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UNITING AND FRAMING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE MUSLIM

BROTHERHOOD IN REVOLUTIONARY EGYPT

Twenty thousand protesters met in Cairo's Tahrir Square in the spring of 2011 to articulate, among other grievances, dissatisfaction with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and to call for his resignation. The movement, which came to be known as the Lotus Revolution, swelled to over a million participants. The protested ended seventeen days later when Mubarak resigned from office.

A few weeks later, on 8 March 2011, a few hundred women and men heeded the call from international NGOs to meet in Tahrir Square and demand a constitutional amendment to permit female presidential candidates. The protest, called the Million Women March (the "March"), ended abruptly within a few hours and no positive changes with respect to women of any kind were, or have been, made to the constitution.

What explains variation in protest outcomes, particularly in conservative societies dominated by religious institutions? This essay will explore the theoretical scholarship on movement outcomes and two explanatory variables—interest alignment and religious institutions. The essay argues that the alignment of diverse interests within movements is a universally important factor in social movement success; however, in conservative societies, religious institutions play a determinative role in alignment and, ultimately, in social movement success.

This essay complements the scholarship on the influence of religious institutions on both interest alignment and movement outcome, research which is critical to understanding the power politics of social movements in conservative countries. Religious institutions, as this essay argues, construct the nature, objectives, supporters and opponents of protests. As such, this study is important for social movement analysts, who, in their efforts to make legitimate predictions and policy recommendations, require a solid understanding of movement power politics.

A note on the use of the word *conservative*: This essay will draw upon the definition of conservative provided in Moghadam's work on women and family in the Middle East. She defines a conservative society as one in which individuals are "integrated into a moral community, bound together by faith, by common moral values, and by obeying the dictates of the family and religion." Within conservative societies, Moghadam adds, spiritual leaders are the decision-makers in both the home and the community (2004, 138).

The next section features a summary of the literature on social movements, beginning with the work on movement outcomes and ending with the scholarship on explanations for social movement success. After a summary of the cases for structured comparison—the Lotus Revolution and the Million Women March—the methodology section appears and is followed by observations, analysis and conclusions.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Theoretical explanations for social movement success are significantly outnumbered by analyses of how and why social movements emerge (Peterson 1989, 419). Strikingly absent is the question: How do social movements succeed in obtaining their stated objective? Giugni

(1998) explicitly states what is assumed by most social movement scholars: that large, united, and well-organized movements with a single-issue focus are more likely to succeed than small, poorly organized movements. This assumption, as Giugni notes, is backed by empirical evidence (1998, 375). Are the causal factors so obvious that no further scholarship on theoretical explanations for social movement success is necessary?

No. The current explanation—that social movement success occurs when they are large and unified—is insufficient; it is void of a theoretical base and, as such, does not explain *why* well-attended, un-factionalized social movements are likely to succeed in theory.

This paper first seeks to theoretically ground the common assumption that large, unified social movements tend to succeed by using resource mobilization theory (RMT) to pinpoint a more precise and rich explanation for social movement success. The paper then employs framing theory to explore another explanation for social movement success in a particular context—conservative societies.

Resource Mobilization Theory   RMT is a useful theoretical base for understanding successful social movement outcomes. RMT explains social movement outcomes in economic terms (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1213); political gains, like financial gains, are dependent on the efficiency of the social movement. Social movements become more efficient as they unify diverse participants' voices.[1]   Thus, social movements work to align participants' interests in order to become efficient and maximize results (Goldstone 2011, 8; McCarthy and Zald 1977,

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[1] RMT scholarship emphasizes the importance of diversity in social movements (Levitsky 2007). Successful movements require broad-based sections of populations that span ethnic and religious groups and socioeconomic classes (Goldstone 2011, 8). These diverse participants make rational choices to align their interests to maximize success, often putting on hold their work on secondary objectives (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1217-26).

1216-7). RMT demonstrates that rational alignment of interests, both by movement recruiters and recruits, is therefore an important explanation for social movement success.

RMT contrasts with other prevailing social movement theories that explain interest unification in psychological terms. Psychological approaches assume that social movement participants mobilize and align their interests in a rush of frustrated emotions (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1212; Peterson 1989, 419; Snow, Worden and Benford 1986, 466).

Frustration with perceived social problems may mobilize large numbers of individuals but it cannot unify their interests. For that, rational tactics are necessary. Indeed, movement organizers often define, create, and manipulate participants' grievances in order to align their interests (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1215). Psychological social movement theory is not as useful as RMT in explaining the level of participant organization and purposeful interest alignment necessary for social movements to effect significant policy change.

