

Advancing Freedom of Religion in the MENA: Insights from Successful Social Movements

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Over the past few decades, several social movements have fundamentally altered social attitudes and government policy in the United States, Europe, and around the world. Civil rights, Feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, and the environmental movement are among the New Movements¹ that transformed attitudes and laws in western countries and globally. The Color Revolutions in Ukraine, Serbia, and many other countries altered political regimes and, in some cases, overthrew authoritarian governments.

This report explores the strategies and tactics used by successful social movements and identifies the potential lessons they offer for the nascent movement for religious freedom in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).² The report addresses two questions in particular:

- 1) What did successful social movements do that is similar to bring about change in laws and attitudes?
- 2) To what extent can these strategies be applied to supporting religious freedom in the MENA region?

Although the New Movements (e.g., Feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, and the environmental movement) and the Color Revolutions emerged in different eras and socio-political contexts, the strategies and tactics they engage offer insights for movements across issue areas and regional contexts. Understanding what a social movement is and how individuals work together to change attitudes and laws is a helpful place to begin.

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¹ The term new social movements (NSMs) is a theory of social movements that explains the emergence of movements in western societies since the 1960s. Pichardo, Nelson, A. "New Social Movements: A Critical Review." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, no. 1 (1997): 411-30.

² Strategies are the plans one intends to undertake to reach their goal while tactics are the individual steps to advance those strategies.

An exploration of successful movements should encourage the reader that change is possible. While not inevitable, attitudinal and legal changes can occur as a result of sustained, peaceful campaigns, especially when the movement attracts a large number of adherents (that is, “People Power”) and uses create campaign tactics and strategic actions to shape legal and political institutions. Social, legal, and other forms of opposition to human rights have always been fierce, especially when powerful interests are challenged, as is the case for the struggle for religious freedom and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

This report proceeds as follows. First, I define social movements and highlight broader lessons about why they emerge and are more likely to succeed. Second, I discuss in detail the specific strategies used by the feminist, LGBTQ+, and climate change movements and highlight a few key points about several other movements’ strategies, including the Color Revolutions. Finally, I summarize some of the strategies used by women’s rights, LGBTQ+, and religious tolerance movements in the MENA region have taken toward achieving greater respect for human rights in the region.

Overview of Social Movements, Strategies and Actions

A social movement is a loosely organized effort by individuals and organizations with a shared collective identity who struggle to achieve a social or political goal, such as changing laws and social attitudes.³ At least two types of movements are discussed in the literature. The first type, of which Feminism, the gay rights movement, the anti-war movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the environmental movement are examples, are referred to as The New Social Movements.⁴ These movements began in Britain and later the US after the Second World War.

The second group of movements, which emerged in authoritarian regimes, is The Color Revolutions. The Color Revolutions are pro-democracy movements in several countries of Asia, the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, and the MENA that demanded and, in some cases, achieved regime change or democratization or advocated for respect for human rights.

The Emergence of a Movement

Smelser writes that social movements begin with an initiating event that galvanizes supporters and reinforces a common identity to work toward a social or political goal.⁵ After a grassroots movement emerges, it becomes organized, entering a phase of bureaucratization, in which organizations and chapters emerge. Importantly, however, there may be a spark that touches off protests, but demonstrations are often preceded by civil society organizing in the preceding years.

Social movements identify a goal and select from a vast set of strategies and tactics to reach that goal. Briefly, strategies are the plans one intends to undertake to reach their goal while tactics are the individual steps that are needed to implement the strategies. Social movements craft campaigns, which are sustained, organized public efforts through which the movement’s members make collective claims of target authorities. Tilly referred to the set of actions

³ Scott, John, Ed. 2015. *A Dictionary of Sociology* (4th Edition). Oxford University Press.

⁴ Pichardo, Nelson, A. "New Social Movements: A Critical Review." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, no. 1 (1997): 411-30.

⁵ Smelser, Neil J. *Theory of Collective Behavior*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962.

movements takes to ask for change as “repertoires of contention.”⁶ These may include the creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, marches, petition drives, statements, pamphlets, podcasts selection of symbols, colors, and branding, recruitment of celebrities and influencers, media campaigns, and many more.⁷

To be successful, movements must leverage people power and engage in sustained, non-violent action. According to Tilly (2004), social movements draw on people power to demonstrate worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments (i.e., WUNC displays). Humorous placards and other creative ways to connect with the population attract potential participants and develop positive public attitudes toward the cause. Effective slogans and symbols also reference irrefutable ideas (e.g., Love is Love) and positive, unifying symbols (e.g., Pink, rainbows) that adherents and allies want to identify with. Movements make strategic choices, but they have different options, based on the financial and political resources available to them.

Issue Framing

An important aspect of demonstrating worthiness is issue framing. For example, in the area of reproductive rights, pro-choice is one framing, while the right to live is a competing framing.

Some theorists argue that for social movements to successfully mobilize individuals, they must develop an injustice frame (i.e., the framing perspective), appealing implicitly or explicitly to moral principles.⁸ Human rights, justice, and equality are increasingly relevant frames, particularly as they relate to religious freedom, which draws its legitimacy from the International Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18). However, religious freedom has received less attention from international organizations than gender and other forms of equality or youth, which are pillars of international development policy. Equality is a powerful frame that has been applied to gender and racial equality, particularly after the murder of George Floyd, and to recent efforts to change the Democratic party platform toward Israel by applying an injustice frame to its occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

Successful reframing involves the ability to enter into the worldview of adversaries—in essence, to use language that one’s opponents will identify with and already believe is important. An example is framing the Israeli occupation as Apartheid as a means of attracting support from

⁶ Tilly, Charles. *Social Movements, 1768-2004*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004.

⁷ Other tactics include movies and short films, boycotts, humorous, witty, or thought-provoking placards and posters, YouTube videos, social media including Tiktok and Twitter, home discussion groups, creative demonstration techniques that attract media attention, civil disobedience, art and music, talk shows appearances, activist training, support from private funds and foundations, research studies, parades, award events, national days for “freedom of conscience,” books, summits, declarations and constitutions, town hall debates, case studies, meaningful stories, website with social media presence, mobilization of youth, coalition-building with like-minded groups and organizations, political strategies, legislation, influence in education systems, lawsuits, leveraging international norms and institutions, litigation, government lobbying, organization of clubs and chapters, using advocates in positions of power and influence, and engaging with scholars.

⁸ Ryan, Charlotte, and Gamson, William A. “The Art of Reframing Political Debates.” *Contexts* 5, no. 1 (2006): 13-18.

a wide variety of people who oppose colonialism and institutional racism. The LGBTQ+ slogan, “Love is Love,” is another example of successful framing.

International and Transnational Linkages

A crucial strategy of domestic social movements is to leverage international institutions, law, and norms such as the International Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18), to encourage or pressure states to change their laws. Developing and authoritarian countries that are dependent on international aid or alliances with western countries are particularly susceptible to pressure.

This has been done successfully around women’s rights. For example, in Morocco, domestic women’s groups leveraged Morocco’s ascension (with reservations) to Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to pressure the Moroccan government to reform the personal status code in 2003. King Mohammed VI was motivated by regime survival. He believed that women’s rights reform would respond to the demands of domestic women’s rights coalitions, improve Morocco’s economy and reputation abroad, and sideline hardline Islamist groups at home in the wake of terrorist attacks in Morocco in 2003.⁹

Similar efforts by domestic groups can be made to advance religious freedom in the MENA and other regions by leveraging international law (e.g., Article 18); however, the success of these movements relies on strategically raising the profile of Article 18 within the UN’s and other organizations’ diversity agenda. This can only be done through a movement of people working together toward a common goal—in this case, for global respect for the human right of freedom of religion.

Key Social Movements

The women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental movements used similar strategies, broadly defined, although with differing levels of resources. All three movements stage demonstrations, lobby governments, influence media organizations, create associations, shape the education system, and use the courts to challenge discriminatory laws.

Feminism and Reproductive Rights

The women’s liberation movement emerged from the civil rights, anti-war movement, and other youth-based movements of the 1960s. While many of the practices opposed by the women’s liberation movement, such as sex-based employment discrimination (e.g., male-only jobs), may seem unbelievable by modern standards, there was at the time substantial opposition to breaking down traditional gender roles. Women had few options for a career and could not decide to not have a child once married. Women feared pregnancy, due to the lack of birth control. Victims of rape or battery were not believed, or in some cases blamed for their assault. For activists, many of these demands were regarded as still under attack even before the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

⁹ Waltz, Susan, and Benstead, Lindsay. 2006. “When the Time is Ripe: The Struggle to Protect and Promote Human Rights in Morocco.” In *Human Rights in the Arab World: Independent Voices*, pp. 174-195. Pennsylvania University Press.

