



A Conceptual Model of Foundations' Leadership Capacity in Times of Change: Lessons From Egypt

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Abstract

In the wake of the January 25, 2011 Egyptian uprisings, local private and community foundations responded divergently to civil society's calls for political change. Egypt's community foundations quickly positioned themselves as leaders of democratic political reforms, while private foundations remained focused on their pre-2011 activities in the economic development realm. To explain the foundations' different responses to the uprisings, the article draws upon extant literature to develop a conceptual model of foundations' capacity to lead change. It then applies the model to the Egyptian case, arguing that community foundations' high levels of political independence and low levels of financial and civic independence facilitated their leadership efforts, while private foundations' low levels of political and financial independence and high levels of civic independence hampered their ability to lead reform initiatives. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords

philanthropy, social movements, Egypt, community foundations

The January 25, 2011, Egyptian uprisings that ousted former President Hosni Mubarak from power presented an opportunity for Egyptian civil society organizations to lead political reform initiatives aimed at bringing about a transition to democracy. The months following the uprisings were marked by euphoria in which individuals and organizations alike created new initiatives aimed at building a more democratic Egypt.

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Taking advantage of this window of opportunity, many Egyptian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) developed new projects related to electoral, constitutional, and judicial reform, human rights, and civic engagement. Egypt's philanthropic foundations pledged to support these organizations' new initiatives and serve as leaders of civil society's political reform efforts. Most, however, failed to do so. Only Egypt's two community foundations incorporated democracy promotion work into their grant making strategies. By contrast, Egypt's private foundations remained focused on economic development projects.

Why did Egypt's private and community foundations respond differently to such a historical movement for change? Foundations have been characterized in the literature as drivers (Fleishman, 2007), catalysts (Faber & McCarthy, 2005), and leaders (Graddy & Morgan, 2006) of change, and have supported most major social movements since the 1950s—from the U.S.-based civil and women's rights movements to international movements for environmental protection, peace, and democracy (Bartley, 2007; Benjamin & Quigley, 2010; Goss, 2007; Jenkins & Halci, 1999; Jung, Harrow, & Phillips, 2013). Yet empirical evidence suggests that foundations are often slow to respond to major movements for change (Jenkins & Halci, 1999; O'Connor, 2010), send only small portions of their grant making budgets to social change efforts (Minkoff & Agnone, 2010), and target professional organizations rather than activist groups (Bartley, 2007; Goss, 2007; Haines, 1984; Jenkins & Halci, 1999; Minkoff & Agnone, 2010). Since most studies of social movement patronage were conducted after foundations had committed their funding and the results of movement activity were apparent, we lack the data necessary to understand why foundations often fail to respond quickly when social movements arise.

The literature does provide clues, however, about the factors likely to shape foundations' roles in advancing change. To explain the case of Egypt, I draw upon this literature to build a conceptual model of foundations' capacity to lead change efforts. After presenting the case background and research methodology, I apply the conceptual model to the Egyptian case, drawing upon interviews with foundation leaders and other civil society actors that took place between 2010 and 2014. I conclude with implications for theory.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, I deploy the literature to develop a conceptual model of private and community foundations' potential for change leadership. Private foundations are institutions in which private funds are invested in endowments and distributed in regular intervals for public purposes (Reich, 2016). Their grants may be targeted locally, nationally, or internationally, and often span a range of program areas. Endowed by a single donor, private foundations are governed by boards of trustees whose members are generally chosen based upon their relationship to the donor or their policy expertise. In most private foundations, donors and boards set the organization's strategic direction while professional program staff conduct grant making activities including proposal reviews, site visits to grantees, and grant evaluations.

Community foundations are organizations that raise funds from multiple sources (including individuals, foundations, and corporations) and make grants within a specific geographic region (Graddy & Morgan, 2006; Harrow, Jung, & Phillips, 2016). Community foundations' governing boards ideally comprise of members who reflect the diverse constituencies that make up the local community (Joseph, 1989). Staff members are responsible both for administering grants and for cultivating and advising donors to the foundation.

