) through disciplinary measures. Overall, the results showed a deterring effect of repression threat on tendencies to engage in the sanctioned forms of collective action.

One limitation of the study, however, is that the proposed policy aimed to affect prospective students rather than the students themselves. The reactions of individuals personally affected by a certain injustice may differ from those who are not personally affected, such that those personally affected by an injustice may by radicalized rather than deterred by repression threat. Accordingly, the present research aims to adapt Ayoub and Saab's (2014) experimental design within a student context while addressing this limitation. We examine reactions to a policy that affects students personally. We now turn

to the literature examining how different levels of repression (threat) severity affect collective action.

B. Severity of Repression

One of the reasons for the inconclusive findings on the direction of the relationship between repression and dissent (Almeida, 2003; Davenport, 2007; Rasler, 1996) may be that little attention has been given to repression severity as a potential moderator (Davenport, 2007; Opp, 1994). At the macro-level and in the context of confrontations with state authorities, some researchers have proposed a curvilinear relationship between repression and dissent that takes the form of an inverted U-curve, whereby increasing severity of repression results in increasing dissent, but only up to a certain point, after which the severity of repression deters further mobilizations (Stockemer, 2012; White, 1989). Another theorized relationship is the non-inverted U-curve, which assumes an initial deterrence in reaction to a theoretically undetermined level of repression after which dissent increases (Koopmans, 1997).

Conversely, contenders of the U-curve hypotheses support a simple backlash hypothesis, whereby severe repression increases perceptions of illegitimacy, solidarity and defiance among dissidents and thereby fuels collective action (Opp, 1994; Stockemer, 2012; White, 1989). Lichbach (1987) proposed a theoretical rational actor model suggesting that more violent and therefore more severe repression will lead to an increase in the perceptions of injustice of the means used by the state, which would generate further mobilizations and thus create a backlash effect. The rational actor model argues that

collective actors undergo a cost-benefit analysis when faced with repression or its likelihood of it. Severe repression increases the costs of participation but also further delegitimizes the repressing agent (Lichbach, 1987) and therefore the incentives for collective action.

So far, it is the inverted U-curve that has gained the most empirical support in the repression literature (DeNardo, 1985; Lichbach & Gurr, 1981; Ondetti, 2006). An important limitation for our purposes, however, is that the inverted U-curve has been examined in the context of confrontation with state authorities rather than private institutional repression which we are primarily interested in examining. Another limitation, is that macro-level studies are not concerned with the effect of repression severity on individuals. These can best be examined using micro-level psychological studies, to which we turn to next.

The effects of repression threat severity could be inferred by drawing on the literature on the effects of punishment severity, which suggests that increasing punishment threat severity increases deterrence of the undesired behavior (Domjan, 2003). For example, Gire and Williams (2007) examined punishment threat severity by conducting a field experiment in two small colleges (military and nonmilitary college) with different levels of severity of threats of punishment when honor code violations occur. The experimenters examined students' likelihood of picking up money that does not belong to them in both colleges in public settings. The military college consisted of a simulated real-life severe threat whereas the nonmilitary consisted of a real-life moderate punishment threat environment. Honor code violations in public settings were significantly more deterred in the military school (severe threat) than in the nonmilitary college (moderate

threat; Gire & Williams, 2007). Similarly, a study by Levin, Dato-On, and Manolis (2007) examined the effects of punishment threat (e.g. jail time, fines) on individual's future intentions to download music illegally off the internet. Threat intensities were manipulated at three levels (weak, mild and high). Participants in the weak threat condition were informed that they will have to delete all music files from their computer, whereas the mild condition consisted of the threat of conducting up to 25 hours of community work if music is illegally downloaded, and finally the strong threat appeal condition consisted of having to pay a fine of 2,500$ for each song downloaded illegally. Participants in each condition were asked to rate their willingness to pirate online music. The authors found a higher deterrence of illegal music download behavior when severity of the threat increased. As such one would expect increasing severity of repression to have a more deterring effect than less severe repression on the sanctioned collective action.

As previously mentioned, however, severe punishment may paradoxically aggrieve the punished individual and lead to a backlash effect (Clinard & Meier, 2011), which would mean that increasing severity of repression may lead to increased collective action. To elaborate, groups engage in protests because they are aggrieved about a certain state of affairs and aim to better their conditions (Wright et al., 1990). Severely crushing a disadvantaged group may therefore only serve to increase the perceived injustice of authorities and further encourage collective action (Koopmans, 1997). As such, rather than decreasing collective action, increased severity of repression (threat) may actually increase it. We now turn to the micro-level literature that directly examines the effects of repression (threat) severity on collective action.

The aforementioned micro-level study by Opp (1994) examined the relationship between increased cost of repression, and political action. After measuring German participants' past perception of the likelihood of being repressed (e.g. probability of being arrested, being hurt by security forces, getting problems on the job/for close family members), participants were asked to rate the perceived cost of each repressive action and their past participation in protests to overturn the regime. The author found a significant negative effect of repression severity on general dissenting behavior and a negative though non-significant effect on demonstrations (Opp, 1994). Cost of repression had a decreasing deterrent effect on dissenting behavior in that it first deterred it but this deterrence became smaller with increasing cost. As previously mentioned, however, Opp's (1994) data was based on asking participants about their past attitudes and was thus retrospective and non-experimental in nature.

In their study on anti-Morsi and anti-military Egyptian activists in 2013, Ayanian and Tausch (2016) examined the relation between the perceived importance of risks associated with protesting (e.g. getting arrested, killed, tortured etc.) and collective action intentions. They found that the more important the risk was, the less willing activists were to engage in collective action in the future. However, they did not compare the effect of different kinds of repression that differ in severity, focusing rather on the aggregate importance of a series of risks. Further, their study was correlational in nature. Furthermore, both Opp (1994) and Ayanian and Tausch (2016) examined repression in the context of confrontations with state authorities rather than in private institutional settings.

While Ayoub and Saab (2014) examined the effects of repression threat on collective action in an experimental and private institutional setting, they did not vary

repression threat severity. In their study, participants were faced with no repression threat or a severe repression threat, namely a hold on their degree for one whole year, meaning that the student engaging in collective action would not be able to obtain their degree or transcripts until one year after their graduation. The authors observed a deterrence effect, which is inconsistent with research in other contexts that showed that severe repression leads to an increase rather than decrease in collective action (Lichbach, 1987). A less severe repression threat may produce a backlash rather than a deterrence effect (compared to control). Accordingly, the present research aims to adapt Ayoub and Saab's (2014) experimental design but vary severity of repression threat (i.e. no repression, low and high repression), to test whether the effect of repression threat on collective action tendencies depends on its severity.

In the following section, we discuss how the effect of repression threat on collective action may depend on politicized identification.

C. Repression and Identity

Social identity is traditionally defined as "that part of an individual's self -concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). An individual can shift between multiple identities depending on the salience of the group membership. In other words, a person can identify as an undergraduate student, an environmental activist or as a citizen depending on the social context (Klandermans, Sabucedo, Rodriguez, & de Weerd 2002). A sense of shared

collective identification (we) emerges as a byproduct of salient group membership, making links between members of the group stronger (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Collective identification with a disadvantaged group has been found to be an instigator of collective action in the social psychological literature (Simon et al., 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see meta-analysis by Van Zomeren et al., 2008).

It is argued that collective identification with a disadvantaged group instigates collective action through its activation of a politicized identity (Van Zomeren et al., 2008), which is identification with a group that is mobilized for a particular cause, and is often measured as identification with a social movement organization (SMO) or an activist identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Politicized identity emphasizes the structural plight of the relevant disadvantaged group, thereby creating a mobilizing potential to address a political struggle for power (Klandermans, 2001; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Van Zomeren et al., 2008; Wright, 2001). A large body of empirical research has found politicized identification to be a stronger predictor of collective action than non-politicized identity (Klandermans, 2002; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Sturmer & Simon, 2004; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). For example, Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) found that identification as an activist was a stronger predictor of women's engagement in political actions compared to identification as a woman. Hornsey et al (2006) also found that activist identification was a unique predictor of future intentions to engage in collective action.

There is some evidence in the literature to suggest that politicized identification might moderate the effect of repression on collective action. In a retrospective survey surrounding participation in the protests in East Germany in 1989, Opp (1994) examined

various incentives to protest (e.g. political discontent, political efficacy) along with social integration (measured as membership in protest-promoting groups or membership in networks of critical friends), which is arguably an indirect measure of politicized identification. He explored the interaction between repression and social integration on individuals' incentives to protest (e.g. moral incentives, expected rewards of reference persons), and explored this separately for repression likelihood (threat) and repression cost (severity). The author found three different interaction patterns, with the most frequent being positive incentives to protest increase for both integrated and non-integrated individuals the higher repression is, however this increase is smaller for integrated individuals (who are already higher on incentives to protest). Another pattern was that positive incentives increase for nonintegrated individuals but decrease for integrated ones (Opp, 1994). Finally, a third interaction pattern was that repression increases incentives to protest for integrated individuals more than for non-integrated individuals (Opp, 1994). Although the author did not explore the direct moderating effect of social integration on protest behavior itself and the study was retrospective in nature, these results provide indirect evidence that politicized identification might moderate the effect of repression threat or repression severity on collective action tendencies, although the direction of this moderation remains inconclusive.

During the rise to power of Morsi in 2013 in Egypt, Ayanian and Tausch (2016) measured the politicized identification of the Egyptian participants as anti-Morsi or anti-Military and examined the effect on collective action. The results were unexpected; they found no evidence of a moderating role of politicized identification on the link between perceived risk likelihood and collective action intentions.

Ayoub and Saab (2014) explored the impact of identification as a moderator of the effect of repression threat on collective action but found no evidence for it. However, the authors measured an opinion-based identity (identification as supporters of women's rights) instead of politicized identification (e.g. identification as a women's rights activist), and suggested that this might have resulted in restricted variance in identification with women. Another potential limitation of Ayoub and Saab (2014) is that the experimenters measured identification before introducing the context of the study then proceeded to introduce the injustice (unfair university policy). It is possible that identification for most participants increased after the injustice scenario, through common in-group fate (Klandermans, 2001), thus resulting in even less variation in identification and masking any potential moderation effect of identification measured at the beginning.