Several strategies and tactics stand out as important in the success of the feminist movement. First, since approximately half of the population is female, there was a large supply of potential members to join the movement. Second, the movement's method of grassroots organizing included home and discussion groups in which women discussed the challenges they faced in order to raise consciousness and increase the number of adherents. Third, the movement used creative demonstration techniques that attracted media attention to their cause. Finally, the movement used litigation and government lobbying to shape laws.

Big philanthropy and Big business do not support the Feminist movement to the extent that they do the LGBTQ+ movement, but financial backing plays a role in funding abortion and litigation to strike down discriminatory laws related to employment and reproductive rights.

Consciousness Raising

The civil rights movement created momentum for the women's rights movement. Some women, for instance, worked as canvassers who went door to door to register people to vote. These early women's organizers created grassroots clubs to share their experiences and problems, such as employment discrimination and lack of access to birth control, and quickly developed into demonstrations and creative activities.

The basic unit of women's organizing was the small group. Women's liberation groups sprung up spontaneously in different parts of the country. Groups discussed issues that women face, such as discrimination. They developed a consciousness through which they began to conceptualize the problem as a societal problem, not a personal problem.

Raising Public Awareness

The movement expanded into more demonstrations, marked by creative slogans and tactics that attracted attention. For example, they demonstrated in Washington, DC, including the Congress, wearing witches' hats, and at the University of Chicago for childcare and to create history classes about women's history.

Women also engaged in provocative actions like burning bras outside the Miss America pageant and, for the first time, dropped a banner reading "Women's Liberation" from the balcony at the Miss America pageant. They held an "Ogle-In" on Wall Street to draw attention to sexual harassment. They went to male-only clubs to try to get them to change and demonstrated in classrooms against sexist professors. They created a school to teach women about women's history, abortion, and automotive maintenance. They held a national women's strike and dropped a Women of the World Unite from the Statue of Liberty.

Bureaucratization

In 1966, the women's movement developed an organizational structure by establishing chapters. They offered classes on sexuality and published the book, *Our Bodies Ourselves*. The movement expanded its use of the media to explain its demands and perspectives. They used talk shows, art, and music, which helped to support a general shift in the culture.

Women also engaged in civil disobedience and legal challenges to abortion and gender inequality. When illegal abortion and self-abortion were common, the issue unified the movement, and women participated in expanding access to illegal abortion. At the time, birth control was illegal in Massachusetts. Women seeking abortions contacted “Janes,” (the Janes Collective), who learned how to perform illegal abortions. Reproductive rights were a key reason that women in this movement fought to uphold their vision of the separation of church and state.

Allies

Not only did the movement recognize its internal race and class diversity, but it also drew on husbands, fathers, and other men as allies. Some efforts were unsuccessful, including a childcare system, which was vetoed by Nixon on the grounds that it was a “Soviet” system.

Funding of the Feminist and Reproductive Rights Movements

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest feminist grassroots association in the US. Its core areas of focus include: (1) reproductive rights and justice, (2) ending violence against women, (3) economic justice, (4) LGBT rights, (5) racial justice, and (6) constitutional equality for women. Among its activities are training activists to lobby the government for change.¹⁰ NOW is funded by membership dues, foundation grants, and individual donations.

Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of reproductive services, including abortion in the US. In 2014 it saw 2.5 million patients and provided 324,000 abortions. Its 1.3 billion in revenue includes approximately \$530 million in government funding, including Medicaid.¹¹

However, because the Hyde Amendment bans federal funding for abortion, except in rare cases, Planned Parenthood withdrew from Title X funding in 2019 and uses private funds for abortion. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Buffett Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Turner Foundation, the Cullmans, and CREDO Mobile are among Planned Parenthood’s present or past funders, although the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation does not fund abortion.

Learnings from the Women’s Movement

The women’s movement illustrates the importance of building people power through consciousness-raising and identifying possible allies to join the movement. The home group method of consciousness-raising used by the early feminist movement may not be appropriate for many MENA settings in which there is weak protection for freedom of speech and association. However, there may be other ways to bring people together to discuss freedom of religion that leads citizens to understand that the challenges they face reflect societal, not only personal problems. External funding can be particularly helpful for establishing associations that

¹⁰ “Lobbying Tips for NOW Activists,” <https://now.org/resource/lobbying-tips-for-now-activists/> (accessed August 15, 2021).

¹¹ Planned Parenthood Annual Report, https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/6714/1996/2641/2013-2014_Annual_Report_FINAL_WEB_VERSION.pdf

support people in the movement to undertake different types of creative actions that they believe will be effective within a given cultural context.

LGBTQ+ Rights and the Redefinition of Marriage

The gay rights movement was the forerunner to the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Early groups such as the Gay Liberation Front wrote pamphlets raising sexual minorities' concerns. The movement argued that women's emotional and sexual needs should be as important as those of men.

While some strategies mirror earlier New Movements, including Feminism, there are distinctive elements as well. The LGBTQ+ movement stands out as having substantial financial backing from Big Business and Big Philanthropy, which have compounded the efforts of activists to achieve substantial social and legal change. The LGBTQ+ movement has been particularly effective at branding and framing by leveraging a symbol (the rainbow) and slogan (Love is Love). (Image 1). The World Pride event also draws tourism to the localities that host it. The movement's framing has been so effective that it has been utilized in corporate and even nation-branding strategies, a practice criticized as "pinkwashing" (i.e., when companies and countries support gay pride as a way of improving their brand image).



Image 1. A symbol and slogan used by the LGBTQ+ movement.

Early Development

The queer rights movement began a street protest against the law prohibiting the serving of alcohol to known homosexuals or wearing clothing associated with the opposite gender. The Stonewall raid in 1969 against those serving alcohol to homosexuals resulted in the arrest of many citizens for disorderly conduct. Being gay was still illegal in every state except Illinois.

The movement has profoundly shaped society. For instance, November is transgender awareness week, illustrating the impact that this movement has had on public life. Marsha P. Johnson, a transgender black woman, is credited with starting the uprising that started the modern gay rights movement and putting the "T" in the LGBTQ+ movement.

The AIDS crisis played a crucial role in gay rights organizing. The movement fought against the government's slow response to gay-related immune deficiency (GRID)—the early name for the disease that later became known as AIDS. Groups that were founded as a result include Act Up, the Gay Men's Health Crisis, the Lesbian AIDS project, and The Names Project.

A key source of opposition to the gay rights movement related to the government's fears of the Soviet Union. In what is known as the Lavender Scare, President Eisenhower fired all homosexual people from the administration, citing concerns that gay and lesbian people could be

blackmailed. Although there were no examples of people who had betrayed the government due to blackmail, Eisenhower purged the government of these employees. Some quietly resigned.

The Second World War also provided an opportunity for gay citizens to meet one another, due to sex segregation in the armed services. And in 1948, the controversial (and since debunked) Kinsey report estimated that 37% of men had had a homosexual experience.

One federal employee victimized by Nixon's policy, Frank Kameny, was the Grandfather of the modern gay rights movement. An astronomer expelled from the US Army's Army Map Service in Washington, DC, Kameny brought the first civil rights case based on homosexuality to court in the 1960s. Though unsuccessful, this effort was followed by more cases. The first case to go to the Supreme court case—and one that was successful—was an Estate tax case. Edith Windsor paid \$365,000 that she would not have had to pay if she was married to a man.

Organizations

Among the first organizations to be founded out of the protests against Stonewall and other raids, including the Bathhouse raids in Canada and the riots against police brutality, was the Gay Liberation Front. Others included Gays and Lesbians Against the Right Everywhere (GLARE) and Lesbians against the Right.

Demonstrations

Protests began in 1981 and have continued since then in the form of World Pride. The world pride parade came to the US for the first time in 2000.¹² World Pride has attracted substantial funding from corporations and governments who have often used it as a means of virtue signaling and to seek tourism. This has led to concerns from within the movement about the corporatization of pride.