I define change efforts as instances of collective action that seek to disrupt entrenched political, economic, and/or social power structures and empower marginalized groups. In the case of Egypt, the 2011 uprisings represented a national movement for political, economic, and social justice with a heavy emphasis on political freedom, human rights, and a transition from autocratic to democratic governance (Brownlee, Masoud, & Reynolds, 2015).

The model identifies three factors theorized to affect foundations' ability to lead change efforts. These include political independence, or freedom from government control; financial independence, or freedom from reliance on external funding; and civic independence, or freedom from accountability to beneficiary communities.

Political Independence

Political independence refers to a foundation's freedom from government influence and control. In Western states, philanthropic foundations—private and community foundations alike—enjoy relatively high levels of political independence, and this is theorized to allow them to spearhead change efforts (Fleishman, 2007; Reich, 2016). Although foundations must adhere to basic procedural regulations and reporting requirements, they are generally free to fund whatever issues they choose so long as they advance a charitable public good. This means that foundations can take on priorities that fall outside of the government's agenda. Whereas government agencies are motivated to cater to the interests of the majority or the median voter, foundations have the prerogative to fight for the concerns of minority and/or marginalized groups: precisely those who tend to be the most outspoken—but least powerful—advocates for change.

However, foundations' political independence may be greater in theory than in practice. Foundations' resources are small compared with governments'. Although foundations may have the liberty to propose policy changes and experiment with innovative solutions to social problems, their leaders often view the government as a key partner in bringing those solutions to scale and implementing policy changes (Almog-Bar & Zychlinski, 2012; Thümler, 2011). Meanwhile, even governments that have traditionally left foundations to pursue their own initiatives are increasingly seeking to partner with foundations in policy development and implementation realms (Daly, 2011; Harrow & Jung, 2011; Smith, 2010). In addition, burgeoning foundation sectors in developing states may benefit from higher levels of government monitoring and reporting requirements, as such accountability mechanisms bolster trust among foundation beneficiaries and the general public (Wang, Graddy, & Morgan, 2011).

Financial Independence

Financial independence refers to a foundation's ability to rely on a steady stream of internal resources to fund its grant making, and by extension its level of accountability to donors. Private foundations have high levels of financial independence. Endowed with financial resources in perpetuity and beholden only to the vision of the founding donor, private foundations have grant making budgets that are both reliable in their size and unconstrained by the need to please a variety of donors. This is theorized to give them the freedom to pursue risky or unpopular change initiatives (Reich, 2016).

Community foundations, by contrast, have low levels of financial independence due to their need to regularly raise funds from elite members of the community. This reliance on contributions from elite donors to survive and grow may discourage community foundations from supporting change initiatives, particularly if the change threatens donors' interests (Guo & Brown, 2006; Millesen & Martin, 2014). Faced with a choice of leading change and alienating donors or taking a more conservative approach to funding to court the wealthy class, community foundations may find it in their strategic interests to take the latter approach. Young community foundations may be particularly sensitive to this tension between leading change and cultivating donor loyalty as they prioritize endowment building (Graddy & Morgan, 2006; Guo & Brown, 2006).

However, research suggests that private foundations' propensity to fund social justice and change rarely lives up to its theorized potential (O'Connor, 2010; Suárez, 2012). Rather, grant making tends to reflect the interests of elite donors and to perpetuate neoliberal corporate values, a trend especially notable in so-called venture philanthropy (Saltman, 2010). Moreover, the idea that the only influence on private foundations' priorities is a vague mission statement provided by a deceased (and thus powerless) founding donor is increasingly inaccurate. Family foundation boards are often comprised of extended family members of the founder (Pharoah & Keidan, 2010), and as more private foundations choose to spend down their assets in a limited period of time, the influence of founding donors is enhanced (Ostrower, 2009).

Civic Independence

Civic independence refers to a foundation's level of accountability to beneficiary communities. Private foundations tend to score high on this factor, which presumably inhibits their ability to lead change efforts that resonate with, and have legitimacy for, local civil society actors. Whereas some private foundations focus their grant making locally, many work on regional, national, and international scales. These foundations are removed from, and relatively unaccountable to, beneficiary communities (Fleishman, 2007; Reich, 2016). Although program officers may conduct site visits to meet with grantees, such foundations are not closely connected to, or embedded within, the communities of their grant recipients. Moreover, private foundations of all grant making scales tend to be managed by members of an elite establishment who may be out of touch with the challenges faced by the marginalized groups most likely

to advocate for change (LaMarche, 2014). As such, they are likely to lack both the knowledge and moral authority necessary to serve as legitimate leaders of change (Kohl-Arenas, 2015).