Our research aims to address the limitations above in order to better explore whether individuals with different levels of identification react differently to repression threats that vary in severity, leading them to choose one type of collective action over the other. First, given that politicized identity is a stronger predictor of collective action (Giguere & Lalonde, 2010; Simon et al., 1998, Van Zomeren et al., 2008), we propose to measure *student activist identity* as a moderator between repression threat and collective action tendencies. Second, we will ask respondents to rate their identification levels after being exposed to the injustice scenario; this will allow us to have more accurate data on the interplay between politicized identification, repression threat severity and collective action tendencies. In the following section, we discuss the effects of repression on different types of collective action.

D. Repression and Type of Collective Action

While we previously discussed the backlash effect of repression as a radicalization (further increase) of the repressed behavior itself, some macro-level (i.e. social movement level; Lichbach, 1987) and micro-level (i.e. individual level; White, 1989) research suggests that repression can lead to a backlash effect manifested as a change in tactics, i.e. an increase in types of action other than the repressed ones (Lichbach, 1987; Opp & Roehl, 1990; White, 1989). More specifically, threatening to repress certain forms of collective action (e.g. offline forms of collective action) may deter those collective action forms themselves, but it may provoke a backlash effect by increasing other forms of collective actions that are unlikely to be repressed (e.g. less costly actions such as social media campaigns), or actions that are more radical (e.g. violent ones) and/or covert.

To illustrate, White (1989) interviewed activists to understand the reasons for their shift from support for peaceful protests to violent actions. He found that many protesters engaged or shifted their support for political violence due to severe state repression (White, 1989). Similarly, Rasler (1996) argued that when the regime crackdown intensified on the political opposition in Iran, collective action took place in mosques and during mourning ceremonies because unlike demonstrations, mourning ceremonies were not subjected to surveillance or repression. As such, one would argue that collective action overall was not deterred by severe repression; rather, repression led to a tactical shift in collective action. As such, when studying the effect of repression threat, we should focus on collective action in its different forms.

Lichbach (1987) also theorized that dissidents engage in an active decision making process of how to invest in a certain tactic to achieve the public good (benefit), depending on how much resistance (cost) dissidents are being faced with by the ruling states. Lichbach (1987) and White (1989) both argued that if certain *peaceful* forms of collective action are repressed, dissidents will be radicalized, thereby leading to a backlash phenomenon observed as political violence in this instance. A similar argument could apply to repression in private institutional settings.

Ayoub and Saab's (2014) experimental study found that repression threat deters collective action tendencies. However, they only measured collective actions which were going to be punished by authorities. It is unclear if repression threat of certain actions would have a generalized deterrence effect on other actions or would deter some actions but escalate others. Given the scarcity of psychological research studies that have examined the effects of repression (threat) on different types of collective action (including in private institutional settings), the present research aims to address this limitation by investigating whether repression threat has varying effects on different types of collective action, namely those that are explicitly punishable (included in the repression threat), those that are immune from punishment (not included in the repression threat and difficult for authorities to punish), and those that are susceptible to punishment (not included in the repression threat but which could be punished by authorities).

1. The Context

Historically, the American University of Beirut witnessed student activism as early as the 1950's and 60's during the struggle between the Nasserite pan-Arabism and

Lebanese nationalists. In the 1970s, student activists protested on campus to call for intellectual diversity, tolerance and freedom of expression, particularly centered on Palestinian causes (Nizameddin, 2016). Recently in 2014, class struggle among AUB students was heightened as students unified against a 6% tuition increase on the already expensive fee. Student activism against administrative policies, decisions and ideological values at AUB has in the past decade been publicly met with moderate and tolerant statements by the administration who calls for dialogue with student body representatives (Mahdi, 2014).

CHAPTER II

AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

We aimed to experimentally examine the effects of repression threat on collective action tendencies in a university context, where undergraduate students were informed about a (fake) policy change that disadvantages them in comparison to other students, after which repression threat was introduced. In particular, students were told that certain peaceful normative forms of collective action (protests and sit-ins) will either be respected (no repression/neutral condition), sanctioned with a dean's warning (mild repression threat), or with an academic suspension (severe repression threat). The mild and severe repression tactics were selected based on how costly they might be for students. As such, a dean's warning (mild) does not go on a students' permanent record whereas an academic suspension (severe) does. Following this, we examined students' intentions to engage in various forms of collective action: 1) the normative punishable actions in question, i.e. those actions that are directly affected by the repression threat (protests and sit-ins), 2) normative actions immune to punishment (off-campus protests, writing an article in the university student newspaper) and 3) actions susceptible to punishment, i.e. actions that are excluded from the repression threat but which could potentially be repressed, consisting of a) normative actions (signing petitions) and b) non-normative actions (boycotting classes and blocking access to administrative buildings).

A. Overall Model

The suggested model proposes that repression threat can have a deterring effect, a radicalizing effect, or no effect on collective action tendencies and that this will depend on severity of the repression threat, politicized identity, and the type of collective action under consideration.

In particular, we hypothesize the following:

For normative punishable actions (protests and sit-ins, which are included in the repression threat):

Hypothesis 1. Repression threat will deter collective action tendencies more strongly when the repression threat is severe than when it is mild.

Hypothesis 2. Politicized identification will moderate the effects above such that high identifiers will be less deterred than low identifiers.

For normative actions immune to punishment (off-campus protest and writing an article in the university student newspaper), we explore the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. Repression threat will result in a backlash effect on action tendencies.

Exploratory hypothesis 4. We explore whether the backlash effect will differ depending on repression severity and politicized identification.

For actions susceptible to punishment (normative: signing petitions, non-normative: boycotting classes and blocking administrative access):

Exploratory hypothesis 5. We explore whether repression threat will have an effect (deterring or backlash), and whether this effect depends on repression threat severity

and on politicized identification (such that high identifiers will be less deterred (or more radicalized) than low identifiers).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

A. Participants

One hundred and ninety nine undergraduate students from the psychology 201 (introductory psychology course) pool coming from different majors and classes, from the American University of Beirut, took part in the experiment. Students were randomly assigned to either one of the experimental conditions (mild or severe repression) or the control condition (no repression).

B. Design

This study had a between-groups design with one manipulated independent variable, repression threat, with three levels (no repression threat, mild repression threat, severe repression threat), and one measured continuous moderator, politicized identification (student rights activism), and four conceptual dependent variables which consist of different types of collective action: normative punishable actions (protests and sit-ins), normative actions immune to punishment (off-campus protests and writing an article in the university student newspaper), normative actions susceptible to punishment (signing petitions), non-normative actions susceptible to punishment (boycotting classes and blocking administrative access to administrative buildings).

C. Procedure

We first obtained approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. Prior to the actual experiment, a pilot study was conducted with three first year graduate students and two senior undergraduate students to test for the employed scenarios' credibility, believability and comprehensibility. Minor changes in wording and layout formatting were made according to their comments and feedbacks, and the time that students took to complete the survey was estimated to be 25 minutes.

Undergraduate students were informed and voluntarily recruited for the study through an email advertisement sent by the coordinator of the Psychology 201 Pool, in exchange for a one point bonus on their final grade in Psych 201.The true purpose of the study was masked as participants were told that an independent research institute (called Lebanese Center for Education Research) rather than the university administration itself was conducting a national study on student attitudes towards university policies. We deliberately mislead the participants to avoid demand characteristics and to ensure their most genuine perceptions and attitudes. To further enhance the credibility of the study a (fake) logo institute was used as a header on the survey question form.

To avoid cross-talk between participants, the study took place in one individual session. This ensured that the debriefing was delivered at the earliest possible opportunity and minimized the chances of a false rumor about the university policies from spreading. One-hundred and ninety nine participants were gathered in a big classroom, seated on individual tables and asked not to interact with their colleagues. In addition to having the experimenter monitor the process of the study, two graduate assistants who have filled the

required IRB ethical examinations were present to assist and monitor/prevent any interaction between participants. The assistants were instructed to be in formal attire, were given badges to indicate their affiliation with the fake institute, and were introduced as colleagues. The experimenter and assistants randomly distributed the sealed envelopes to the participants thereby assigning them to either the control condition or one of the two experimental conditions. Both participants and experimenters were blind to the conditions as the envelopes were mixed.

The content of the information sheet (i.e. consent form) was explained orally by the experimenter (*Appendix A*), after which participants were given 30 minutes to finish the survey (*Appendix B*). The experimenter emphasized that participants cannot exit the room or communicate with other individuals in the room until everyone has finished and been debriefed. Participants who finished early were instructed to return their surveys to the envelopes and seal them and patiently wait for the rest to finish.

The study began with students reading a report done by an independent research body that declared a new policy change at the American University of Beirut. The passage intended to falsely inform participants' that AUB's administration is planning on restricting undergraduate students' access to Wifi to dorms and libraries starting Spring 2016-2017 due to financial difficulties faced by the university.

Before the repression condition was introduced, participants answered a comprehension check to ensure they understood the text, a control check to rate how important having Wifi access is to them, completed a measure of politicized identification, and attitude toward the policy to ensure that we focus on collective action tendencies only among those who oppose the upcoming policy and therefore have a motivation to take

action. Participants also answered measures of perceptions of injustice to control for differences between the control and experimental groups. In the control condition, participants read a passage allegedly taken from the same source in which a member of AUB's administration stated that AUB respects students' rights to protest and sit-in in opposition to this policy, whereas participants in the repression conditions were falsely informed that AUB's administration will sanction protests and sit-ins with a Dean's warning (mild repression) or with academic suspension (severe repression).