RMT scholars acknowledge that individual movement participants make rational decisions to align their individual interests with that of primary movement goals; however, RMT scholarship is also particularly interested in the efforts of cultural institutions to unify participants' diverse and often divergent interests as well as in creating overall movement goals (Goldstone 2011; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Melucci, Keane and Mier 1989; Morris 2000). Cultural institutions may include informal networks, pre-existing structures, and formal organizations.

Framing Theory   RMT explains *why* individuals, organizations and institutions in social movements align their interests—to maximize success through rational choices—but fails to fully explore *how* alignment occurs. For scholars Snow, Worden and Benford, the "how" of

successful unification of diverse interests is explained by framing processes (1986, 467). In other words, framing theory offers a solution to a perceived gap in RMT by explaining tactics employed, particularly by cultural institutions, to unify interests within social movements.

The framing processes in social movements involve the deliberate drawing on established collective identities and shaping new ones; defining problems, causes and solutions; passing moral judgment; and establishing enemies (Hamdy and Gomaa 2012, 197; Tarrow 1998, 21-2). For framing theorists, institutions work to frame the values and beliefs of individuals and organizations in social movements so that all participants' goals coalesce. To this end, social movement framers adjust the collective framework by adding or deleting objectives so as to encompass and align the largest and most diverse number of adherents (Snow, Worden and Benford 1986, 464, 472). Framing theorists emphasize that individuals and organizations may indeed make rational decisions in social movements but *it is the institutions that control individuals' perceptions of their options through framing tactics* (Hamdy and Gomaa 2012, 196-7).

Framing theorists stress the centrality of cultural institutions in interest framing and alignment. In conservative societies, religious institutions enjoy the cultural power and organizational resources necessary for interest framing and unification (Morris 2000, 447). Morris identifies the African-American Church in the American Civil Rights Movement as a religious institution largely responsible for framing and aligning movement participants' goals. The Church, using its communications networks, organized congregations, and financial resources, promoted its own cultural norm—"equality for all under God"—as the collective goal of the civil rights movement (Morris 2000, 447-8; Tarrow 1998, 128-30). This case

demonstrates how cultural institutions play a significant role in the success of social movements in conservative societies by aligning participants' interests through framing processes.

Thus far, this essay has examined how RMT and framing theory explain the theoretical relationship between social movement success, interest alignment, and religious institutions. To illustrate this argument, this essay compares two movements in revolutionary Egypt: the Lotus Revolution (25 January-11 February) and the Million Women March (8 March 2011). The next section provides a brief context for the movements and is followed by sections detailing the research methods, observations and analysis.

BACKGROUND

In the wake of the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia, demonstrations organized for 25 January 2011 in Cairo's Tahrir Square by civil society and opposition groups unexpectedly drew over 20,000 participants.[2] Protest organizers called for a "Day of Rage" on 28 January. In the following days, over a million Egyptians flocked to Tahrir Square. Assembled protesters, in response to Mubarak's announcement that he would not run again for office at the end of his term, demanded his immediate resignation. Pro-Mubarak supporters engaged the protesters in violent clashes but the Lotus Revolution continued without interruption. On 10 February, seventeen days after the protest began, the Egyptian military announced that Mubarak had resigned (Al Jazeera 2011; Dalacoura 2012, 64-5).

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[2] The period prior to the social movements of 2011 in Egypt was marked by political corruption and cronyism, widespread poverty amid increasingly extravagant wealth, unrelieved build-up of tension in the form of strikes and protests, and violent state retribution affecting many thousands of Egyptians (Goldstone 2011, 12; Joya 2011, 368-374). In response, groups representing various social and political interests began increasingly to communicate and cooperate with each other. Demonstrations increased dramatically; human rights groups estimated that around 300 demonstrations, protests, sit-ins and strikes occurred during 2008-2010 (Joya 2011, 369, 374).

Less than one month later, on 8 March 2011, women's interest groups and UN agencies staged a 'Million Woman March' near Tahrir Square in celebration of International Women's Day. The organizing groups announced that the protest was a call for a new constitution allowing women the right to run for president (Davies 2011). The much-reduced group (a few hundred women and men) faced harassment and several incidents of sexual assault (Amar 2011). After several hours the Egyptian military arrived, rounded up many of the demonstrators, and subjected some of the female protesters to virginity tests (Coleman 2011). The remaining marchers left in sadness, shock and fear (Ibrahim 2011).

The two movements described above share similar origins and involved many of the same interest groups. The successful Lotus Revolution outcome—resignation of Hosni Mubarak—contrasts sharply, however, to the abrupt and unsuccessful outcome of the Million Woman March. What variables explain the variation between the outcomes of the two movements? The next section describes the methods for observing the impact of two variables— interest alignment and religious institutions—on social movement success in the case of protests in revolutionary Egypt. The Methodology section is followed by observations gathered on the variables.