Community foundations, with their narrow geographic foci, locally recruited boards of directors, and wide donor bases, tend to be deeply embedded in the communities they serve and thus have low levels of civic independence. Familiarity with the local community's needs and priorities, coupled with the clout to bring together leaders from a variety of sectors, is thought to position community foundations to convene constituents and mobilize resources to advance change (Graddy & Morgan, 2006; Gronbjerg, 2006; Sacks, 2014). Once again, however, the picture is not necessarily clear. Often, community foundation boards are stacked with local elites who can court donors (Millesen & Martin, 2014). Their connections to marginalized, change-oriented groups are often tenuous at best. In addition, community foundations vary in their conceptualizations of localism and community (Jung et al., 2013), with some (e.g., the Silicon Valley Community Foundation) viewing the world as their community. Thus, the low civic independence of community foundations—and their corresponding position as local change agents—assumed in theory may not hold up in practice.

In sum, the literature suggests that foundations' levels of political, financial, and civic independence will shape their capacity to lead social change efforts, but that neither the direction of each factor's influence nor private and community foundations' levels of independence is clear-cut. Thus, the conceptual model should be a useful tool for analyzing, but not predicting, foundations' capacity to lead change. It is to this analysis that the article now turns.

Case Background

Traditions of institutionalized philanthropy have deep roots in Egypt. Prior to the mid-20th century, social welfare was largely funded by endowment funds from *awqaf* (singular, *waqf*), or Islamic trusts (Cizakca, 1998; Kuran, 2001; Zencirci, 2015). Political and economic elites established *awqaf* as private pious acts but earmarked endowment proceeds for public purposes. *Waqf* funds supported the development and maintenance of hospitals, schools, soup kitchens, religious institutions, and infrastructure projects, creating a public welfare system that relied largely on private benevolence. After the Nasser government nationalized *awqaf* in the early 1950s, it fell out of favor as a vehicle for private philanthropy (Atia, 2013).

Since the 1970s, Presidents Sadat and Mubarak increasingly privatized Egypt's economy and welfare state, setting the stage for the reemergence of institutionalized philanthropy (Atia, 2013). As these regimes retrenched public welfare spending, they encouraged NGOs to fill in the gaps and looked to business elites, who had profited from new economic privatization policies, to help bankroll Egypt's NGO sector through institutionalized philanthropy (Farah, 2009; Soliman, 2011). It was within this context of privatization that Egyptian NGOs multiplied and modern-day foundations were formed.

Just prior to the 2011 uprisings, Egypt was home to approximately 30,000 NGOs and a growing foundation sector (Abdou, Atia, Hussein, Kharas, & Maaty, 2011). The vast

majority of NGOs worked in realms of charity and economic development, and a very small number of human rights organizations addressed issues of public policy. In 2002, a new NGO law (Law 84) allowed for the creation of foundations. Estimates suggest that approximately 1,000 *mu'assasat*, or foundations, were established after the law went into effect. Most of these foundations were small and administered their own programs instead of making grants, essentially operating as NGOs (Atia, 2008). In addition, however, larger grant making foundations began to emerge. These foundations, which self-identified as private and community foundations, are the focus of the current study. Although their grant making budgets were small compared with those of the biggest Western foundations—official data are not available, but estimates suggest that private foundations contributed around US\$5 million to US\$10 million per year and community foundations contributed significantly less than that—the grants were sizable in Egypt, a developing state where NGOs operate on shoestring budgets, and the foundations represented significant players in Egypt's charitable landscape (Atia, 2008).