Following this, participants completed a manipulation check to ensure they understood the text, along with measures of the perceived likelihood of repression, in addition to other measures not analyzed in the present research (anger, fear, fear of participating in each action, efficacy, perceived efficacy of each action), and intentions to engage in collective action to oppose the policy. Finally participants were asked to rate the perceived costliness of receiving a dean's warning and an academic suspension. Additionally, participants were asked about their participation in activities that support students' rights in the last 12 months to examine actual previous experience in collective action. Finally, students filled out a suspicion check to assess whether they suspected the true purpose of the study while reading the passages of the survey, in addition to answering socio-demographic measures of information pertaining to their age, academic major, class and English proficiency.

After completing the survey, students were informed about the true purpose of the study (i.e. Debriefing form: *Appendix C*) and handed a post-debriefing informed consent form. It was emphasized that AUB does not plan on imposing this policy, the research institute conducting the study does not exist, and that the experimenters' aim was to

measure the effects of repression threat on collective action tendencies. At this point, participants were asked to either authorize researchers to use their responses by submitting the sealed envelope, or to withdraw from the study by keeping the envelope with them without losing the extra point.

After the survey was completed, the data was entered into SPSS by the experimenter herself and an undergraduate student; data sets were compared across matches and mismatches and the physical copies were reexamined to correct emerging discrepancies.

D. Instruments

1. Comprehension Checks

Participants answered the following comprehension checks with true or false: "According to the report you just read, AUB's administration is planning to stop undergraduate students' ability to access AUB Wifi", and "According to the article, the AUB administration is planning to punish anyone who engages in protests, or sit-ins against its plan of restricting undergraduate student's access to the Wireless Internet services".

2. Attitude Toward The Policy

Manipulation and Control Checks For Perceived Injustice. Two scales adapted by Ayoub and Saab (2014):

Participants were asked “Do you support or oppose the upcoming policy by the AUB administration to restrict undergraduate students’ access to Wifi?” with two answer options: support/oppose.

3. Perceptions Of Injustice

Participants were asked to rate their agreement on the following statements: “The new policy is unjust/ the new policy is unfair/the new policy is justified.” The items was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4. Student Activism

This variable was measured using the following five items adapted from Zaal et al. (2014): “I identify with other student rights activists”, “I feel a bond with other student rights activists”, “I have a lot in common with other student rights activists”, “Being a student rights’ activist is an important part of my identity”, “I don’t feel connected to other student rights activists [reverse scored]” (Cronbach’s alpha = .93). Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert-types scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to ensure variability on the scale.

5. Manipulation and Control Checks for Repression Severity

A single item was used to assess participants’ perception of the severity of each repressive measure. It was administered at the end of the study so as not to prime participants in the no-repression condition. Furthermore, to document participants’ views of the severity of a dean’s warning and academic suspension, participants in all conditions

completed these measures. Ratings were made using a 5-point scale from 1 (not severe at all) to 5 (very severe). The item read "How severe of a punishment do you think it would be if the AUB administration would punish students who participate in a protest or sit-in against the new policy, by giving them a Dean's warning? A warning from the dean is in writing. Only two Dean's Warnings are allowed in a student's academic career at AUB". The same item was used to measure the costliness of academic suspension, where participants were told that "suspension will form part of the student's permanent record (and will appear on the student's transcript). A student will be suspended for a fixed period of time during which the student may not participate in any academic or other activities at the University. At the end of the suspension period, the student may be readmitted to the University, only upon the recommendation of the University Disciplinary Committee." In the control condition and the mild repression threat conditions, participants were asked first about the dean's warning, but in the severe repression threat condition, participants were asked first about the suspension.

6. Manipulation Check for Repression Threat

Participants were asked "How likely do you think it is that the AUB administration will punish students who engage in protests or sit-ins against the plan of restricting undergraduate student's access to the Wireless Internet services?" on a 5-point scale from 1 (not likely at all) to 5 (very likely).

7. Willingness to Participate in Collective Action

Participants were asked the following: "To what extent are you willing to engage in the following actions to oppose the AUB administration's plan to restrict undergraduate students' access to the Wireless Internet services: participate in a protest/participate in a sit-in/boycotting classes/ participate in an off-campus protest/sign a petition/ writing an article in the university student newspaper/ blocking administrative access to administrative buildings." The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not willing at all) to 5 (very much willing).

8. Participation in Activities Regarding Student Rights

Participants were asked if they had engaged in any of these activities in the last 12 months: a) participated in a protest/public gathering for students' rights, b) signed a petition about students' rights, c) posted a link regarding students' rights d) liked a page on Facebook/social media for students' rights e) blogged about students' rights f) wrote an article about students' rights g) are members in a students' rights organization/society/club.

9. Suspicion Checks

Students were asked the following two questions at the very end of the survey: "What do you think is the purpose of this study?" and "While reading the passages and answering the questions, did you feel that there was something strange or suspicious? If yes, please explain." Students also rated their English proficiency from 1 (very bad) to 7 (very good).

10. Action normativity

Students in the control condition were asked to rate the normativity of each action from a student's point of view on a scale from 1 (absolutely normative from a student's point of view) to 5 (absolutely non-normative from a student's point of view. Normative actions were defined in the instructions as those actions supported by the majority of students and in line with conventions and rules among students. Non-normative actions were defined as actions not supported by the majority of students and violating conventions and rules among students[1].

Anger, fear, efficacy and effectiveness of action were also measured, however, these are beyond the scope of the present research.

[1] See Appendix D for analysis of action normativity

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A. Missing Values Analysis

A Missing Value Analysis (MVA) analysis was run on the sample. All variables had below 5% missing data. Furthermore, Little's MCAR test was not significant, $\chi^2 = 319.36$, $p = .45$, *ns,* suggesting that the data were missing completely at random. All missing values were imputed using the Expectation Maximization technique, following recommendations by Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007. No values were out of range therefore no adjustments were done.

B. Comprehension and Manipulation Checks

The original sample consisted of 199 participants. However, a frequency check on the item of support for the policy revealed that five participants supported the policy and were therefore deleted as they were assumed to have no motivation to take collective action against the new policy.

Subsequently, a frequency check was run on the first and second comprehension checks. A total of 63 (33.5%) participants answered the first comprehension check (which asked about the proposed policy) wrong. The comprehension check read as follows: "Please answer the following comprehension question. According to the article you just read, AUB's administration is planning to stop undergraduate students' ability to access AUB Wifi." In this case the correct answer was "true". The comprehension check aims to

identify which students understood the given scenario, which ideally all students should answer correctly. A closer inspection of the hard-copy surveys showed that students might have been confused by reading, in the text of the article, that "AUB will *restrict* undergraduate students' access to wifi to AUB dorms, libraries etc", while the comprehension question read AUB will *stop* undergraduate students' access to wifi on campus. It is possible that some students were confused because they had underlined the words "stop" and "restrict", while others had changed their responses once or twice as indicated by crossing out or erasing their original answers.

Given that the second comprehension check asked if "According to the article you just read, AUB's administration is planning to punish anyone who engages in protests and sit-ins against the new policy", we deemed that answers to the second comprehension check assume an understanding of students facing an unfair policy. As such, we concluded the second comprehension check would be a more reliable comprehension check. Accordingly, a total of six participants, one in the control and five in the severe condition were excluded for answering the second comprehension check wrong. The final sample consisted of $N = 188$, with 61 participants in the control condition, 69 in the mild repression threat condition and 58 in the severe repression threat condition.

The perceived likelihood of repression for the student body differed significantly across groups, $F\ (2, 185) = 69.38$, $p < .001$. A Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that participants in the mild ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .87$) and the severe condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.02$) perceived student repression to be more likely than participants in the control condition ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .76$). The mean difference between the mild and control condition was 1.58, 95 % CI [1.20, 1.95], $r = .70$, and between the severe and control

condition 1.68, 95 % CI [1.29, 2.07], $r = 0.68$. This indicates that our manipulation was successful in changing the perceived likelihood of repression. There was, however, no difference on likelihood of repression for the student body between participants in the mild ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .87$) and the severe condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.02$) (mean difference = .11; 95% CI = -.28, .49; $p > .05$). Similarly, a one-way Anova with Bonferroni post-hoc tests was run on perceptions of repression likelihood for the student him/herself. There was a significant effect of the manipulation on the perceived repression likelihood, F (2, 185) = 61.68, $p < .001$, such that participants in the mild ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .81$) and severe conditions ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .96$), felt significantly more likely to be repressed than participants in the control condition ($M = 2.21$, $SD = .88$), $p < .001$ (mean difference between the mild and control condition 1.49, 95 % CI [1.11, 1.86], $r = .66$; mean difference between severe and control condition 1.57, 95% CI [1.17, 1.95], $r = .65$). As predicted, perceptions of repression likelihood for the student him/herself did not differ for participants in the mild ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .87$) and the severe condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.02$) (mean difference = .08; 95% CI = -.30, .46, $p > .05$).

Participants overall considered the repressive measure to be highly costly as they scored well above the midpoint for the perceived severity of the repression measure for the individual him/herself ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .80$) and for a member of the student body ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .86$). An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine differences in the perceived repression threat severity for the student him/herself between the mild and severe conditions (the control condition was excluded as no repression threat was made in it). Homogeneity of variance was not met ($F = 13.76$, $p < .001$) so the t-test adjusting for this violation was conducted. As expected, participants in the mild condition ($M = 4.17$; $SD =$

.51) perceived the threat of repression on themselves as less severe than participants in the severe condition (M = 4.72; SD = .52), t (125) = - 4.27, $p < .001$, r = .36. Regarding the perceived severity of repression threat on the student body, homogeneity of variance was assumed (F (1, 125)= .05, $p > .05$, *ns*.). As expected, participants in the mild condition (M = 3.87; SD = .86) perceived the repression threat on the student body to be less severe than participants in the severe condition (M = 4.48; SD = .75), t (125) = - 4.24, $p < .001$, r = .35. These results thus suggest that our manipulation of repression threat severity was successful.

C. Participant Characteristics

The students' ages ranged between 18 and 22 (M = 18.5, SD = 0.82). The sample consisted of 124 women and 62 men with 2 students choosing to leave the gender question unanswered. Further, 18.6% of the students were majoring in Psychology, while the rest were from other majors (Biology, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Economics, etc.). With regard to English proficiency, students on average rated their English at M = 5.88, SD = 1.00, with the minimum rating being 3 on a 7-point Likert scale, which indicates that students had a relatively good English base.