METHODOLOGY

Dependent Variable: Social Movement Success

Social movement success is defined as significant policy change as demanded by the protesting group.[3] Halebsky (2006, 443) classifies a range of outcomes with definitions to measure variation in the variable:

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[3] Gamson (1990) and Gurr (1980) define movement success in terms of significant policy change.

1. Complete success (the movement's primary goal is realized)
2. Partial success (the movement's secondary goal(s) is/are realized)
3. Failure (the movement's goals are not realized)

Independent Variable 1: Interest Alignment

Interest alignment is measured by the number of different interest groups who make the same statement to the Western press about movement objectives as a percentage of the total number of statements made by distinct interest groups.[45] Variation in alignment will be classified in a manner similar to the dependent variable:

1. Complete alignment (100 percent of statements corroborate)
2. Partial alignment (60 percent of the statements corroborate)
3. Little or no alignment (20 percent or fewer statements corroborate)

Independent Variable 2: Religious Institutions

This study assumes that in conservative societies, religious institutions are critical to diverse interest alignment and, thereby, social movement success.[6] Thus, the impact of religious institutions on the other variables is simply measured by religious institutions' presence, or absence, as participants in social movements.[7]

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[4] This study uses Western media reports because Hamdy and Gomaa (2012, 198-9) evaluate many local media sources as unreliable. However, it must be noted that the exclusion of Arabic language and local media sources may create a selection bias.

[5] A selection bias is inherent in this operational definition of interest alignment. Not all participating groups were specifically quoted by the Western media. Unquoted group objectives are unknown and therefore are not considered in the percentage measuring interest alignment.

[6] This assumption is based on the theories discussed in the literature review that 1) religious institutions are best equipped, out of all other organizations, with cultural and organizational resources (Morris 2000, 447) and 2) religious institutions will use social movements to achieve their own particular goals (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1216-7).

[7] The term "participants" in this essay refers to anyone involved in social movements in a non-antagonistic role.

OBSERVATIONS

Success　　　　The general consensus, according to academic and journalistic accounts, is that the primary goal of the Lotus Revolution was the resignation of Hosni Mubarak. The primary goal of the Million Woman March was a constitutional change allowing for a female to run for president (Dalacoura 2012, 64; Davies 2011).

Were these goals realized, rendering the social movements a success? Table 1 summarizes the movements' primary goals, policy changes, and success evaluation. The Lotus Revolution concluded with Hosni Mubarak resigning from office on 11 February 2011, and in the following weeks a referendum approving a constitutional amendment restricting term limits was approved by referendum (Al Jazeera 2011; Dalacoura 2012, 65). According to Halebsky's (2006, 443) classification, the movement was a "complete success."

The Million Woman March was not followed by a significant policy change. Egypt's constitution was not ammended to allow for female presidential candidates. No Egyptian governing body since the March has made any positive significant policy changes with respect to women; rather, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces began its post-Mubarak rule by eliminating the quotas for female candidates previously mandated for political parties (Coleman 2011, 222). According to Halebsky's classification, the Million Woman March was a failure.

Table 1. Dependent Variable (Movement Success) Observations

Movement	Goal	Policy Change	Movement Outcome
Lotus Revolution	Resignation of Hosni Mubarak	Ouster of Hosni Mubarak	Complete success
Million Women March	Constitutional amendment	No positive change	Failure

Alignment   Interest alignment is measured first by taking the number of statements, made to the Western press by different interest groups, that align with the primary movement objective and then comparing that number to the total number of groups who declared any objective at all.[8] In the case of the Lotus Revolution, observations were collected from throughout the period of the protest: 25 January-11 February 2011. For the Million Women March, observations were collected from the sole day of the protest: 8 March 2011.[9]

Table 2. Independent Variable (Interest Alignment) Observations for the Lotus Revolution

Interest group	*Declarations of an objective that align with the primary objective of the movement (the resignation of Mubarak)**	*Declarations of other objectives unaligned with the primary objective of the movement*	*Aligned objectives declarations as a % of total declarations*
Leftists	X		
Muslim Brotherhood	X		
Women	X		
Christians	X		
Groups total: 4	**Aligned objectives total: 4**	**Unaligned objectives total: 0**	**100%**

*Sources: Al Jazeera 2011; Al-Ali 2012; Al-Shalchi 2011; Dalacoura 2012; Goldstone 2011; Hamdy and Gomaa 2012; Joya 2011.