The foundations in this study were inspired by Egypt's culture of giving but were modeled after the major U.S. grant making foundations (Interviews, January 28 and February 21, 2010). They were not part of the *waqf* revival movement that was occurring in other parts of the Arab world (Atia, 2013). Although Egypt's community foundation leaders indicated that they used the concept of *waqf* to promote their community foundations, this was done in the spirit of reviving community-based philanthropy rather than as attempt bringing back the traditional form of *waqf*. The original *waqf* more closely resembled private foundations, with a single donor and a board that made decisions on behalf of the donor; however, Egypt's private foundation leaders did not mention the concept of *waqf* when discussing the birth and evolution of their foundations. Instead, they looked abroad for inspiration. As a result, Egypt's modern-day foundations largely resembled the major U.S.-based private and community foundations in terms of both their structures and the language they used to describe their work (referring, for example, to "strategic" and "effective" philanthropy). Various unique aspects of the Egyptian foundations—for example, they were still in the early phases of building endowments—will be elucidated in the application of the conceptual model.

Prior to the 2011 uprisings, Law 84 of 2002 constrained foundations' activities to the realm of economic development (Herrold, 2016). It prohibited any activities that could be deemed "political," and thus Egypt's foundations carefully avoided initiatives related to politics or policy. (The Mubarak regime turned a blind eye to human rights organizations to win approval from Western donors; however, even these organizations did not cross certain red lines.) Although Law 84 remained in effect after the 2011 uprisings, NGOs began to ignore its strictures with the belief that the transitional government of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) was on the side of the people and would permit organizations' new political reform activities. While by late 2011 the SCAF did begin to crack down on Egypt's NGO sector, the window of opportunity created by the 2011 uprisings lasted for about a year and many organizations took advantage.

Egypt's two community foundations quickly positioned themselves to lead local political reform initiatives. They did so through three approaches: advocacy, oversight of democratic political processes, and voter education. One foundation led community-based

efforts to demand that government officials recognize the legal rights of the community's residents who had died while protesting in the uprisings. This foundation also trained local volunteers to serve as monitors in Egypt's first post-Mubarak election. Both community foundations created programs to educate and register voters. One adapted its existing youth arts program to incorporate political education. Children in the program created drawings to depict various aspects of democratic political processes, and the drawings were distributed to illiterate community members. The other foundation launched a political education and voter registration campaign for the local community that aimed to build awareness and participation. The foundation hosted a series of village meetings in which local volunteers and participants discussed the uprisings' aims, democratic political processes, and citizens' right to vote.

By contrast, Egypt's private foundations failed to change their grant making strategies and instead remained focused on economic development. "It's strange," said a staff member of an Arab foundation support organization. "No one is reacting. They were caught off guard. No one is re-thinking. Thoughts are not evolving . . . [The Arab Spring] is in front of our eyes but we are not building on [protesters] success" (Interview, March 2, 2011). Private foundation leaders confirmed that they were "sticking with the same thing" (Interview, June 29, 2011) and not funding new projects related to political reform.

Data and Method

This research is designed around a case study (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007) of Egyptian private and community foundations and is part of a larger study of the roles of Egyptian NGOs, foundations, and international donors in pre- and post-uprising Egypt.

Fieldwork spanned 26 months between January 2010 and August 2014 and included participant observation, interviews, and analysis of primary and secondary documents. Findings for this study are based primarily upon 19 interviews with leaders of 11 distinct private foundations and four interviews with leaders of two distinct community foundations. In my analysis, I also draw on data from interviews with other civil society actors that help to contextualize and triangulate the findings.

Contacts were made primarily through snowball sampling, which despite its potential for bias was appropriate in this study both because there is no publicly available database of Egyptian NGOs and foundations and because it opened countless doors during a time of heightened suspicion of foreigners in Egypt. Interviews were semistructured and interviewees were guaranteed anonymity due to the politically sensitive nature of the topic. Most were prearranged, lasted between 1 and 2 hr, and were conducted in the interviewee's office. Open-ended questions were deployed to encourage interviewees to freely expound on their organizations' goals and operations as well as their views on Egyptian civil society and its role in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings. In addition, I analyzed primary documents including organizations' websites, annual reports, and press releases. I also observed conferences, meetings, and daily activities of local foundations and NGOs and attended protests where I talked with local activists.