We also found different types of past engagement in activities that support students' rights. Most participants had signed a petition (67.6%) and liked a page on student rights (53.7%). Around a quarter had posted a link on a students' rights affiliated page (28.7%) or belonged to a student rights group (21.3%). Only a small minority of

participants had engaged in protest/public gathering for students' rights (12.8%), blogged about students' rights (13.8%) or written an article about students' rights (6.9%).

D. Factor Analysis

A one-component factor analysis with principal component extraction and varimax rotation was conducted on the items of each scale (injustice, identification). There were no issues of multicollinearity or singularity of data because all determinants were greater than .00001, and there were no correlations above .80 in the correlation matrices. Furthermore, all chi-squares of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were significant: Injustice, $\chi^2(3) = 154.18$, $p < .001$; Identification, $\chi^2(21) = 779.80$, $p < .001$. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin values for Injustice was above .60 (KMO = .61), and above .80 for Identification (KMO = .85). All measures of sampling adequacy (MSA) were above .50. Therefore, no variables warranted exclusion.

A single extracted component explained a total of 66.78% of the variance for Injustice. Two components were extracted for identification, the first one explaining 59.35% of the variance and the second explaining 16.69%. Items 1 to 5 (see Table 1) loaded heavily on the first factor, these items referred mainly to participants' identification with other student activists. Accordingly the first identification scale was called student activist identity scale. Items 6 and 7 which referred mainly to participants' concern of the wellbeing and welfare of the undergraduate student body loaded on the second factor; the factor was subsequently called student identification. A descriptive check on both identification scales revealed that the mean for student activism was slightly above the mid-point, $M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.19$, whereas that for student identification was very high, $M = 6.01$,

SD = .98, and the median was 6.00 on a 7-point Likert scale indicating a ceiling effect. This restricted variance implied that the analysis of student identification (using this scale) as a moderator would be inappropriate. As such we relied only on student activist identification as a potential moderator of the effect of repression threat severity on collective action tendencies.

Table 1
Identification rotated component matrix

	Component	
	1	2
I identify with other student activists	.81	
I feel a bond with other student activists	.88	
I have a lot in common with other student activists	.89	
I don't feel connected to other student activists [recoded]	.74	
Being a student activist is an important part of my identity.	.72	
I am concerned with the welfare of undergraduate AUB students.	.	.90
I care about the wellbeing of students	.	.91

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Given the relatively low sample size for a reliable factor analysis, and in line with our aim to examine the effect of repression threat on different types of collective action, we decided to (1) combine protests and sit-ins into a single scale given that they were both normative and explicitly punishable in our scenario, in addition to the fact that they loaded

on the same factor and correlated highly ($r = .85$, $p < .05$), and (2) examine the effects of the independent variables on each of the remaining forms of collective action individually.

All scales showed good reliability through an inspection of the Cronbach's alpha (Table 2) and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient for normative punishable actions was strong $r = .85$.

Table 2
Reliability Coefficients of Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Injustice	3	.72
Activist ID	5	.89
Student ID	2	.86

Table 3
Pearson Intercorrelation Matrix of Collective Actions

Measure	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
1. normative punishable actions	1							
2. Boycott classes	.40**	1						
3. Petition	.32**	.27**	1					
4. Off-campus protest	.53**	.36**	.32**	1				
5. Article	.34**	.15*	.26**	.30**	1			
6. Block access	.41**	.62**	.10	.34**	.24**	1		
7. Injustice	.13	.07	.04	.15*	-.04	.10	1	
8. Activist Identification	.40**	.20**	-.15*	.23**	.26**	.19**	.14	1

E. Univariate Outliers

We first inspected the univariate outliers through z-scores in each group separately. Two univariate outliers (z-scores exceeding 3.29 in absolute value) were found, one in each of the three conditions: in the control condition (Injustice -4.14), in the severe repression condition (Blocking administrative access to college hall 3.67). To check for multivariate outliers, we looked at Mahalanobis distances using the linear regression model whereby injustice, activist identification, normative punishable actions actions (Protest and sit-ins) and the other actions were entered using the forced entry method. There was one multivariate outlier that exceeded the $\chi^2(8) = 26.13$, $p < .001$ in the mild condition. Given that only a small number of outliers was found and none of the univariate outliers were multivariate outliers, we decided to retain the outliers in the final analysis[2].

F. Normality Tests

To check for normality, we used the Kolomogorov-Smirnov test in each group. All variables were non-normally distributed except for activist identification in the control group $D(61) = .08$, $p = .20$, *ns*, in the mild condition $D(69) = 0.8$, $p = .20$, *ns*, and in the severe condition $D(58) = .11$, $p = .08$, *ns*. Bootstrapping is recommended using the PROCESS macro in SPSS to investigate the moderating effects of identification as a continuous variable with a multicategorical independent variable (Field, 2013).

[2] The findings remained similar when the outliers were removed.

G. Control Checks

Participants perceived the situation to be highly unjust as the mean injustice score was well above the midpoint ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .72$). Importantly, no significant differences emerged in the perceived injustice of the policy in the control condition ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .76$), mild condition ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .76$) and the severe condition ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .63$) as indicated by a one-way ANOVA test, $F(2, 187) = .24$, $p = .79$, *ns*. Similarly, participants did not differ on levels of identification with student activism across the conditions, $F(2, 187) = .90$, $p = .41$, *ns*. This indicates that randomization succeeded in ensuring no selection bias of participants in the different conditions.

Interestingly, identification as student activist showed a positive but only marginally significant correlation with perceived injustice of wifi restriction policy ($r = .14$, $p = .06$, *ns).* We expected to find a stronger positive relationship between perceiving a situation as unjust and identifying with the affected group, but the relationship is in the expected direction.

H. Sample Descriptives

Looking at the means (table 4), there was a relatively high willingness to engage in normative punishable actions for participants in the control condition, in comparison to a moderate willingness for participants in the mild condition, and a low willingness in the severe condition, suggesting a deterring effect of repression threat severity.

Similarly, for other normative actions relatively immune to punishment, results seemed to differ depending on the action. Judging from the means, repression threat

seemed to have some deterrence effect on writing an article at severe levels of repression threat as participants in the severe condition showed relatively low willingness to write an article while participants showed relatively moderate willingness to write an article in the mild and control conditions.

Conversely, willingness to engage in off-campus protests was relatively low for the control), moderate (at mid-point) for participants in the mild condition but low in the severe condition, suggesting an initial backlash effect at mild levels of repression threat followed by a deterrence effect at severe levels of repression threat.

As for actions that were susceptible to punishment, again results seemed to differ depending on the action. There was a relatively high willingness to sign a petition (normative action) regardless of repression threat, as the mean was above the mid-point in the control mild and severe conditions. By contrast, participants showed an overall low willingness to boycott classes (non-normative) across conditions, namely in the control condition, mild condition, but particularly in the severe condition, suggesting a deterrence effect at severe levels of repression threat. Similarly, participants showed low willingness to block access to administrative offices (non-normative) across conditions, which got progressively lower the more severe the repression threat was.

CHAPTER V

MAIN ANALYSIS

We aimed to examine the effects of repression threat severity on students' willingness to engage in collective action to oppose the wifi restriction policy and test the potential moderating effect of identification as a student activist. We relied on a software plug-in for SPSS called PROCESS Macro which automatically generates the effects of a multi-categorical independent variable on an outcome variable at different levels of a continuous moderator (Hayes, 2015). For each outcome variable, two multiple regression analyses were performed. The first used two dummy variables with the control condition as a reference category, student activist identification (mean centered), and the interaction of the dummy variables with identification as predictor variables. The second used the same analytic strategy but this time using the severe repression condition as the reference category, in order to generate all types of pairwise comparisons. Six multiple regressions were run (twice) on the following dependent variables: willingness to engage in normative punishable actions (protests and sit-ins), writing an article, off-campus protests, signing a petition, boycotting classes, and blocking access to college hall. The Durbin-Watson statistics were within rang (0 to 4) with a minimum value of 1.9 and a maximum value of 2.1 (Field, 2009). There were no influential cases since none of the DFBeta values were greater than 1 in absolute value, and the sample size was adequate for the test (N = 188). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend the sample size to be larger than $N \geq 50 + 8m$ (m = number of IVs). For this test, the sample size should be $N \geq 50 + 8 (3) = 74$. An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner,

2007) and revealed the need for a total sample size of 158 to achieve a power of .80 (Cohen, 1988), accordingly our sample size of 188 seems reasonable. The assumption of normality of the collective action measures and identification was violated. Such a model (PROCESS model 1) makes all standard assumptions of OLS regression including normality and homoscedasticity of the errors in estimations, a bootstrap confidence interval can be a good alternative to not having to make these assumptions (Hayes, 2015). Bootstrapping is a technique which calculates the statistic of interest and generates significance tests and confidence intervals by taking repeated samples with replacement from the dataset, and calculating the statistic of interest of each sample (Field, 2013, p. 871). The effects were estimated using bias-corrected (BC) 95% confidence intervals, based on 1000 bootstrap samples, as recommended by Field (2013).