Pride is a registered trademark, prompting the community to worry that they have lost control of their movement. For example, by welcoming LGBTQ+ people to visit the country, Israel has been accused of a PR stunt to deflect attention from its occupation of the Palestinian Territories. In response, activists distributed condoms at World Pride with a message reading, "Why Israel is an apartheid state." Tel Aviv hosts one of the world's largest pride parades.¹³

Education System

Organizations such as the ARCUS Foundation support educational programs in schools. GLSEN,¹⁴ an organization that seeks to ensure that all students encounter an LGBTQ+-inclusive K-12 education, whose founder was brought to Arcus in 2012 by its board of directors, has influenced K-12 school curricula in some school systems.

¹² Chisholm, Kami, Wei, Lulu, Spence, Johnny, Media Education Foundation, Production Company, and Kanopy, Distributor. *Pride Denied: Homonationalism & the Future of Queer Politics*. Northampton, Mass.: Media Education Foundation, 2016.

¹³ Other examples of pinkwashing include organizations that donate to breast cancer research while making products that are carcinogenic.

¹⁴ GLSEN, <https://www.glsen.org/our-work>

In addition to the role of formal sex-ed curriculum, schools provide the milieu in which students' ideas develop by discussing and encountering diversity in gender and sexual identity. (Image 2). For example, a student-led group in Colorado with the help of the ACLU sued the school district to allow the club to be recognized. The club changed its name from the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) to the Gay Straight Trans Alliance (GSTA), and later the Sexuality and Gender Acceptance (SAGA) club, reflecting the desire for acceptance.

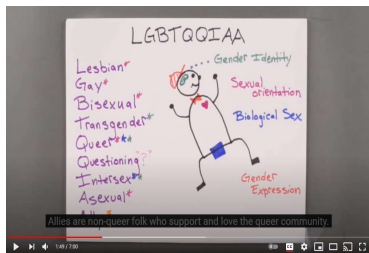


Image 2. This explainer discusses the wide variety of gender identity terms that exist today.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE7bKmOXY3w>

Litigation

In a historic ruling on sex discrimination in 2020, the Supreme Court of the US outlawed employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Massachusetts was the first state to legalize gay marriage and 12 years later it was legal in all fifty states.

Media and Influencers

Media and influencers have been crucial to the rapid acceptance of gay rights. In 1997, Ellen Degeneres was on the cover of Times Magazine. Subsequently, many TVs and movies featured LGBTQ+ characters and actors. Platforms such as Youtube have been used to educate the population about gay rights, including this film on EllenTube¹⁵ which suggests that Socrates was gay. Many talented individuals identify as LGBTQ+ and this increases the community's visibility.

Funding

Unlike the women's rights movements, which were based on people power, the defining feature of the LGBTQ+ movement's success in recent years is its advocates who hold positions of power and influence in media, academia, business, and philanthropy. The following is a section of an article written by Bilek about the movement's funding, including the Stryker family,¹⁶

¹⁵ "Wanda Sykes Takes Us Through the History of LGBTQ+ - Now You Know,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkzwDOCEDCo>

¹⁶ Bilek, Jennifer. January 21, 2020. "The Billionaires Behind the LGBT Movement,"

<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2020/01/the-billionaires-behind-the-lgbt-movement>.

Jon Stryker is the grandson of Homer Stryker, an orthopedic surgeon who founded the Stryker Corporation. Based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Stryker Corporation sold \$13.6 billion in surgical supplies and software in 2018. Jon, heir to the fortune, is gay. In 2000 he created the Arcus Foundation, a nonprofit serving the LGBT community...Arcus has given more than \$58.4 million to programs and organizations doing LGBT-related work between 2007 and 2010 alone, making it one of the largest LGBT funders in the world...Ronda Stryker is married to William Johnston, chairman of Greenleaf Trust. She is also vice chair of Spelman College, where Arcus recently bestowed a \$2 million grant in the name of lesbian feminist Audre Lorde. The money is earmarked for a queer studies program. Ronda and Johnston have gifted Spelman \$30 million dollars overall...She is also a trustee of Kalamazoo College (where Arcus bestowed a social justice leadership grant for \$23 million in 2012), as well as a member of the Harvard Medical School Board of Fellows.

The Arcus Foundation is one of the funders of National Public Radio.¹⁷ According to Bilek,

Pat Stryker, another sister to Jon, has worked closely with gay male Tim Gill. Gill operates one of the largest LGBT nonprofits in America and has been close to the Stryker family since Jon created Arcus...Prior to 2015, Stryker had already built the political infrastructure to drive gender identity ideology and transgenderism across the globe, donating millions to small and large entities. These included hundreds of thousands of dollars to ILGA, an LGBT organization for equality in Europe and Central Asia [which]...promote gender identity and transgenderism by training leaders in political activism, leadership, transgender law, religious liberty, education, and civil rights.

Arcus works at all levels, encouraging the investment of businesses in pride month activities. In addition to funding schools and universities, these foundations also support the American Psychological Foundation (APF), helping to promote change in language that uses inclusive language around gender identity. It is important to note that the largest lobby in Congress is the pharmaceutical industry. This has become one pathway of influence by the movement, without which the dramatic changes in social attitudes in recent years would have occurred.

Learnings from the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement

The LGBTQ+ Rights movement illustrates the importance of selecting an irrefutable symbol and slogan, which will be important for the religious freedom movement. It also succeeded due to the framing of the issue around equality, justice, and diversity—the same frames that might be successful for the movement for religious freedom. Some of the leaders and activists in the LGBTQ+ movement were in positions of power in the media, while others could provide financial support to universities and media outlets that helped to increase coverage of LGBTQ+ people and issues, often focusing on storytelling. While the amount of money available for investment in religious freedom may not be as substantial, financial resources can make a substantial difference if they are used to support the development of symbols and framing, fund

¹⁷ “NPR’s 2018 Annual Report,” <https://www.npr.org/about-npr/727982638/philanthropic-supporters>.

programs in academia and the media, finance the creation and launch of an international movement, and support local groups to craft and implement goals, strategies, and tactics that are appropriate in their contexts.

Climate Change and the Green New Deal

Al Gore's 2006 documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" brought climate awareness to the mainstream. Other celebrity activists include Leonardo DiCaprio, Jane Fonda, and Jayden Smith. Yet youth activism is the movement's defining feature. Youth have driven changes in Democratic National Congress (DNC) policy and the impact of their activism is likely to compound as they come of age and take up positions of influence. A key group is Zero Hour led by 16-year-old Jamie Margolin has a million student members.

Background

Scientists have warned since the 1960s about global warming.¹⁸ In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or "Earth Summit," was held in Rio de Janeiro. Among the Summit's first major steps was to create the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body that assesses the scientific evidence related to climate change.

Several activists, Al Gore and later Greta Thunberg, helped bring the issue into global focus. Thunberg is one of many youth activists at the heart of the movement that has succeeded in bringing litigation against governments and spurred the adoption of the Green New Deal.

Protests Youth Activism and Celebrity

Climate change as an issue has several features that make it uniquely suited for youth activists. First, it is by definition an issue that is likely to affect the young more than the older generations. Second, parents are likely to see it as an age-appropriate issue area for children to learn about.

Al Gore has been surpassed by Greta Thunberg as the most recognizable symbol of climate activism. After first speaking in Poland, Thunberg organized a school strike.¹⁹ A handful of students began protesting in New York, leading to the First Global Climate Strike on March 15, 2019. Dubbed Fridays for Future, this was the first of the weekly strikes held around the world, with 1.5 million young people participating in thousands of cities across the world.

By this time, the UN's focus turned to youth. In the run-up to the UN Climate Summit, Thunberg sailed across the Atlantic on an emissions-free yacht to get to the first-ever climate summit. Seven million people participated in demonstrations during the event.

¹⁸ "History of Climate Change Activism," Act Now SLX Learning," December 5, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6A-pBUdZok>

¹⁹ "Beyond Greta Thunberg: The Uprising of Youth Climate Activists," January 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoC_1rOAFX0

Framing, Social Media and Lobbying

Greta Thunberg has framed the issue, like others, as an existential emergency. Youth and indigenous movements also use climate justice and jobs as frames. Action groups use social media, including two viral hashtags: #10YearChallenge and #TrashTag, the latter of which showcases community cleanups around the world.

The Sunrise movement's members advocated for climate-friendly policies, even sleeping outside the DNC headquarters demanding a climate-only debate. While they were unsuccessful, two CNN town hall debates included climate questions. The movement also lobbied Congress for a green new deal, which became a central focus of the Biden administration. The group seeks a plan to eliminate fossil fuel burning and create good clean energy jobs for the next generation.