I transcribed all interview notes immediately after the interviews took place. I used discourse analysis to analyze and understand variations' interpretations (Johnston, 2002; Neumann, 2008). I then coded and analyzed the field notes thematically. After building the conceptual model presented in this study, my analysis moved back and forth between the model and my data as I developed a "dialogue" between theory and evidence (Ragin, 1987).

Conceptual Model Applied

This section presents the analysis of Egyptian private and community foundations' responses to the 2011 uprisings using the conceptual model proposed above.

Political Independence

Prior to the 2011 uprisings, Egypt's private and community foundations had low levels of political independence due to extensive government regulation of Egypt's NGO and foundation sectors, manifested primarily through Law 84 of 2002. Leaders of both private and community foundations indicated that intrusive government monitoring affected their work, and that prior to the 2011 uprisings it prevented them from working on political or policy issues. The program director of one community foundation indicated that members of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS), which was officially responsible for overseeing NGOs and foundations, came to the foundation's premises regularly to inspect its records and observe its activities. "We must tell MOSS about everything we do," the program officer said. "It takes a lot of time and stops our work" (Interview, February 6, 2010). The program officer of a private foundation agreed, indicating that the foundation could not go ahead with its work prior to government approval, and that doing so could land the foundation staff in jail. "The point is to help people," the program officer said. "It's not useful to fight the government" (Interview, January 28, 2010).

However, while both types of foundations were affected by Mubarak-era control, the foundations had adopted different relationships with the regime. Whereas Egypt's private foundations aligned with Mubarak and his priorities, the community foundations took a more oppositional stance. These different approaches in turn affected the foundations' capacities to respond quickly to the 2011 uprisings.

Egypt's private foundations were created, and remained governed, by business elites who had built corporate empires through a system of crony capitalism in which the government exchanged business contracts and monopoly rights for political loyalty (El-Tarouty, 2015). Private foundation boards consisted of family relatives of the founder, senior executives of the founder's corporation, and experts in the development fields in which the foundation made grants. Thus, much of the private foundations' board members were directly or indirectly tied to corporations, which were in turn tied to the Mubarak regime.

As part of their clientelistic relations with Mubarak, private foundation donors used their foundations to support the regime's neoliberal economic development agenda by

targeting their grants to NGOs working on projects that aligned with the government's priorities (Soliman, 2011). Leaders of private foundations openly admitted their donors' ties to Mubarak. Speaking in 2010, one foundation program officer said, "[Foundations] are very closely affiliated with [the government] . . . At the National Democratic Party conference the government highlights areas where it needs support from business. This will impact the agendas of foundations" (Interview, February 4, 2010). Another described a "three-ring show" in which the government approved projects, foundations provided funding, and NGOs delivered services (Interview, January 28, 2010).

Egypt's community foundations were created by development professionals and governed by academics, development professionals, and everyday citizens. Unlike the leaders of Egypt's private foundations, which maintained close ties to Mubarak, Egypt's community foundation leaders took an oppositional stance toward the regime. Their foundations, while still complying with Law 84, subtly challenged the Mubarak regime's policies. For example, by including the word "*Waqfeya*" in its Arabic name, one foundation signaled its attempt to reclaim private philanthropy from government appropriation and return decisions about resource allocation to local citizens. The other community foundation worked to empower Egypt's Bedouin community, whom for years the Mubarak regime had marginalized, denied basic rights, and allowed no voice or vote (Gilbert & Al-Jebaali, 2012). In the context of an autocracy, in which a governing regime used its power to silence citizen voices and control social welfare and development priorities, efforts to empower private citizens with the agency to make decisions affecting their communities and to demand their basic rights were decidedly political.

The foundations' contrasting stances toward the Mubarak regime—with private foundations aligning with the regime and community foundations subtly challenging it—affected their responses to the 2011 uprisings, slowing the private foundations' responses and bolstering community foundations' ability to lead political reform efforts.

Although leaders of Egypt's private foundations admitted their culpability in helping to maintain the political status quo under Mubarak, they indicated that they were eager to realign with civil society after the uprisings and help to bring a more democratic system of governance to Egypt. Fallout from ties to the Mubarak regime slowed this realignment. In late 2011, the SCAF levied a series of corruption charges against allies of the deposed Mubarak regime (Springborg, 2011). Donors to Egypt's private foundations were targeted, including those of the EFG Hermes Foundation, the Mansour Foundation for Development, and the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development. Indictments were made arbitrarily (Springborg, 2011), leaving the entire business community, including foundation donors, uncertain and apprehensive about the future.