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of the different collective actions

		N	Mean		Std. Deviation
RepSEV		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Control Condition	normative punishable actions	61	3.54	.14	1.11
	Boycott	61	2.33	.18	1.40
	Petition	61	4.52	.10	.79
	Off-Camp	61	2.72	.18	1.38
	Article	61	3.30	.17	1.33
	Block	61	2.18	.18	1.38
	Valid N (listwise)	61			
Mild Condition	normative punishable actions	69	3.07	.15	1.21
	Boycott	69	2.25	.16	1.34
	Petition	69	4.35	.13	1.05
	Off-Camp	69	3.13	.17	1.46

	Article	69	3.20	.17	1.41
	Block	69	1.87	.15	1.27
	Valid N (listwise)	69			
Severe Condition	normative punishable actions	58	2.49	.17	1.28
	Boycott	58	1.90	.16	1.21
	Petition	58	4.31	.13	1.01
	Off-Camp	58	2.74	.18	1.40
	Article	58	2.72	.19	1.45
	Block	58	1.55	.12	.94
	Valid N (listwise)	58			

A. Normative Punishable Actions.

The overall model was significant, $F(5, 182) = 16.25$, $p < .05$, and accounted for 51% of the variance on willingness to engage in normative punishable actions. Repression severity had a significant effect. There was a significant difference between the control and mild repression condition ($b = -.39$, $SE = .19$, $p < .05$, [-.76, -.01], control and severe repression condition, $b = .91$, $SE = .20$, $p < .05$, [.51, 1.30], and between the two experimental groups ($b = .52$, $SE = .22$, $p < .05$, [.09, .95]). The results indicated that participants in the control condition ($M = 3.54$, $SE = .14$) were significantly more willing to oppose the policy using normative punishable actions) than participants in the mild repression condition ($M = 3.07$, $SE = .15$), and in the severe repression condition ($M = 2.49$, $SE = .17$). Additionally, those who were severely repressed were significantly less willing to engage in normative punishable actions than those who were mildly repressed. There was a significant effect of student activist identification on protest and sit-ins: $b_a = .54$, $p < .05$ when the control condition was the reference, and $b_b = .45$, $p < .05$ when the severe

condition was used as the reference[3]. Regression coefficients for identification changed respectively for all actions. Contrary to our expectations, the interaction term between repression severity and student activist identity did not explain significantly more variance in the dependent variable, (Hayes & Montoya, 2017), $F(2, 182) = 2.27$, $p = .11$. Bootstrapping does not provide standardized coefficients; therefore, we could not compare the size of the regression coefficients.

B. Normative Actions Immune to Punishment

Off-Campus protests. For willingness to engage in off-campus protests, the overall model was significant, $F(5, 182) = 2.61$, $p < .05$, and accounted for 31% of the total variance. However, repression threat had no significant main effects ($p > .06$ for all $b_{s)}$. On the other hand, student activist identification had a significant positive effect, $b_a = .47$, $p < .05$, $b_b = .34$, $p < .05$. However, the interaction between repression severity and student activism did not explain significantly more variance, $F(2, 182) = 1.70$, $p = .19$, *ns*. Hence, repression threat had no deterring or escalating effect on willingness to engage in off-campus protests.

Article. The overall model for writing an article in the student newspaper was significant, $F(5,182) = 3.75$, $p < .05$, and accounted for 31% of the total variance. However, repression threat had no significant main effects ($p > .07$ for all b_s). Student activist

[3] The coefficient for identification changes depending on the reference group and subsequently a regression coefficient followed by subscript a indicates that the control is the reference category while one followed by subscript b indicates that the severe repression threat is the reference category.

identification had a significant positive effect on willingness to write an article, $b_a = .33$, $p < .05$, $b_b = .36$, $p < .05$. Similarly to the previous actions though, the interaction between repression severity and student activist identity was non-significant as the addition of the interaction term did not explain significantly more variance, $F(2,182) = .30$, $p = .74$. Hence, repression threat had no deterring or escalating effect on willingness to write an article in the student newspaper.

C. Normative Actions Susceptible to Punishment

Petition. The overall model was not significant, $F(2, 182) = .90$, $p = .41$, *ns.* Moreover, student activist identity also did not have a significant effect on petition signing $b_a = .13$, $p = .10$, $b_b = .21$, $p = .17$, and the interaction did not explain significantly more variance $F(5, 182) = 1.66$, $p = .15$, *ns*. Hence, repression threat had no deterring or escalating effect on willingness to sign petitions.

D. Non-Normative Actions Susceptible to Punishment

Boycotting classes. The overall model for boycotting classes was not significant, $F(5, 184) = 1.76$, $p = .12$, *ns*. Student activism also had no significant effect on boycotting classes $b_a = .41$, p = .08, $b_b = .08$, $p = .56$ and the interaction did not explain significantly more variance, $F(2,182) = .79$, $p = .45$, *ns*. Hence, repression threat had no deterring or escalating effect on willingness to boycott classes.

Block access. The overall model was significant, $F(5, 182) = 3.13$, $p < .05$, and the model accounted for 28% of the variance. Repression threat had a significant main effect,

such that participants in the control condition were significantly more willing to block administrative access to administrative buildings, than participants faced with the severe repression condition, b =.57, SE =.23, $p < .05$, [.12, 1.02]. No other differences between the repression threat conditions emerged, $p > .13$ for all b_s. Student activist identification had no significant effect on blocking access to administrative buildings, $b_a = .31$, $p = .17$, $b_b = .09$, $p = .31$, and the interaction term between repression severity and student activist identity was non-significant as the addition of the interaction term did not explain significantly more variance, $F(2,182) = .45$, $p = .64$, *ns*. Hence, repression threat had a deterring effect on willingness to block access to administrative buildings, but only at severe repression threat levels.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The current experimental study aimed to determine the effects of repression threat on collective action tendencies and examine whether these effects depend on repression threat severity and on student activist identity and whether they differ depending on collective action type. We examined these effects in the context of repression in a private setting, namely a university. More precisely, using a sample of AUB undergraduate students, we falsely informed participants that the administration plans on restricting undergraduate students' access to wifi on campus to the dorms and libraries. We subsequently manipulated repression threat likelihood and repression threat severity, resulting in three conditions (no repression threat, mild repression threat and severe repression threat).

We originally argued that repression threat might affect collective action differently (provoking a backlash or deterrence effect) depending on the severity of repression threat, the level of politicized identification and the type of collective action under consideration. With regard to the type of collective action considered, we distinguished between normative punishable actions (those that were explicitly threatened with repression, i.e. protests and sit-ins), normative actions that are immune to punishment (namely writing an article in the student newspaper, off-campus protests), normative actions that are susceptible to punishment because they are identifiable and/or disruptive (signing petitions) and non-normative actions susceptible to punishment (boycotting classes and blocking the way to administrative buildings).

We hypothesized that repression threat would deter normative punishable collective action tendencies and the deterrence would be stronger the greater the severity of repression. Our hypothesis was met such that repression threat deterred students' willingness to engage in protests and sit-ins and this deterrence was stronger the more severe the repression threat was. This is in line with laboratory studies showing that severe repression by private institutions (e.g. university) decreases students' activism (Ayoub & Saab, 2014; Gire & Williams, 2007), but the findings are at odds with some social movement work such as Opp's (1994) who found a decreasing radicalizing effect of increased likelihood of repression. In other words, the backlash on increased likelihood of repression occurs but this backlash becomes smaller with increased repression threat. Despite the discrepancy in the findings, Opp (1994) measured likelihood of repression threat by asking participants to rate (in retrospect) the likelihood of being repressed at the time of the events whereas we experimentally manipulated repression threat to provide unbiased or distorted perceptions by memory. Moreover, our context involves confrontation with authorities in a private institution as opposed to confrontation with political authorities. These differences in design and context may account for the different results obtained.

Additionally, we predicted that repression threat would provoke some backlash effect on normative actions immune to punishment (i.e. off-campus protests, and writing an article). This prediction followed from Opp and Roehl's (1990) findings on the radicalization of members of a group; different levels of repression might lead to rational processes which raise the rewards and diminish the costs of participation, thereby leading to a backlash on repression. Instead, we found that repression threat had no effect on either

off-campus protests or on writing an article in the student newspaper. In fact, on average, willingness to engage in these actions was either moderate or slightly low in the different conditions. This is inconsistent with Lichbach (1987), Rasler (1996) and White's (1989) argument that actors change their collective action tactics in response to repression.

Interestingly, we did observe an initial non-significant backlash effect on off-campus protests when moving from no repression to mild repression, but this backlash was further deterred (non-significantly though) in the severe condition thereby, in line with the inverted U-curve hypothesis. The theory argues that increasing repression fuels collective action up to a certain level after which it deters it. One explanation for the lack of effect might be that these actions were perceived as relatively ineffective and as such, they did not warrant a tactical shift. In this regard, it is possible that during a cost-benefit analysis, discontented participants might not opt for seemingly ineffective actions even though they might be normative and not susceptible to punishment (e.g. off-campus protests, writing an article). It may be useful to examine a model that examines efficacy as a moderator between repression threat and collective action.

We adopted an exploratory approach regarding the effect of repression threat on actions susceptible to punishment and had no clear a priori hypothesis. We found that repression threat had no effect on signing petitions. In fact, petition signing had a ceiling effect as the means in the three groups were well above the mid-point, which may explain why we could not observe a backlash effect. As for less normative actions that were susceptible to punishment, repression threat had no effect on boycotting classes, which received low endorsement on average. On the other hand, arguably the most non-normative and therefore potentially most punishable action, which is blocking access to administrative

buildings, received low endorsement overall but was even further deterred under severe repression threat levels. This is in line with Gire and William's (2007) finding that severe punishment threats are successful at deterring illegal downloading of music. Ayoub and Saab (2014) found a similar deterrence effect when they threatened students with a hold on their degree should they protest; they, however, did not manipulate repression severity at three levels.

Lichbach (1987) contends that severe repression increases the costs of participation but also further delegitimizes the repressing agent. From a theoretical perspective, some argue that repression may trigger system alienation which is described as discontent and disillusion with the institution (Gerlach & Hine, 1970, cited by Opp 1994). Despite the importance of accessing wifi on campus for students, the manipulation might not have been strong enough to recruit more participants for an off campus protest, writing an article or boycotting classes. This may be due to our selection of the injustice (e.g. wifi restriction). One could argue that nowadays, being connected is a rather easy matter, and participants may have been morally opposed to the policy but not enough to mobilize using these actions (off-campus protest, writing an article). An alternative explanation for the lack of effect on boycotting classes might be that some courses mandate attendance taking and allocate a percentage of the final mark to it; this action might not have been perceived as desirable because it might impose further sanctions (e.g. lower grades), which would increase the costs of repression even more.