Litigation

With the support of financial backers, young activists have also used litigation to advance their goals. In 2015, Juliana vs. United States, Kelsey Juliana along with 20 other plaintiffs under 25 years, sued the government. 30,000 people signed on in 11 days for the case to be heard, allowing the plaintiffs to file an extraordinary motion. There are now over a thousand lawsuits in the fight against climate change in the US and more than 300 globally, including a Pakistani lawsuit over air pollution.

Global Warming Protests and Funders

The Kennedys and the Gettys are two American families who fund protests, including one in Washington, DC organized by Extinction Rebellion.²⁰ Jeff Bezos pledged \$791 million to 16 environmental groups as part of a \$10 billion Earth Fund.²¹ The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation invested \$5 in the Prime Coalition, a nonprofit organization focusing on funding technologies with major potential to cut greenhouse gas emissions.²²

Learnings from the Environmental Movement

Youth activism is a defining feature of the environmental movement. Because this movement is less controversial than some others, it is easy to explain why wealthy organizations use donations to support the advancement of this movement—notably by giving to non-profit organizations that develop and implement strategies and tactics, such as protests.

²⁰ Schwartz, John, "Meet the Millionaires Helping to Pay for Climate Protests," September 27, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/climate/climate-change-protests-funding.html>.

²¹ Mufson, Steven. "Bezos Makes First Donations from \$10 Billion Earth Fund for Fighting Climate Change," *Washington Post*, November 16, 2020.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/11/16/bezos-climate-grants/>

²² Ellison, Katherine, "Philanthropies Flow Funds to Climate Technologies," *Washington Post*, October 14, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2020/10/14/climate-change-philanthropy/>

Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter

In addition to the acceptance of drugs²³ and cancel culture,²⁴ Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Lives Matter (BLM) are among other movements shaping society today. Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a largely youth-led movement that is influenced by CRT. The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation attracted \$90 million last year and seeks to continue protests and other activities after Black Americans die from police violence.²⁵

Critical Race Theory is an academic theory of race relations that has shaped a generation of activists seeking to reform institutions, including the education system, in order to counter institutional racism. According to Sawchuk, “Critical race theory is an academic concept that is more than 40 years old. The core idea is that racism is a social construct, and that it is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies.”²⁶ The heart of this movement focuses on reshaping curriculum in school to develop new forms of viewing American institutions that will eventually lead to racial equality. A key pillar is that whiteness is a form of capital that only white people possess (i.e., white privilege). Important scholars include Kimberlé Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado.²⁷

In 2016, the Ford Foundation announced plans to fund the M4BL Movement For Black Lives. Legislation purporting to outlaw CRT in schools has passed in Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Tennessee and proposed elsewhere. Critics like the Heritage Foundation see CRT as the foundation of the BLM protests, LGBTQ+ school clubs, diversity training in federal agencies, and California’s ethnic studies curriculum.

Learnings from BLM and Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory is the best example of academic work being used to shape a movement’s goals and provide a rationale behind the need for change. There are potential analogs in the religious freedom space which might justify funding for academic studies or conferences that consider the positive consequences of religious freedom for economic and political development.

Strategies Used in Pro-Democracy Movements (The Color Revolutions)

²³ In recent years, some recreational drugs, including cannabis, have been legalized in many US states and other countries. Government entities needing tax revenues have sometimes seen taxation of these substances as preferable to a constant cycle of enforcement of drug laws.

²⁴ Cancel culture or call-out culture is a form of ostracism in which someone is removed from social or professional circles—whether online or in person.

²⁵ Morrison, Aaron, “AP Exclusive: Black Lives Matter Opens Up About Its Finances,” *Associated Press*, February 23, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/black-lives-matter-90-million-finances-8a80cad199f54c0c4b9e74283d27366f>.

²⁶ Sawchuk, Stephen, “What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?” May 18, 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05>. No page.

²⁷ Yosso, Tara J. “Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth.” *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 1 (2005): 69-91.

Strategies used by pro-democracy movements in repressive regimes also offer insights for a movement to support the international human right of religious freedom. Popovic and Miller emphasize the importance of ‘people power’ to affect state-level change and the use of creative strategies that resonate with the women’s rights movement in the US.²⁸ For example, Popovic presents several chapters, each aimed at describing one strategy. First, movements must have a recognizable and reproducible symbol to represent their brand. Second, they must have a unified “vision of tomorrow” that brings as many elements of society together as possible, rather than dividing society. Third, they must plan for the sustained effort that carefully calibrates small wins toward the long-term goal, rather than a sudden change. Fourth, they must use comedy and humor to attract sympathy from the population and authorities. In other contexts, this might include light-hearted witty displays that foster sympathy for those who are suffering from the social ills the movement wants to change. Fifth, they must try to weaken the regime’s sources of support and ensure that it is costly for the regime to repress the movement. Two reasons for failure, they argue, are the movement does not mobilize enough members or use boring tactics.

The strategies and tactics used by the Color Revolutions to successfully demonstrate in authoritarian contexts were shaped by the writing of Gene Sharp, the most widely-read scholar of nonviolent movements. Sharp’s work was used by Serbian and Ukrainian activists to overthrow Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine. Sharp’s work has been translated into more than thirty languages.²⁹ According to news reports, Egyptian activists used the strategies of gaining the support of a powerful actor, in this case, the military (which sided with the protesters), to oust President Hosni Mubarak,³⁰ as well as tactics related to the use of social media and methods for organizing and demonstrating.

Organization and Use of Symbols

There have been dozens of Color Revolutions beginning from at least The People Power Revolution (Yellow Revolution) which began in the Philippines in 1986 and resulted in the departure of President Marcos. An analysis of these movements highlights patterns in successful strategies and tactics of people organizing. During the Yellow Revolution, a tragic, galvanizing event was the assassination of the opposition figure Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr., whose funeral prompted mass demonstrations. The movement leveraged symbols, including the “L” shaped sign (“Laban”), a Filipino gesture signifying “Fight,” the Color Yellow, and the song “Tie a Yellow Ribbon.” (Image 3 and 4). Like many of the Color Revolutions, it was organized by civil society groups including the Opposition Liberal Party and the National Union of Students. Most Color Revolutions appear leaderless, but typically result from sustained organizing by civil society that generates enough people power to mobilize.

²⁸ Popovic, Srdja, and Miller, Matthew I. *Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World*. First ed. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

²⁹ For examples of the tactics used by some of the Color Revolutions, see Harutyunyan, Gagik, (2017, 16 January), “Color Revolutions,” http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/security/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=15365

³⁰ Amos, Deborah, 2011. “Sor Some Arab Revolutionaries, A Serbian Tutor,” <https://www.npr.org/2011/12/13/143648877/for-some-arab-revolutionaries-a-serbian-tutor>



Image 3. Ribbon of EDSA People Power activity in February 2014. Photo from EDSA People Power Commission Facebook Page. Source: <https://www.goodnewspilipinas.com/edsa-people-power-the-philippines-shows-world-the-way-to-non-violent-resistance-to-tyranny/>



Image 4. The Laban sign (“Fight”). Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laban_sign#/media/File:Risa_hontiveros.JPG

Funding

An analysis of publicly available information suggests that external organizations in some cases supported the social movements behind the Color Revolutions by teaching tactics, convening/building networks, and funding local organizations that make up the movements. But local leadership and grassroots were essential. According to Harutyunyan (2017),³¹

It is assumed that one of the main resource centers for “revolutions” is the East European Democratic Center (*Wschodnioeuropejskie Centrum Demokratyczne, WECD*) headquartered in Warsaw. This organization was established and is financed by the *Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)*. The official website of *WECD* claims that they implement educational and training activities mostly for journalists, educators, regional publishers and NGO activists...The organization’s objectives are indicated as: “spread of democratic ideology, assistance to civic endeavors and non-government programs, building open society, education on human rights and democratic freedoms, support to social and public reforms in post-communist countries.” Some researchers note that revolutions and protest movements are also funded by Open Society Institute of George Soros, US-based International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute, London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies...Media reports suggest that only the latter invested about \$100M in [the] Serbian revolution...color revolutions and other similar operations are incomparably less expensive in achieving geopolitical goals that [sic] military operations, which makes them attractive.

³¹ Harutyunyan, Gagik, (2017, 16 January), “Color Revolutions,” http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/security/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=15365.