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[8] Distinct interest groups were designated either by self-identification by the group itself ("as Christians we stand with…") or by the media source ("leftists, headed by Mohamed ElBaradei, pledge their support…").

[9] This essay is a research design. A complete study on the relationship between social movement success, interest alignment, and religious institutions would involve a thorough and systematic scan of Western news sources to obtain a significantly higher number of observations.

Table 3. Independent Variable (Interest Alignment) Observations for the Million Woman March

Interest Group	Declarations of an objective that align with the primary objective of the movement (Constitutional Amendment)*	Declarations of other objectives unaligned with the primary objective of the movement	Aligned objectives declarations as a % of total declarations
Liberal/Leftist Women	X		
Conservative Women	X		
Liberal/Leftist Men	X		
Christians	X		
Groups total: 4	**Aligned objectives total: 4**	**Unaligned objectives total 0**	**100%**

*Sources: Al-Ali 2012; Al-Shalchi 2011; Amar 2011; Coleman 2011; Ibrahim 2011.

In sum, the intersts of diverse participating groups were identified by declarations made to the Western media. The number of declarations that aligned with the primary movement objectives were compared to the total number of declarations. In the case of both the Lotus Revolution and the Million Woman March, the stated interests of the diverse participating groups aligned 100 percent with the stated objectives of the two movements. According to the alignment variation measure indicated above in the Methodology section, a result of 100 percent indicates that the various participating groups in both movements completely aligned their diverse objectives with the main movement goals.

Institutions   The impact of religious institutions is measured by religious institutions' presence or absence as participants in social movements. In the case of the Lotus Revolution, media reports document the presence of a powerful religious institution—the Muslim Brotherhood (Dalacoura 2012; Goldstone 2011; Joya 2011). In the case of the Million Woman

March, media reports document the absence of the Muslim Brotherhood among the movement participants (Al-Ali 2012; Al-Shalchi 2011; Amar 2011; Coleman 2011; Ibrahim 2011).

The media record indicates that the Muslim Brotherhood was absent from among the Million Women March participants but that it was present in the form of an opponent. Million Women March protesters were faced by men, many in Islamic dress and carrying Qur'ans, shouting that the Marchers were taking attention away from the main issues and that "the people want women to step down" (Al-Ali 2012, 29; Ibrahim 2011). Angry men labeled the women's demand for a constitutional amendment as "not urgent" and as "against Islam" (Al-Shalchi 2011; Coleman 2011, 219). Opponents framed male Marchers as "queers" or homosexuals (Davies 2011).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Observations of the Lotus Revolution corroborate with RMT scholars' explanations for social movement success in terms of interest alignment. Western media sources record that leftists, Islamists, Christians, and women participated prominently in the protest and that each of these widely diverse interest groups stated its goal in terms of the primary objective of the protest: the resignation of Hosni Mubarak. The movement, despite opposition from Egyptian police and pro-Mubarak protesters, gained in strength and culminated in the ouster of Mubarak.

Observations of the Million Women March appear to contradict RMT scholarship on interest alignment. Despite the documented unified declarations of the Muslim male, female, and Christian participants, the movement fizzled within a few hours and failed to achieve its primary objective: a constitutional amendment allowing for female presidential candidates. What, then, can account for the varied outcomes of these two seemingly similar movements?

Framing theory reveals the missing link to be religious institutions. Framing scholars theorize that religious institutions' organizational and framing tactics are critical to social movement success in conservative societies.

The corollary is that religious institutions also explain movement failure in conservative societies. When religious institutions elect not to employ their cultural and organizational resources to mobilize and align participants, social movements suffer. When religious institutions, acting as movement opponents, frame protests' objectives as unaligned, or devient from public interests, movements fail.

Observations from the Lotus Revolution and the Million Women March substantiate the theory that social movement success is a factor of interest alignment and, in conservative societies, the participation of religious institutions. As has been noted above, the media record reflects interest alignment among participants in both of the protests. The media also record a substantial presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Lotus Revolution and its absence among the participants of the Million Women March. The media further documents both the presense of the Muslim Brotherhood as March opponents and the Brotherhood's anti-March framing tactics. These observations confirm that interest alignment is an important explanatory factor of social movement success but that, in conservative soceieties, participation of religious insitutions is the critical factor.

Greater research is needed to explore the causal relationship between religious institutions and social movement success in conservative societies. Understanding the role of powerful cultural influences within social movements is particularly critical to gendered analyses of past and future protests. Further case studies revealing how and why religious institutions

frame social movements would complement scholarship exploring how women can effectively work within existing cultural norms and power structures in conservative societies to successfully achieve policy changes through social movements.

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