In sum, repression threat had a deterring effect on explicitly punishable normative actions, but no backlash effect on other actions. It is nevertheless worth nothing that by and large, except for blocking access to administrative buildings, repression threat's deterrence

effect was specific to the explicitly punishable actions and did not spill over to other actions, suggesting sustained engagement in certain types of collective action even in the face of repression threat for others.

Interestingly and contrary to our prediction, student activist identity did not moderate the relationship between repression threat severity and collective action. This might seem at odds with Opp's (1994) findings who found some evidence of a moderation effect. It is worth noting however that Opp (1994) merely plotted the regression lines to compare the linear relationships between repression and incentives to protest between low and high integrated individuals. He argues that the results do not provide evidence for which interaction pattern is more common for which dimension of repression (threat or cost). More recent research found no significant support for the moderating role of politicized identity on collective action either (Ayoub & Saab, 2014; Ayanian & Tausch, 2016). Our results show that student activist identity did, however, positively predict normative punishable actions and normative actions immune to punishment (namely off-campus protests and writing an article) but did not predict any of the non-normative actions susceptible to punishment (boycotting classes, blocking access to administrative buildings).

These null effects are inconsistent with the substantial evidence on the instigating role of politicized identity on collective action (Van Zomeren et al. 2008). Two aspects of the results require comment. First, participants were mostly quite young (18 -19 years) and in their first year at university. They are therefore relatively fresh high-school graduates. As such, they may not have been radicalized enough and their activist identity might therefore not involve engagement in relatively non-normative actions, such as boycotting classes and

blocking access to administrative buildings. Second, these actions may also be less sought out in the efforts of avoiding negative sanctions by peers (Opp & Roehl, 1990). As for the absence of a moderating effect of politicized identity, the results are in line with Ayoub and Saab (2014) and Ayanian and Tausch (2016) who found no evidence for politicized identification as a moderator of the effect of repression threat on collective action. Hence, the results so far suggest that while those with more politicized identities may be more willing to engage in collective action, they do not react differently to repression threat.

CHAPTER VII

LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Given the experimental nature of the study certain limitations should be taken into consideration while interpreting the results. First, we measured collective action intentions instead of the actual behavior. Although there is evidence for a positive relationship between collective action tendencies and collective action behavior (de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Webb & Sheeran, 2006), we should be cautious in generalizing the results. Similarly, we measured repression threat as a proxy for actual repression. Although repression likely operates through activating repression threat, results might differ under actual repression. A methodological limitation is the number of incorrect answers on the first manipulation check. We suggested, after an examination of the physical copies of the questionnaires, that students were confused about wifi being restricted or completely stopped, which might mean that some viewed the policy as less unfair than intended.

Another aspect to consider is that the experimental study took place in a private setting where individuals are only temporarily governed by the institution. Political state repression may take a toll on disadvantages because it is experienced for longer periods of time and is ingrained in the everyday life of the individual (e.g. tax increase). Furthermore, by selecting participants from a private university population, the external validity of the results is reduced. On one hand, our sample was quite young (mostly first-year university students), and older students who are more engaged in university life might react differently in the given context. On the other hand, the American University of Beirut is a private university accessible only to those who have competitive resources and

demonstrated academic achievements. Students at the Lebanese University, for example, which is a public university that is funded by public means through a national government but in which students receive far less services from their administration might experience unfair policies and repression differently, as being directly linked to state authorities. It would be interesting to compare the effects of repression in a private versus public university setting.

From an ecological validity standpoint, our control condition was one in which students were notified that their rights will be respected should they decide to exercise them, potentially priming the university as a permissive environment. This may explain why we could not observe a backlash effect on certain actions, as collective action engagement would be higher than expected under the control condition. An alternative control condition to be considered in future research could withhold information on the university's potential reaction to protests.

Additionally, we did not measure the socio-economic background or students' need or necessity to have wifi access on campus. Although the participants considered wifi access to be important, it might not practically affect all students' lives the same way (e.g. those who can afford larger mobile data plans). From another perspective, we did not check if participants were on scholarship programs or financial aid. The students' financial aid status at the university may make them hesitant to engage in collective action against the administration fearing that it may affect their academic career. We recommend examining how socio-economic status and financial aid/scholarship status affect repression and collective action in such an academic context.

Moreover, we selected a variety of conventional methods of collective action while relying on the history of collective movement at AUB. This analysis was intended to illustrate the point that various types of collective action are differentially affected by repression. However, our selection might have limited our ability to predict a tactical shift. Different effects might have occurred on other actions such as online actions and actions that promote dialogue (e.g. delegating a group of representatives to negotiate with the administration)[4].

It is also important to mention that Importantly, when asking about previous participation in action, 67.6% of the participants admitted signing a petition at one point. Interestingly, a week before data collection was done, the AUB administration began a discussion about a new GPA equivalency system which will cause grade deflation. Outraged, the students circulated a petition that gathered 2500 signatures (Abi-Ghannam, Haidar, Mneimneh, & Issa, 2016). It is possible that participants were influenced by external and environmental factors right before data collection. This might explain, for instance, why there was a ceiling effect on student petitions.

Finally, the way politicized identification was measured may be problematic as the identity of student rights activism may not be an actual identity in students' minds. It is possible that student mobilization for student rights necessitates identification with particular political student groups on campus, or with an opinion-based group (i.e. anti-restriction of wifi group). Given the fictional injustice in the scenario we used, it was not

[4] On every measure of action, participants had the option of selecting "Other actions, please specify:" and suggesting an action, some students suggested forming a group of students to approach the president/administration in order to oppose the policy. Others suggested disconnecting the wifi routers on campus.

possible to tap into such identities. Future studies should select more ecologically valid forms of politicized identity.

We had started off the manuscript by drawing on uprisings around the world and how repression was used to crush movements. Our model does not consider the full set of psychological variables that operate in situations of severe widespread repression of political minorities. These variables might include a multitude of variables such as political efficacy, gender, past exposure to repression or time of conflict (lagged vs immediate effects of repression on action). Nonetheless, this experiment contributes to the relatively scarce social psychological literature on repression and collective action in various ways. First, this study extends previous experimental work on the effects of repression threat on collective action (Ayoub &Saab, 2014), which is still in its infancy. Second, to our knowledge, this study offered the first experimental manipulation of repression threat severity on collective action. Third, the study examined tactical shifts in collective action by examining different types of action. Finally, the study goes beyond the usual context in which repression is studies, namely by public agents, to examine overt, coercive repression in private institutional settings (Earl, 2011).

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study examined the relationship between collective action and repression threat by building on recent experimental work that examines the impact of repression threat on collective action. It varied three levels of repression severity (no repression, mild and severe), and it examined different types of collective action to investigate whether there will be a backlash effect or a deterrence of action. Our results showed that there was a deterrence of actions that were threatened with repression; this deterrence increased the more severe the repression threat. Conversely, repression threat had no effect on other normative actions that were immune to punishment (such as protesting off-campus and writing an article in the student newspaper), and actions that were susceptible to punishment (such as signing petitions and boycotting classes). However, repression threat had a significant deterrence effect on a non-normative action susceptible to punishment, which is blocking access to administrative buildings, but only among participants who were severely repressed. Interestingly, there was no statistically significant evidence for the moderating role of politicized identification on collective action when faced with repression threat. However, politicized identification generally positively predicted collective action tendencies, although this effect was mostly found with normative rather than non-normative actions.

Overall, the results suggest show that in the present context of repression threat in a private university setting, repression threat operates in a deterring fashion particularly on normative actions that are punishable, and even some non-normative actions. However, by

no means is this deterrence effect generalizable to all actions, as some actions that are immune to punishment or susceptible to punishment remained unaffected. Furthermore, when faced with repression threat, students who have stronger politicized identities are more likely to take collective action than those with weaker politicized identities, particularly normative forms of actions. By using an experimental paradigm, this study sheds light on the causal effects of repression threat and repression severity and helps extend previous research done in public settings to private settings, particularly university settings.

APPENDIX A

The Lebanese Center for Education Research

Information Sheet
Students' Opinions Regarding Policies of the American University of Beirut Administration

Dear participants, we would like to invite you to participate in a social service effort forThe Lebanese Center for Education Research (LCER). The instituteis conducting an internal research project in various universities in Lebanon and aims to investigate students' opinions regarding IT-related policies at their universities. In order to take part in this social service, you have to be an AUB student, and 18 years of age or above.
Before we begin, we would like to take a few minutes to explain why we are inviting you to participate and what will be done with the information you provide. You will be asked to read this information sheet, and then complete some questions, after which you will read an article from The Lebanese Center for Education Research (LCER) and respond to an anonymous questionnaire. Please read and consider each question carefully, but do not agonize over your answers. There are no right or wrong answers, and first impressions are usually fine. Just think about what best reflects your own knowledge. You will sign next to your name on a separate sheet, for you to receive one extra credit on your general average in the Psyc 201 class. The results of this study will be released in 2018 as nationally aggregated data.
We will be asking 250 AUB students to complete the study questions. Your individual privacy and confidentiality of the information you provide will be maintained in all published and written data analysis resulting from the study. There are no threats for the anonymity or confidentiality of your results since no direct identifiers will be recorded in the study; no names nor signatures. You will only provide your name and signature on a **separate**list; therefore no one will be able to track your name back to any particular study questions.
All answers are **anonymous** and no one would be able to trace your name to your responses. All data from this study will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the primary investigator (hard copies), or on a password protected computer (soft copies). Only the researchers of this project will have access to the data.
Participation should take approximately 20minutes. Please understand your participation is entirely on a voluntary basis and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without justification or penalty. You have the option to refuse to participate in the study with no penalty or any possible loss of benefits, and your relationship with the American University of Beirut will not be affected in any way. You might feel stressed as a result of reading information presented in the study questions.

The stress you might feel resembles what you experience when you think of a disadvantage that is imposed on your group.
The results of the study will help researchers to better understand students' reactions to their university's upcoming policies. Furthermore, you will receive one extra point on your final PSYC 201 grade.
If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to answer any questions, please feel free to skip those questions.