This is underscored by the Soros Foundation annual report which states that the Soros Foundation seeks to equip civil society, particularly in closed countries, to resist repression and transition to democracy. However, while pro-Kremlin groups argue that the Color Revolutions were orchestrated by the Soros Foundation, the Foundation supported some civil society organizations that are part of the movement for respect of human rights and democracy in these countries.³² According to the 2010 Soros Foundation report,

The goal of the Soros foundations network in more than 50 countries throughout the world is to transform closed societies into open ones and to protect and expand the values of existing open societies...the foundations established and supported by George Soros fund and operate a range of programs and activities. These initiatives deal with arts and culture; the strengthening of civil society; economic development and reform; education at all levels; human rights, with special attention to the rights of marginalized groups; legal reform and public administration; media and information, including publishing, electronic communication, and libraries; and public health. (p. 7)

According to these sources, the Soros Foundation has not convened the civil society groups or orchestrated their actions against the government. Rather, like other NGOs and INGOs in the freedom of peaceful assembly and human rights space, it had supported a multiplicity of groups and activities that contributed to the Color Revolutions. A key lesson for the movement for religious freedom is that financial support to local organizations may be an effective means to advance human rights, yet it may lead to accusations from opponents that local groups are tainted by outside influence. This does not mean, however, that such financial support should be avoided, particularly in the context of an inclusive, global movement for religious freedom.

Technology

The Color Revolutions and especially The Arab Spring (2010-2012) raised questions about the role of new technologies—especially social media (dubbed ‘horizontal technologies’) and satellite technology in explaining protest emergence and success. Yet according to Stepanova, Internet usage did not predict whether protests occurred. For instance, very few Yemenis use the Internet while more than eighty percent of Bahrainis do.³³ Social media was a tool that aided the movements by allowing them to communicate with one another and share information nationally and internationally about the unfolding protests. Some scholars believe that social media played a crucial role in “mobilization, empowerment, shaping opinions, and influencing change” during the Arab Spring, but local civil society organizations and the grassroots launched the social movements in the years preceding the Arab spring (p. 24).³⁴ Technology was a tool—and it may even have improved movements’ success—but the grievances and civil society organizations

³² Soros Foundation, “2020 Report.” https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/5e4f2b5f-075a-4190-ad2f-25bc95f64255/a_complete_8.pdf

³³ Stepanova, Ekaterina. (2011). “The Role of Information Communication Technologies in the ‘Arab Spring’: Implications Beyond the Region.” PONARS Eurasia, Policy Memo 159, pircenter.org/. Retrieved 17d May 2015.

³⁴ Mourtada, Racha, and Salem, Fadi. (2011). “Civil Movements: The Impact of Facebook and Twitter,” *Arab Social Media Report* 1(2).
file:///C:/Users/benstead/Downloads/ASMR2_En_Final.pdf

already existed. Consider for instance the Iranian revolution was a success with the aid of cassette tapes. Technology is helpful, but people power and sustained effort are important for a movement's success.

Application of the Strategy to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

The exploration of the New Social Movements and the Color Revolutions demonstrates that there is a common set of strategies and tactics used to advocate for and achieve social and political change. With regard to the Color Revolutions, in particular, the analysis points to the crucial role of local civil society organizations seeking to build grassroots support. External funding is important on many levels, even though it will heighten claims that a local movement is influenced by foreign entities. Yet while there are lessons from examining US-based movements, there are also examples from the MENA region, including the women's rights movement, that illustrate how local movements craft strategies to achieve change in social attitudes and legal structures in a way that is context-sensitive and effective. These examples are important because they highlight the need to use tactics that are appropriate for a given context and aim to shape social attitudes and laws over time without placing the movement's members in danger.

Women's Rights Organizations

Feminist movements have a long history in the MENA, but women's organizations were increasingly formed in the 1980s and 1990s during the region's experience with political liberalization. Beginning with the Beijing declaration of women's rights, these movements leveraged their state's commitment to women's rights in The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to pressure the government to change discriminatory laws. Freedom of religion and conscious movements may be able to find allies in the women's empowerment and LGBTQ+ rights movements, and they may learn from their strategies, including their framing of the issue in terms of irrefutable claims for equality and leveraging international norms to change laws.

Lessons from Abolish 153

In the arena of women's rights, Abolish 153 seeks to abolish Article 153 of the Kuwaiti penal code that allows a male perpetrator of an "honor killing" to be charged with a misdemeanor offense for killing a family member for a violation of family honor. Abolish 153 seeks to establish the first domestic violence shelter in Kuwait (<http://abolish153.org/>).

The Abolish 153 movement is of particular relevance to the social movement for religious freedom because it deals with a socially-sensitive topic that requires a long-term, context-sensitive strategy. A Kuwaiti movement, the movement takes a long-term approach that uses non-threatening tactics to share its message through art shows, short films, and social media to build a network and work over time toward the abolishment of Article 153. The movement reaches out to activists, academics, and international organizations to explain its goals. It shares these activities on its website and social media accounts (i.e., a social media strategy).



Image 6. Short film produced by Abolish 153 discussing the problem of domestic violence.

LGBTQ+ Activism

There is also a nascent social movement for LGBTQ+ equality in the MENA. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Despite state-sponsored repression and social stigma, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the Middle East and North Africa are finding ways to speak out. They are telling their stories, building alliances, networking across borders, developing national and regional movements.”³⁵ As part of the movement, HRW and the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE) curated videos of Arabic-speaking activists telling their stories. Faced with official intransigence, some activists choose to work outside state structures; their activism focuses on community-building and attitudinal change.

A Movement for Religious Freedom

Like the MENA-based movements discussed, a movement for religious freedom in the MENA region is still in its infancy, due to political repression and war. Religious minorities keep a low profile and sometimes support the autocratic regime as safer than an Islamist alternative. According to the State Department’s Report on International Religious Freedom, indigenous religious minorities in Algeria (generally converts to Christianity) keep a low profile.

The [Algerian] constitution provides for religious freedom, but other laws, policies, and practices sometimes restrict religious freedom...non-Muslim groups experienced difficulty when attempting to register with the government...Although society generally tolerated foreigners and citizens who practiced religions other than Islam, Algerian Jews and some Algerian Muslims who converted to Christianity kept a low profile due to concern for their personal safety and potential legal and social problems.³⁶

Muslims may also face state repression in some countries if, for example, they are members of Islamist groups or sects the regime sees as a threat.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch. 2018. “Audacity in Adversity: LGBT Activism in the Middle East and North Africa” <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/16/audacity-adversity/lgbt-activism-middle-east-and-north-africa>

³⁶ “Algeria,” International Religious Freedom Report for 2011. United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/193089.pdf>

There is demand in the MENA region for religious freedom, as well as political freedom generally. Religious minorities have little incentive, however, to increase their visibility and doing so would likely cause harm. As a result, it is important to support local groups to implement the strategies and tactics they see as beneficial. Yet most of the organizations working for religious freedom are external to the MENA. Some of these include western advocacy organizations with varying levels of engagement in the Middle East such as the Religious Freedom Institute (<https://www.religiousfreedominstitute.org/>) and The Voice of the Martyrs (<https://www.persecution.com/>). The US government has also made the promotion of religious freedom a part of its foreign policy.³⁷ But international and transnational groups can support a nascent movement for religious freedom by working at the level of international organizations and civil society to frame the issues around Article 18 and the global equality agenda and supporting local organizations in their efforts.

Indigenous Groups and the Marrakech Declaration

The Marrakech Declaration offers among the most significant developments for supporting an indigenous religious freedom movement in the region and has recently been expanded through diplomatic efforts. The 2016 declaration by “more than 250 Muslim religious leaders, heads of state, and scholars,” champions “defending the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim countries,” saying Islam forbids religious persecution.³⁸ It reflects a demand for religious freedom not only from religious minorities but also from the Sunni mainstream alarmed at the rise of the Islamic State, which enslaved and killed minorities in Iraq and Syria. Governments and civil society from more than 100 countries were represented at the meeting of Muslim leaders in Marrakech, sponsored by the Moroccan government and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, an organization led by Islamic scholar Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, an 80-year-old scholar from the UAE.

The Declaration references the Constitution (Charter) of Medina which gave non-Muslims certain rights under the political leadership of the Muslim community:

1. The security of God is equal for all groups;
2. Non-Muslim members have the same political and cultural rights as Muslims. They have autonomy and freedom of religion;
3. Non-Muslims take up arms against the enemy of the nation and share the cost of war. There is to be no treachery between the two;
4. Non-Muslims are not obliged to take part in the Muslims' religious wars.