A scholar of Egyptian civil society described foundation donors as, "completely confused about what to do . . . They were all tied to Mubarak and are now vulnerable. They want to do more but they're not sure if they are welcome" (Interview, July 4, 2011). Private foundation donors confirmed this. They indicated that they wanted to use their foundations to advance change, but at the same time wondered "if [they] were going down with the regime" (Interview, April 10, 2012). One said,

The revolution ended an era we all thought should end. There was a small group controlling the country. There was oppression and a lack of human rights. But the consolation was stability with [Hosni] Mubarak, Gamal [Mubarak], and the military. We knew where the line was. We knew how to adjust. Now no one has a feel of what's going on . . . The instability factor is high. It is difficult in the face of instability. (Interview, July 18, 2011)

As a result of this uncertainty, Egypt's private foundations adopted a "wait and see" approach to the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings, indicating that they would stick to the safe realm of economic development until a new president was elected and power realignments had become clear.

The community foundations, while not fearless of leading civil society's political reform efforts after the uprisings, were better positioned to do so due to their prior experience in contesting government policy and advancing citizens' interests. They found themselves on the right side of history and could seamlessly move into roles as citizen mobilizers. The leader of one of the foundations told me that the uprisings were "about dignity" and that the foundation's work was already aimed at nurturing citizen dignity and empowerment (Interview, July 14, 2011). Unencumbered by ties to the deposed regime, the community foundations boards could "act quickly" (Interview, July 14, 2011) to adapt the foundations' strategies to facilitate local residents' efforts to build a more democratic Egypt.

They admitted the risk—One leader said that her foundation's work "was a huge risk" and that she "was scared" (Interview, July 14, 2011), while the other described the foundation's work as "edgy" (Interview, October 22, 2011). One explained, "Other NGOs said no, and hesitated because of the history of control. Civil society is coming from a culture of strict government control. It is scared. It thinks it is not free" (Interview, July 14, 2011). But the community foundation leaders, who had conceived their foundations as vehicles for change, saw the uprisings as a window of opportunity to marshal a surge in citizens' desire to participate in reforming Egypt and augment their foundations' existing efforts to empower people to exercise their voice and claim their rights.

Financial Independence

Neither Egypt's private foundations nor its community foundations were financially independent. Both types of foundations relied on regular but unpredictable donations to fund their grant making activities, with private foundations receiving funds from founding donors, board members, and the corporate parents, and community foundations receiving donations from local community members, board members, and Western donors. The private foundations' reliance on donors slowed their responses to the uprisings as a deteriorating national economy strained corporate profits and, by extension, reduced the foundations' grant making budgets. The community foundations were less hampered by their lack of financial independence, as their donors provided moral support for the foundations' efforts to lead political reform efforts and the

foundations' structures facilitated an approach in which the foundations served as conveners and facilitators of local advocacy efforts rather than grant makers to other advocacy organizations.

Still in their youth, Egypt's private foundations were in the early stages of building endowments and thus relied on yearly financial contributions from the founding donor, members of the donor's family, and board members of the donor's corporation for their grant making budgets. Some of these foundations were housed within a parent corporation and thus structurally resembled what in the United States are referred to as "corporate foundations." These foundations did, however, clearly identify themselves as foundations seeking to build endowments and be independent from the parent company. They emphatically distinguished themselves from corporate social responsibility departments that were part and parcel of the corporation. Others were registered as stand-alone private foundations, but they, too, were in the early stages of building endowments. Thus, Egypt's private foundations all relied heavily on their parent corporations' profits to fund their annual grant making budgets. Some foundations received a set percentage of corporate profits for their grant making, while others relied on annual donations from the founders and board members, whose fortunes were themselves tied to their corporations' success.