Although we have described the general nature of the tasks that you will be asked to perform, more information regarding the study will be provided after you complete the study.

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about this research study later, you may contact Carol Abi Ghanem at carol.abi.ghanem@gmail.com
If youare not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about research or your rights as a participant, please contact the AUB Social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional review Board (SBSIRB) at AUB: 01- 350 000 ext. 5445 or irb@aub.edu.lb.

By signing this information sheet, you agree to participate in this research project. The purpose, procedures to be used, as well as, the potential risks and benefits of your participation have been explained to you in detail. You can refuse to participate or withdraw your participation in this study at anytime without penalty and still receive the extra credit. You will be given a copy of this information sheet.

Your Printed Name

_____ _____
Your Signature Today's Date

Printed Name of Research Director

_____ _____
Signature of Research Director Today's Date

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL STAMP:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX B

The Lebanese Center for Education Research

INJUSTICE SCENARIO

The Lebanese Center for Education Research (LCER) is an academic research institute currently conducting a research project with students from various universities in Lebanon to examinetheir attitudes towards IT-related policies at their universities. As you may have already heard, AUB is planning to restrict undergraduate students' access to wifi starting from Spring 2016. Below is a passage extracted from an article I Lebanese Center for Education Research (LCER)Summer 2016 *report, thatdiscusses thenew policy.*
Please read the passage carefully. We areinterested in your thoughts and reactions regarding this policy. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. We care about knowing your genuine opinion. You may omit the questions that you do not want to answer.

"The American University of Beirut plans to implement cuts on The Internet and Network Connection service on campus. The decision comes as the university has been struggling withgrowing financial difficulties over the past few years. President FadloKhoury has been open in his recent public addresses about the budgetary challenges that the new administration is facing. Normally, the campus network is available 24/7, allowing staff, students, alumni and guests to connect to the internet and access the university's many network based resources and services.However, due to the financial costs involved in managing this network and the university's budgetary constraints, the administration has decided to restrict internet access. Importantly, only undergraduate students will be affected by this policy because, according to the administration, students fulfilling their Graduate and Phd requirements require internet access from personal laptops/tablets and mobiles. When interviewed, university board member R. Jalloul said: "*The University is facing major issues in the maintenance of the IT wireless servers and one way to resolve this issue is to restrict wifi access on campus to fewer people. We have therefore decided to keep wifi access to those who need it the most, namely graduate students, faculty members and AUB staff. Note that undergraduates can still benefit from the internet at AUB, but only on AUB computers located in computer labs, or university libraries, or university dorms."*

EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATION

Participants in the control condition will be presented with the following:

Please read carefully the following paragraph that is extracted from the same article.

Mr. Jad Raji in the Office of Student Affairs was contacted to enquire further about the new policy. Raji, who is a top administrator at the Office of Student Affairs, confirmed that the upcoming policy will take place starting next semester and will also be applied to currently registered undergraduates. When asked "How do you expect AUB students' body,

especially undergraduate students, to react to this decision? Are there fears that this plan might lead to the eruption of student protests on campus?" *Raji simply replied that: "the administration respects students' rights to take peaceful collective action on campus".*

Participants in the experimental conditions will be presented with the following (wording in italic represents the experimental manipulation and wording between brackets refers to the severe repression condition):

"Mr. JadRaji in the Office of Student Affairs was contacted to enquire further about the new policy. Raji, who is a top administrator at the Office of Student Affairs, confirmed that the upcoming policy will take place starting next semester and will also be applied to currently registered undergraduates. When asked "How do you expect AUB students' body, especially undergraduate students, to react to this decision? Are there fears that this plan might lead to the eruption of student protests on campus?" *Rajireplied that"AUB is currently in no position to tolerate actions that disrupt the normal flow of life on campus. Students caught engaging in protests and sit-ins will face disciplinary measures that include dean's warnings[suspension from university]."*

It is worth noting that previous administrations at AUB have at times taken disciplinary measures against students engaging in collective action such as protests and sit-ins. For example,in 2012-2013, the administration sanctioned a number of students for engaging in protests and sit-ins against increase in tuition fees. *Some students indeed received dean's warnings. According to the university's student handbook, these are warnings given by the dean in writing. Only two Dean's Warnings are allowed in a student's academic career at AUB.[Some studentswere indeed suspended for one academic term. According to the university's student handbooksuspension forms part of the student's permanent record (and appears on the student's transcript). A student is suspended for a fixed period of time during which the student may not participate in any academic or other activities at the University. At the end of the suspension period, the student may be readmitted to the University, only upon the recommendation of the University Disciplinary Committee]."*

Survey Items

The Lebanese Center for Education Research

[Introduction of injustice scenario]

Please answer the following comprehension question. According to the article you just read, AUB's administration is planning to stop undergraduate students' ability to access AUB Wifi.

- ☐ **True**
- ☐ **False**

Using the scale below, please indicate how important it is to you, personally, to have Wifi access?

1 Not important	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very important

Do you support or oppose the upcoming policy by the AUB administration to restrict undergraduate students' access to Wifi?

Support

Oppose

Using a scale from 1 to 5, please rate your agreement with the following statements by putting an "X" in the appropriate cell.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
The new policy is unjust.					
The new policy is unfair.					
The new policy is justified.					

After reading this excerpt, *Please indicate to which extent the following statements apply to you.*

Note: Student activism refers to students taking collective action typically to promote the welfare and wellbeing of the student body and defend their rights. Student activism takes place in schools, colleges or universities Examples include fighting against tuition fee increases, or for the improvement of educational facilities, or the changes in the educational curriculum or certain educational practices.

Statement	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Slightly Disagree**	**4 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**5 Slightly Agree**	**6 Agree**	**7 Strongly Agree**
I identify with other student activists							
I feel a bond with other student activists							
I have a lot in common with other student activists							
I don't feel connected to other student activists							
Being a student activist is an important part of my identity.							
I am concerned with the welfare of undergraduate AUB students							
I care about the wellbeing of students on campus							

[Introducing manipulation]

Please answer the following comprehension question. According to the article you just read, AUB's administration is planning to punish anyone who engages in protests and sit-ins against the new policy.

- ☐ **True**
- ☐ **False**

How likely do you think it is that the AUB administration will punish students who engage in collective action (e.g. protests, and sit-ins) to oppose the plan of restricting undergraduate students' access to AUB Wifi? Please use the scale below to indicate your answer by putting an "X" in the appropriate case.

1 Not Likely at All	**2 Not Likely**	**3 Neither Likely nor Unlikely**	**4 Likely**	**5 Very Likely**

How likely do you think it is that the AUB administration will punish youif you engaged in collective action (e.g. protests, and sit-ins) to oppose the plan of restricting undergraduate students' access to AUB Wifi? Please use the scale below to indicate your answer by putting an "X" in the appropriate case.

1 Not Likely at All	**2 Not Likely**	**3 Neither Likely nor Unlikely**	**4 Likely**	**5 Very Likely**

Using the scale below, please rate the following statements by putting an "X" in the appropriate case.
When I think of the AUB administration's treatment of students in this situation:

Statement	**1 Not at All**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 A Lot**
I feel angry.					
I feel outraged.					
I feel furious.					

Using the scale below, please rate the following statements by putting an "X" in the appropriate case.

<u>If I participate in collective action against the new policy of restricting undergraduate students' access to wifi…</u>

Statement	**1 Not at All**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 A Lot**
I worry that the AUB administration might punish me.					
I feel afraid that the AUB administration might punish me.					
I feel anxious that the AUB administration might punish me.					

To what extent are you afraid of participating in the following actions to oppose the new policy restricting undergraduate students' access to wifi?

Actions	**1 Not afraid at all**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 Very afraid**
Participate in a protest on campus					
Participate in a sit-in on campus					
Boycott classes (refuse to attend class)					
Sign a petition					
Participate in an off-campus demonstration (e.g. on Bliss Street or the corniche)					
Write an article in Outlook to voice your opinion about the policy					
Block access to administrative offices in college hall					
Other action (Please specify):					

Using the scale below, please rate your agreement the following statements by putting an "X" in the appropriate case.

Statement	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
I think that students can together, through joint effort, stop the AUB administration's plan to restrict undergraduate students' access to wifi					
I think that students can collectively stop the AUB administration's plan to restrict undergraduate students' access to wifi					

Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you think that the following actions will be effective at preventing the AUB administration from implementing its plan of restricting undergraduate students' access to wifi:

Actions	**1 Not effective at all**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 Very effective**
Participate in a protest on campus					
Participate in a sit-in on campus					
Boycott classes (refuse to attend class)					
Sign a petition					
Participate in an off-campus demonstration (e.g. on Bliss Street or the corniche)					
Write an article in Outlook to voice out your opinion about the policy					
Block access to administrative offices in college hall					
Other actions (Please specify):					

Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you are willing to engage in the following actions to oppose the AUB administration's plan of restricting undergraduate students' access to wifi?

Actions	**1 Not willing at all**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 Willing to a great extent**
Participate in a protest on campus					
Participate in a sit-in on campus					
Boycott classes (refuse to attend class)					
Sign a petition					
Participate in an off-campus demonstration (e.g. on Bliss Street or the corniche)					
Write an article in Outlook to voice out your opinion about the policy.					
Block access to administrative offices in college hall					
Other Actions (Please specify):					

Did you engage in any of these activities in the last 12 months? Please answer by Yes or No.

Activity	**Yes**	**No**
Participated in a protest/public gathering for students' rights		
Signed a petition about students' rights		
Posted a link in social media regarding students' rights		
Liked a page on Facebook/social media for students' right		
Blogged about students' rights		
Wrote an article about students' rights		
Are you a member in a students' rights organization/society/club		
Have you ever received a dean's warning during your time at AUB?		
Have you ever received an academic suspension in your academic career?		