Among other things, it calls for changes to educational materials to affirm equal citizenship as an Islamic principle and traditional form of governance prescribed by Prophet Muhammad.

The Declaration has many limitations in that it focuses on religious minorities and says little about indigenous churches made up of Muslims who have converted to Christianity.

³⁷ Within the State Department sits the Office of International Religious Freedom (<https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/office-of-international-religious-freedom/>).

³⁸ “Marrakesh Declaration,” Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies,” <http://ciris.org.uk/tag/marrakesh-declaration/>.

However, support for the Declaration from some Sunni regimes (notably Morocco and Bahrain) suggests that some governments to one degree or another perceive strategic interests in supporting religious freedom.³⁹ Muslim regimes, including the hosting Moroccan government, have incentives both to improve their international reputations by respecting human rights, as well as to marginalize hardline Islamist groups, such as the banned group, Justice and Charity, which seeks to overthrow the monarchy. In the case of Bahrain, it may also be a way to convince domestic audiences that the country's recent overtures to Israel are not contrary to Islam. Indeed,

According to an article in *Christianity Today*, Bahrain has declared “freedom of choice” to be a “divine gift.” “We unequivocally reject compelled observance,” states the Bahrain Declaration for Religious Tolerance, released September 13 in Los Angeles with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish leaders in attendance. “Every individual has the freedom to practice their religion, providing they do no harm to others, respect the laws of the land, and accept responsibility, spiritually and materially, for their choices.” Further, according to the article, Prince Nasser bin Hamad al Khalifa of Bahrain signed as an official envoy of the Gulf nation's king. Johnnie Moore, a board member of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Rabbi Marvin Heir of the Simon Wiesenthal Center also participated, joining ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Israel. “The King is acting decisively, courageously, and seriously,” Moore told CT, also noting Bahraini sponsorship of a religious tolerance center in the capital city of Manama as well as sponsorship of a chair in religious coexistence at La Sapienza University in Rome.⁴⁰

Muslims also critique the declaration. Shadi Hamid of the Brookings Institution suggests that traditional Muslim scholars may not reach the right people. “One of the audiences you're trying to persuade here are those who are on the fence, young, angry Arabs and Muslims who are looking for something to believe in,” Hamid says. “The problem with these kinds of status quo scholars and governments is that they are seen as illegitimate and not credible.”

Thus, while the Marrakech Declaration is only a small step forward, it has also been carried on by Bahrain, which suggests that some Muslim regimes see a political benefit in appearing to promote religious tolerance. It is crucial, however, that local and international groups seize on this opportunity to encourage and reward regimes that make concrete improvements in protection of religious freedom and human rights more broadly.

Western allies, including those who would fund such a movement, must be conscious of how the west generally and Christianity in particular, are seen in the region. As expressed by the USIP Declaration, “Those from non-Muslim majority contexts wishing to support the Marrakesh Declaration must be careful not to undermine its legitimacy as a Muslim-led initiative, particularly in contexts where minority rights and religious freedom have historically been used as pretext for colonialism and Christian missionizing” (p. 1). However, a movement of people from all religions and those without religious belief can support a movement for the human right of religious freedom while acknowledging that all religions do not believe the same thing. In this

³⁹ “Marrakesh Declaration,” <http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org>

⁴⁰ Casper, Jayson. (2017, September 13). “Saudi Arabia's Neighbor Defends Religious Freedom of Individuals.” <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/september/bahrain-declaration-saudi-arabia-neighbor-religious-freedom.html>

respect, Arab youth are calling for freedom, identity, and authenticity might be natural allies in a regional movement for freedom of religion.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Developing a clear goal and selecting inclusive and irrefutable symbols, slogans, and hashtags is a good place for a new social movement to begin. Because religious freedom is a human right enshrined in international law, a social movement for religious freedom might focus on Article 18, which obligates states to both respect freedom of religion within their borders as well as promote freedom beyond their borders. Doing so would allow INGOs, NGOs, and local organizations to leverage states' reputational concerns by incentivizing them to strengthen laws and policies that enshrine respect for freedom of religion and conscience. The Marrakesh declaration and work of Bahrain and other states that support the declaration may be an important starting place.

The lessons of the Color Revolutions suggest that while external organizations can support movements by funding programs and associations, the movement must spring from the grassroots in order to be effective. According to Feldman (2016), a modern social movement must be "owned by the people who comprise the movement itself...[whether they be] activists, social changemakers, supporters, or donors." The movement itself must define what involvement means.⁴¹ Efforts to fund a movement for religious freedom should focus on supporting new and existing local organizations—particularly those within the region—to develop and implement their strategies and tactics. This includes identifying inclusive, effective tactics that are appropriate for a given context as part of a long-term strategy to transform social attitudes and laws. This support should be offered within a framework of seeking to do no harm and protecting the vulnerable.

Churches and other religious institutions, whether in the west or the MENA region, are natural allies that could adopt the symbol of the movement and support it financially through participation in activities. Organizations like the Voice of the Martyrs already provide means to send financial resources to Christians who are victims of repression (including religious persecution) and have been effective in supporting letter-writing campaigns to pastors and others who are jailed in violation of their human rights. The religiously conservative in MENA countries, such as Islamists in some countries, also face state repression and might be allies.

There is also a role for an academic strategy. Funding can support a discussion of the issues in seminars and through academic conferences. A related goal that can be met through activities in academia is the need to convince the international community of the link between religious freedom and economic and political development. Funding could support a panel at an academic conference or a paper prize for peer-reviewed research on religious freedom.

Accordingly, the information presented in this report leads to several recommendations.

- 1) It is important to create a unified movement for religious freedom as a universal human right under Article 18 consistently with the rule of law and universal human values. The

⁴¹ Feldmann, Derrick. (2016, April 21). "Social Movements for Good: How Companies and Causes Create Viral Change. *Philanthropy News Digest*
<https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/features/book-reviews/social-movements-for-good-how-companies-and-causes-create-viral-change>

movement must define a goal and stay focused on that goal. One of the first steps is to create a unifying symbol, slogan, and hashtag for the movement.

- 2) The movement might develop several strategies which include a strategy to institutionalize the international norm of religious freedom within international organizations (INGOs) like the United Nations; a strategy to assist and encourage governments in fulfilling their obligation to respect and support religious freedom at home and abroad; a media strategy; a strategy to create and disseminate academic knowledge about religious freedom in seminaries and academia writ large; among other strategies.
- 3) External (western) funding is helpful for financially supporting activities such as demonstrations and media projects. However, the very idea of religious freedom will be viewed with suspicion as foreign by many whose interests are challenged by it. One way to address this challenge is to leverage the Marrakesh Declaration as an indigenous, Muslim justification for religious freedom. Another is to build a coalition made up of individuals and groups from different countries and social and religious backgrounds who are already working to strengthening human rights, including freedom of religion and conscience. The bulk of funding might be used to support local organizations working to craft and implement strategies and tactics in locally appropriate ways. Crowdfunding sites might be useful to draw support from the grassroots from across many countries.
- 4) It is important to bring influencers at all levels into the movement—that is, people who are willing to support the movement in different ways, including simply to identify with the movement and its symbols. The use of personal stories, the media, and the arts, including music, is important for spreading a message in a non-threatening way. Grants to media organizations like NPR and other media organizations may even shape the types of stories that are covered.
- 5) Authoritarian governments will welcome activities that help them hold onto power but repress activities that undermine it. A natural place to foster these gains is in countries that are most active in the Marrakech Declaration (i.e., Morocco and Bahrain) in order to attach international reputation to the protection and promotion of all peaceful expressions of religious faith.
- 6) Change will only occur through people power—that is, a large enough group of citizens in the MENA region who are unified by a common identity and set of demands—sustained over a long period of time, along with reforms to laws.
- 7) Building this base of supporters and changing society's attitudes and laws will require effective framing of the issue around values and norms that many in society (including adversaries) also support, such as equality and human rights.
- 8) Supporting discussion about common problems and solutions to attract adherents to the movement can be a useful place to begin, but meeting online or in person will be fear-producing in repressive regimes. Many religious minorities will not want to participate

due to the threats that they face. And every effort must be made to protect participants from harm.

- 9) Despite opposition, change is possible with sustained and carefully thought-out actions.