Using the scale below, please rate the following statement by putting an (X) in the appropriate case.[5]

Statement	**1 Not severe at all**	**2 Not severe**	**3 Neither severe nor lenient**	**4 Severe**	**5 Very Severe**
How severe of a punishment do you think it would be if the AUB administration would punish students who participate in a protest or sit-in against the new policy with a Dean's warning. This is a written warning that does not go on a student's permanent record.					
How severe of a punishment do you think it would be if the AUB administration would punish students who participate in a protest or sit-in against the new policy with suspension . A suspended student cannot continue his/her studies for a full academic semester.					

[5]In the severe repression condition, participants will be asked to rate the costliness of suspension followed by costliness of a dean's warning. The control condition will be asked to rate the costliness of repression at the end of the questionnaire.

Using the scale below, please rate the following statement by putting an (X) in the appropriate case.

Statement	**1 Not severe at all**	**2 Not severe**	**3 Neither severe nor lenient**	**4 Severe**	**5 Very Severe**
How severe of a punishment would it be if the AUB administration punishedyouforparticipating in a protest, sit-in against the new policy, by giving a Deans warning. This is a written warning that does not go on a student's permanent record.					
How severe of a punishment would it be if the AUB administration punishedyouforparticipating in a protest, sit-in against the new policy, withsuspension. A suspended student cannot continue his/her studies for a full academic semester.					

In the context of a general conflict between students and the administration on some particular administrative policy, please rate how "normative" it would be for students to engage in of each of the following actions.

Actions are **normative** from a students' perspective when they are supported by the majority of students and when they are in line with conventions and rules among students. In contrast, actions are **non-normative** from a students' perspective when they are not supported by the majority of students and when they violate conventions and rules among students.

Actions	**1 Absolutely normative from a student's perspective**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 Absolutely non-normative from a student's perspective**
Participate in a protest on campus					
Participate in a sit-in on campus					
Boycott classes (refuse to attend class)					
Sign a petition					
Participate in an off-campus demonstration (e.g. on Bliss Street or the corniche)					
Write an article in Outlook to voice out your opinion about the policy.					
Block access to administrative offices in college hall					

Age	
Class	
Major	

In the adjacent space, please answer the following question: **what do you think is the purpose of this study?**	

Question	**Yes**	**No**	**Explanation (if answer is yes)**
While reading the passages and answering the questions, did you feel that there was something strange or suspicious? If yes, please explain.			

Are there any words you did NOT understand in the study?

No

Yes

If yes, please specify: _____

How would you rate your proficiency in written English?

1 Very bad	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7 Very good**

APPENDIX C

Debriefing Letter

Background information about the issue being investigated

Since the end of 2010, the Arab world has been witnessing protests against political regimes. Despite their overall nonviolent nature, those protests were met with brutal violence by the authorities in many countries, leading to thousands of casualties, with the aim of deterring further engagement in collective action (e.g. protests, demonstrations, strikes…etc). Paradoxically, however, angry protests sometimes persisted despite the threat of repression or its severity. We know little about the impact of repression threat severity on collective action especially in private institutional sessions. For instance, some studies found that increased cost of repression threat increases collective action, while other found that it decreases collective action.

Real purpose of the study, experimental conditions, and hypothesis

The aims of this research study are to a) experimentally examine the impact of repression threat severity on collective action and b) the psychological processes underlying this impact. To examine our research question, we randomly assigned undergraduate participants to either an experimental or control condition. Participants in both groups were told that AUB's administration is planning on restricting undergraduate students' access to Wifi. In the repression condition, participants were told that AUB's administration will punish students who take part in protests and sit-ins against this plan by either a dean's warning (mild repression condition) or an academic suspension (severe repression condition), while in the no-repression condition students were told that AUB respects students' rights to protest. We predict that the potential impact of repression threat on collective action will differ depending on participants' level of identification as student rights activist, and that this effect also depends on the severity of the repression and type of action repressed.

The rationale behind the necessary use of deception

When you began the study, you were told that certain details will not be disclosed to you so as not to as not to bias your responses. PLEASE NOTE that we left out a few details and provided you with information that **misrepresented** the real purpose of the study. What this means is the study was actually different than what we explained in the beginning. Some studies in psychology involve deception – that is, participants are led to believe the study is about one thing when it is actually about something else. This is one of those studies. Accordingly, please take note of the following:

1) This study is conducted by a Master's student as part of her thesis project, and it is supervised by Dr. Rim Saab in the Psychology department.
2) The true purpose of this study is NOT to explore students' opinions regarding upcoming university policies, but rather to examine the link between repression threat severity and collective action tendencies. All the passages you read in the study were **completely**

FICTITIOUS. There is **NO** plan by AUB's administration to restrict undergraduate students' access to Wifi.

3) There is **NO** research institute "Lebanese Center for Education Research", nor did it publish a report on upcoming AUB policies

4) According to the AUB Student Code of Conduct:

> "*Students have the right to express their opinions on matters of concern to the University in an organized manner and in a public space […], but they must notify and consult with the dean of student affairs before doing so. The nature of the event and any publicity accompanying it must be reviewed by the dean to assure that neither Lebanese law, nor university policies and norms are being violated. […] In cases where student-sponsored events, including protests, sit-ins, and demonstrations are, after such consultation, not approved by the dean of student affairs, or, if needed by the Board of Deans or the president, it may become necessary for the dean of student affairs to undertake disciplinary measures and even to instruct campus protection to bring the public gathering to an end. Disrupting or obstructing the normal educational process or any university function or activity by student demonstrations, sit-ins, or 'strikes' is strictly prohibited."* http://goo.gl/oKMGx8

The necessity for using deception in this study was because we needed participants' behavior and attitudes **to be as natural as possible**. Thus, we could not give participants complete information before their involvement in the study since it may have influenced participants' attitudes in a way that would make investigations of the research question invalid. Simply withholding the real aim of the study may have resulted in responses that depend on each participant's expectations regarding the true aim of the study. As such, it was necessary that all participants receive uniform information ("deception") regarding the true purpose of the study. Therefore, **active deception was NOT intended to embarrass anyone** but to prevent distortion of results and to ensure that the validity of conclusions would not be jeopardized.

The hypothetical situation – AUB's administration plan to restrict undergraduate students' access to Wifi, and to repress (or not) possible protests – was necessary to actively engage our participants, who are AUB students. Experimental researchers strongly recommend using realistic conditions that can engage participants. As such, our proposed hypothetical situation works well as it invites undergraduate students to actively engage in an experiment that may have implications on them. Other less relevant alternatives are likely to create a detached feeling that would offset the research purpose and design ("this does not concern me"; "I do not care about policies in some other or unknown university I have no link to").

The research team apologizes for omitting details and for providing you with fictional information about the purpose of the study. We hope that you understand the need for the use of deception now that the purpose of the study has been more fully explained to you.

Confidentiality issues

Even though this study involved deception, the information given to you previously about confidentiality, data storage, and security still applies. All data collected is confidential and securely stored at all times. No one other than the researchers have access to the data. Raw data on data-recording systems will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the investigator for a period of seven years following the termination of the study, after which it will be shredded.

Furthermore, there is no link between your names and the experimental questionnaires you completed. We took your names during the recruitment phase only to enable us to keep track of students names that need to be compensated with an extra credit or the opportunity to enter into a prize draw for research participation. However, while collecting your responses, we did not ask for any form of personal identifiers (e.g. names, telephone numbers etc…) and thus there is no way to link your name with the experimental questionnaires you completed, especially with a large sample of 200 participants.

Participants' Gained Benefits

Once you showed up to the lab, you have automatically gained an extra grade towards your final PSYC 201 grade if you are enrolled in PSYC 201 this semester.

Contact information of the researchers, Counseling Center and the Office of Research Ethics

If you were upset, disturbed or distressed by participation in this experiment or found out information about yourself that is upsetting, disturbing, or distressing, we encourage you to make contact with the Counseling Center in AUB.

Counseling Center
Location: West Hall 2nd Floor Room 210-210 C
Phone: 01- 350000, ext: 3178

Also, if you have any questions or concerns about this study, you are encouraged to contact the principle investigator and/or the co-investigator. You will be provided with a sheet that contains their contact information before you leave the lab.

Principle Investigator
Dr. Rim Saab
Assistant Professor
Psychology Department
American University of Beirut
rs147@aub.edu.lb
Phone: 01-350000, ext: 4367

Co-Investigator
Carol Abi Ghanem
Graduate Student- MA in progress
Psychology Department
American University of Beirut
Email: cwa03@aub.edu.lb
Phone: 70- 81 49 74

If you have any other questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, or to report any feelings of discomfort, you may contact the Institutional Review Board via the following:

Institutional Review Board **Tel:** 00961 1 374374, ext: 5445
American University of Beirut **Fax:** 00961 1 374374, ext: 5444
PO BOX: 11-0236 F15 **Email:** irb@aub.edu.lb
Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020
Lebanon

Because there are still other students that will participate in this study, please don't tell anyone about the deception used in this study. If other students found about what we are really studying and then came to participate in our experiment, we wouldn't be able to trust the results of the experiment because their responses could be biased.

APPENDIX D

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare scores on action normativity among participants in the control condition ($N = 61$). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for action normativity among participants in the control condition

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Protest on campus	1.72	.90	61
sit-in on campus	1.81	.99	61
Boycott classes	2.80	1.18	61
Sign a petition	1.36	.98	61
Off-Campus protest	2.72	1.23	61
Write an article	1.97	1.03	61
Block access to administrative offices	3.33	1.26	61

The actions differed significantly according to type of action, Wilk's Lambda = .40, $F(6,55) = 13.62$, $p<.0005$, multivariate partial eta square = .60

The normativity of each action was measured by asking participants to rate from student's perspective how normative each of the seven proposed actions is. We initially predicted protests, sit-ins, signing petitions, writing an article and off-campus protests and normative actions, whereas boycotting classes and blocking access to administrative offices were predicted as non-normative actions

An examination of the pairwise comparisons reveals that signing petitions was rated significantly more normative than the other actions, whereas blocking access to administrative offices was rated as the most non-normative actions from a student's perspective. Protests and sit-ins were significantly more normative than the other actions except writing an article. Boycotting classes was significantly more nonnormative than the other normative actions for off-campus protests.

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