The study of the western movements is instructive because it shows that, even in western societies, key movements faced opposition and brutal repression from the state and society. Movements for human rights in the Middle East and North Africa also face repression.⁴² Yet by supporting indigenous work for religious freedom and the protection of human rights, funding organizations can support those who seek to ensure equality and rule of law at home and beyond. This should be done within an ethos of doing no harm and supporting those worldwide who seek to ensure that all people enjoy the human right of religious freedom, regardless of where they live and what they believe.

Key questions:

- 1) How can the Marrakesh Declaration be a tool for movements to promote religious freedom?
- 2) What will the goals of the movement be and which movements will it consider allies? How will it work with these allies?
- 3) How should western groups support or not support these movements? What is the role of external funding? How can western groups avoid doing harm?
- 4) How will activists be supported when they face repression or threats due to their activism?

⁴² For instance, Arab states have repressed demonstrations at concerts where the rainbow flag was seen.

Appendix

1. Acronyms

CEDAW – Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

INGO – Intergovernmental Organization

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

2. Films

Women's rights and reproductive rights

- 1) She's Beautiful When She's Angry⁴³ explores the history of feminist organizing in the United States. See <http://www.shesbeautifulwhenshesangry.com/>.
- 2) Miss Representation focuses on women and politics in the United States. Its website discusses how it is being used to support a movement for equal political representation. See <https://thereproject.org/films/miss-representation/>.
- 3) Class of 2006 is a PBS documentary that discusses the incentives of authoritarian regimes, in this case, the Moroccan regime, to promote women's rights and undermine hardline religious movements and ideologies. See <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/video/class-of-2006-video-full-episode/1038/>.
- 4) Short films on women's rights reform and anti-domestic violence in Kuwait. See <http://abolish153.org/>.

List of films on LGBTQ+ rights

- 1) A full list of films is available here: <https://www.glaad.org/blog/learn-more-about-lgbtq-history-these-films-and-documentaries>.
- 2) Lavender Scare discusses the history of US government repression of gay employees during the Cold War.
- 3) EllenTube explainer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkzwDOCEDCo>
- 4) Gender and sexual identity explainer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE7bKmOXY3w>
- 5) Human Rights Watch stories of LGBTQ+ activists in the MENA region. See "Audacity in Adversity: LGBTQ Activism in the Middle East and North Africa," <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/16/audacity-adversity/lgbt-activism-middle-east-and-north-africa>. According to HRW, they supported short films featuring activists telling the stories, produced by AFE. While I was unable to find the films, I found the organization's Facebook and Instagram accounts via their website. See <https://afemena.org/about/>.

⁴³ Dore, Mary, Kennedy, Nancy C., Degli Antoni, Mark, International Film Circuit, Presenter, and Cinema Guild, Publisher. She's Beautiful When She's Angry. New York, NY: Cinema Guild, 2020.

List of films about climate change

- 1) The Inconvenient Truth

3. List of Crowdfunding Sites

A list of crowdfunding sites can be found at: <https://www.godaddy.com/garage/top-crowdfunding-platforms/>

Indiegogo, GoFundMe, Chuffed, MightyCause, and FundRazr

Annex 1: Documents and Declarations

1. International Human Rights Law

Freedom of religion or belief is guaranteed under international law:

-Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18 (1948)

-International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 (1966)

-Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18 (1948)

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Full list of provisions in international law guaranteeing freedom of religion and belief:

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner provides a list of international standards on freedom of religion or belief drawn from international law. See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/freedomreligion/pages/standards.aspx>.

Digest on freedom of religion or belief

Freedom of religion or belief

- Freedom to adopt, change or renounce a religion or belief
- Freedom from coercion

- The right to manifest one's religion or belief
- Freedom to worship
- Places of worship
- Religious symbols
- Observance of holidays and days of rest
- Appointing clergy
- Teaching and disseminating materials (including missionary activity)
- The right of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children
- Registration
- Communicate with individuals and communities on religious matters at the national and international level
- Establish and maintain charitable and humanitarian institutions/solicit and receive funding
- Conscientious objection

Discrimination

- Discrimination on the basis of religion or belief/inter-religious discrimination/tolerance
- State religion

Vulnerable groups

- Women
- Persons deprived of their liberty
- Refugees
- Children
- Minorities
- Migrant workers

Intersection of freedom of religion or belief with other human rights

- Freedom of expression including questions related to religious conflicts, religious intolerance and extremism
- Right to life, right to liberty
- Prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Cross-cutting issues

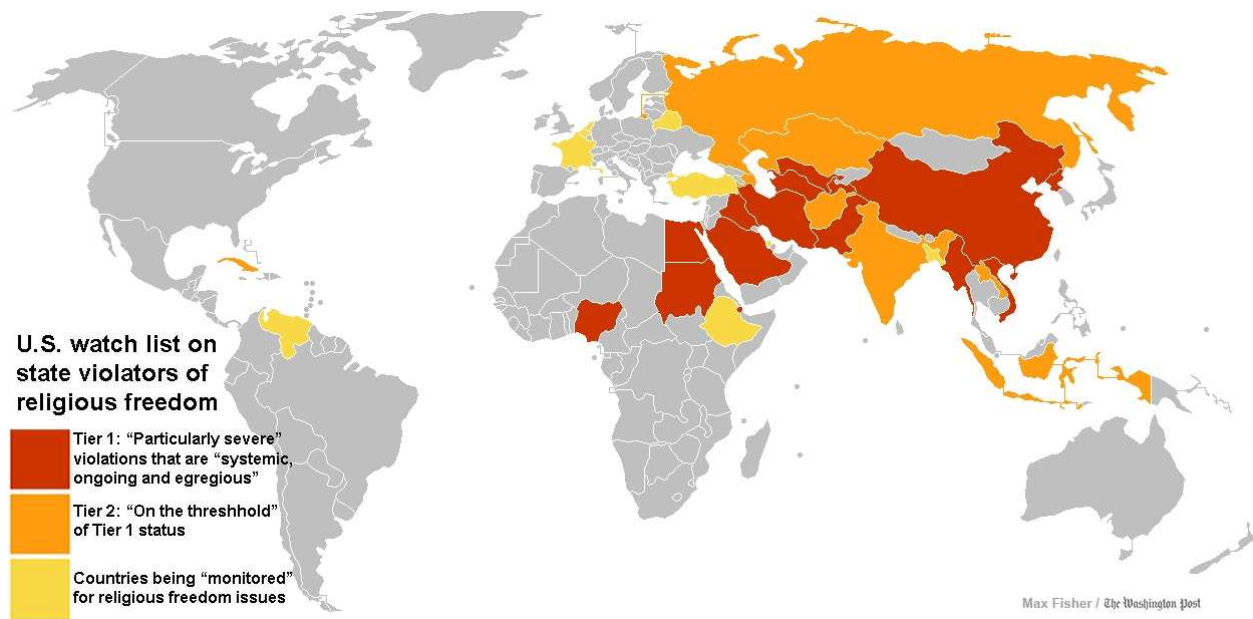
- Derogation
- Limitation
- Legislative issues
- Defenders of freedom of religion or belief and non-governmental organizations

Under international law:

- 1) States have a responsibility to respect Freedom of Religion within their borders
- 2) States (including democratic states) have the obligation to support Freedom of Religion globally

Often, they do not.

Figure A1.1. Religious Freedom Map



Source: Fisher, Max. "A Distressing Map of Religious Freedom Around the World," *The Washington Post*, May 3, 2013.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/05/03/a-distressing-map-of-religious-freedom-around-the-world/>

2. Text of the [Marrakech Declaration of 15 April 1994](#)

Ministers,

Representing the 124 Governments and the European Communities participating in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, on the occasion of the final session of the Trade Negotiations Committee at Ministerial level held at Marrakesh, Morocco from 12 to 15 April 1994,

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration adopted at Punta del Este, Uruguay on 20 September 1986 to launch the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations,

Recalling the progress achieved at the Ministerial meetings held at Montreal, Canada and Brussels, Belgium in December of 1988 and 1990 respectively,

Noting that the negotiations were substantially concluded on 15 December 1993,

Determined to build upon the success of the Uruguay Round through the participation of their economies in the world trading system, based upon open, market- oriented policies and the commitments set out in the Uruguay Round Agreements and Decisions,

Have today adopted the following:

DECLARATION

1. Ministers salute the historic achievement represented by the conclusion of the Round, which they believe will strengthen the world economy and lead to more trade, investment, employment and income growth throughout the world. In particular, they welcome:

— the stronger and clearer legal framework they have adopted for the conduct of international trade, including a more effective and reliable dispute settlement mechanism,

— the global reduction by 40 per cent of tariffs and wider market-opening agreements on goods, and the increased predictability and security represented by a major expansion in the scope of tariff commitments, and

— the establishment of a multilateral framework of disciplines for trade in services and for the protection of trade-related intellectual property rights, as well as the reinforced multilateral trade provisions in agriculture and in textiles and clothing.

2. Ministers affirm that the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ushers in a new era of global economic cooperation, reflecting the widespread desire to operate in a fairer and more open multilateral trading system for the benefit and welfare of their peoples. Ministers express their determination to resist protectionist pressures of all kinds. They believe that the trade liberalization and strengthened rules achieved in the Uruguay Round will lead to a progressively more open world trading environment. Ministers undertake, with immediate effect and until the entry into force of the WTO, not to take any trade measures that would undermine or adversely affect the results of the Uruguay Round negotiations or their implementation.

3. Ministers confirm their resolution to strive for greater global coherence of policies in the fields of trade, money and finance, including cooperation between the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank for that purpose.

4. Ministers welcome the fact that participation in the Uruguay Round was considerably wider than in any previous multilateral trade negotiation and, in particular, that developing countries played a notably active rôle in it. This has marked a historic step towards a more balanced and integrated global trade partnership. Ministers note that during the period these negotiations were underway significant measures of economic reform and autonomous trade liberalization were implemented in many developing countries and formerly centrally planned economies.

5. Ministers recall that the results of the negotiations embody provisions conferring differential and more favourable treatment for developing economies, including special attention to the particular situation of least-developed countries. Ministers recognize the importance of the implementation of these provisions for the least-developed countries and declare their intention to continue to assist and facilitate the expansion of their trade and investment opportunities. They agree to keep under regular review by the Ministerial Conference and the appropriate organs of the WTO the impact of the results of the Round on the least-developed countries as well as on the net food-importing developing countries, with a view to fostering positive measures to enable them to achieve their development objectives. Ministers recognize the need for strengthening the capability of the GATT and the WTO to provide increased technical assistance in their areas of competence, and in particular to substantially expand its provision to the least-developed countries.

6. Ministers declare that their signature of the “Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations” and their adoption of associated Ministerial Decisions initiates the transition from the GATT to the WTO. They have in particular established a Preparatory Committee to lay the ground for the entry into force of the WTO Agreement and commit themselves to seek to complete all steps necessary to ratify the WTO Agreement so that it can enter into force by 1 January 1995 or as early as possible thereafter. Ministers have furthermore adopted a Decision on Trade and Environment.

7. Ministers express their sincere gratitude to His Majesty King Hassan II for his personal contribution to the success of this Ministerial Meeting, and to his Government and the people of Morocco for their warm hospitality and the excellent organization they have provided. The fact that this final Ministerial Meeting of the Uruguay Round has been held at Marrakesh is an additional manifestation of Morocco's commitment to an open world trading system and to its fullest integration to the global economy.

8. With the adoption and signature of the Final Act and the opening for acceptance of the WTO Agreement, Ministers declare the work of the Trade Negotiations Committee to be complete and the Uruguay Round formally concluded.

Annex 2: Strategies and Tactics List

Strategies and Tactics

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The following list of strategies and tactics is drawn from an analysis of the New Social Movements (e.g., Feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, the environmental movement) and the Color Revolutions.⁴⁴ To be successful, movements must leverage people power and engage in sustained, carefully-crafted (wise) non-violent action. Strategies and tactics must be selected with the context in mind. (e.g., Is it wise, effective, and safe in a given time and context?)

Set Goals and Craft Rationales

- 1) Among a core group of people, develop a clear goal(s). This goal will guide the movement as it crafts strategies and tactics, allowing the movement to stay focused and avoid being pulled away toward related causes. The movement should come to share a common identity around the pursuit of the goal(s).
- 2) Develop a set of arguments and a rationale for why your goal is justified. Identify the moral principles and international legal frameworks that justify your goal. Develop an “injustice theme” (that is, a framing of your issue) around moral principles such as human rights, injustice, and equality that are unifying and widely accepted. Articulate this justification on a website and/or other founding documents such as reports or pamphlets. Consider using images or other ways of depicting the harms that you are trying to address. This can include images and personal stories of individuals who are affected by the injustice.

⁴⁴ *Definitions*: Strategies are the plans you intend to undertake to reach your goal. Tactics are the individual steps you will take to implement the strategy and pursue your broader goals.

Take Actions to Increase Public Awareness of and Support for the Goal

- 3) Begin to expand public awareness of and acceptance of your goal. Create a unifying symbol and slogan for the movement. Consider symbols that are irrefutable (e.g., Love is Love). Use concrete images or colors that people associate with positive feelings (e.g., Pink, rainbows, women calling for equality). Choose a hashtag(s).
- 4) Hold an opening event to launch your movement using the symbol and the slogan.
- 5) If appropriate, organize marches and other in-person campaign activities and tactics. Utilize social media (e.g., hashtags) to promote the cause. Be creative in developing rallies and marches and other tactics in a way that attracts media attention to the cause and evokes a supportive emotional response from the public.⁴⁵ Use visuals and stories that help people from different backgrounds identify with the movement and viscerally grasp the reality and harms of religious repression and intolerance.
- 6) Use the media, including traditional media, social/new media, podcasts, and film. Seek people to tell their stories. Choose advocates and influencers who can represent the cause and communicate the movement's issue and injustice framing. Think about who can tell their story to connect with the broader public and convince them of the need for change. Seek financial support from leaders and influencers to fund organizations working on the ground and give to media, educational, and political institutions at the local, national, and international levels.

Development of 'People Power'

- 7) Take actions that will increase the size of the movement. People power is essential (i.e., a large number of adherents). Consider how you will mobilize more people, convince them to identify with the movement, and take part in the movements' campaigns. Hold rallies

⁴⁵ Tactics could include campaigns, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, marches, petition drives, statements, pamphlets, symbols, colors, and branding, recruitment of celebrities and influencers, media campaigns, movies and short films, boycotts, humorous and witty placards and posters, podcasts, YouTube videos, home discussion groups, creative demonstration techniques that attract the media, civil disobedience, art and music to promote ideas, talk shows, training of activists, support from private funds/foundations, research studies, high visibility events, parades, award events, national days for "freedom of conscience," writing of books, summits organized around the topic, declarations and constitutions, town hall debates, case studies, meaningful stories, website with social media presence, and youth mobilization.

as well as discussion groups and other types of forums. Consider what kind of organizational structure would be most effective to reach the goal.

- 8) Identify organizations that are core to the movement. Consider how to build a coalition of organizations that will identify with and work toward a common goal. Consider the politics of support from different groups and how to refute criticism by opponents.
- 9) Engage in consciousness-raising. Organize meetings (in person and online) in which people discuss shared difficulties and determine to promote change.
- 10) Broaden your coalition. What are the organizations and thought leaders with whom you can create an alliance to increase the number of people who belong to the movement? As you build the movement, reach out to different groups who share your goal (e.g., those from different religious backgrounds who are interested in the issue of religious freedom).

Use Diplomacy to Create Key Allies and Consider How to Lessen Opposition

- 11) Conduct diplomacy to build key allies in positions of power in politics, the economy, and the media. Ask them to support the movement through actions that are consistent with their roles. Think about strategies to give opponents of the movement a material interest in changing.
- 12) Consider carrots and sticks to shape the behavior of state and non-state actors. Consider how the movement, working with key institutions, can advocate for policies and actions that reward those who respect freedom of religion. This could include lawsuits, sanctions, conditioning aid, and reputational benefits from making concessions. Consider that soft power (e.g., use of the media and educational institutions and shining light on what transgressors are doing) can do as much to advance the cause as hard power or sticks.

Continue Pursuing your Goals Over the Long-Term

- 13) Be wise in the tactics used. Use non-threatening messages and tactics in the beginning before making bigger asks (e.g., asking leaders to change laws). Be inclusive, so long as the movement adheres to the original goal. Consider that there will be backlash and take every measure possible to reduce harm. Take your time at each step, knowing that it may take a generation or more to reach the goal. Do not quit. Put service to people at the center of the mission.