This link between corporate profits and the foundations' grant making budgets hindered their capacity to fund new democratic political reform projects after the uprisings. Soon after Mubarak's ouster, Egypt's economy declined precipitously, with GDP growth rates falling to -4% in 2011 and rising to only 2% to 3% for all but one quarter between 2012 and 2013 (<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/gdp-growth>). This economic downturn threatened business profits and, correspondingly, private foundations' grant making budgets. "The [foundation board members] own the corporation. The revolution affected their profits," explained the executive director of one foundation. "I took 25 percent of the administrative costs and gave them to the beneficiaries. I committed to not asking for funds for two years," this director went on to say (Interview, April 10, 2012). The leader of another foundation added, "Regarding the funding side, when the company [that funds the foundation] was making money it gave much to the foundation, which then made large grants. Now we don't have money" (Interview, July 18, 2011). These strains on corporate profits confined the private foundations to funding existing projects and precluded them from expanding their grant making to include political reform initiatives.

Like Egypt's private foundations, the community foundations aimed to build endowments but were in the very early phases of doing so and thus relied heavily on annual contributions from external donors, including local community members, board members, and international grant makers. Both foundations received significant support from the Global Fund for Community Foundations, which provided start-up funding and ongoing support. The founders indicated that their budgets were relatively small, and that in addition to making grants to local NGOs, the foundations also operated their own programs. Also, due to budget limitations, the community foundations employed few paid staff and depended heavily on volunteers.

The community foundations' ties to external donors, along with their small grant making budgets, actually bolstered their capacity to lead political reform efforts after the 2011 uprisings. Some of their largest grants came from Western donors who conceptualized community foundations as agents of change. This support emboldened the foundations to lead local democracy building initiatives. Describing the foundation's voter education program, one foundation director said, "If this isn't what [our Western donor] is trying to achieve, I don't know what is" (Interview, October 22, 2011). Both foundations indicted that the Global Fund for Community Foundations was a particularly important source of support, not only providing financial backing but also surrounding the Egyptian foundations with a worldwide group of peers who all subscribed to a vision of community foundations as catalysts for change.

The community foundations' reliance on volunteers to carry out programs also facilitated their responses to the uprisings, as they were well positioned to nimbly build political reform initiatives into their repertoires of self-administered activities. "The community spirit is there," explained one foundation leader (Interview, July 14, 2011). The foundations marshaled this spirit, drawing residents together to advance political reform at local levels. The foundations were cautious to avoid calling attention to themselves as organizations, even describing their work as "undercover" (Interview, July 14, 2011). One foundation leader explained that her employees who had previously earned salaries were working as volunteers so that foreign grants would not have to flow through the foundation and attract government attention. These strategies helped the foundations to position themselves as facilitators of the collective action of local residents which, at the time, the SCAF had not yet begun to repress.

Civic Independence

Egypt's private foundations were based either in downtown Cairo or in the parent corporation's headquarter offices located in greater Cairo. The offices were formal, with corporate-style furniture, up-to-date technology, and tea boys. Program staff were responsible for the day-to-day responsibilities of grant making, including soliciting and evaluating proposals, making grant recommendations to the board, conducting site visits to potential and current grantees, and evaluating the results of grants. Although these staff members took site visits to meet with grantees, their office spaces denoted a level of distance from beneficiary populations.

Moreover, the loyalty that foundation donors cultivated with Mubarak left the foundations both removed from, and distrusted by, activists and grassroots groups within civil society. This gave the private foundations high levels of civic independence and correspondingly low levels of trust and accountability among the people and organizations pushing for change. "Your name is [our foundation's name] and the beneficiaries are suspicious," indicated the executive director of one private foundation (Interview, April 10, 2012). Leaders of Egypt's human rights organizations, which were at the front lines of political reform initiatives, were particularly wary of private foundations' motives and their legitimacy as change agents. Said the director of one,

At our organization, we hire human rights lawyers. Egyptian foundations won't fund this. They won't fund you to promote ideas against the government philosophy. At the end of the day a foundation is a corporation and they don't want to lose their government relations. (Interview, July 28, 2011)

Foundation leaders indicated that they needed to renegotiate their "relationships with power" and "realign with the grassroots" (Participant observation, May 6, 2011). This process would take time, however, and until it was complete, the foundations were unable to serve as trusted leaders of reform. "If we are going to enlist people from the community to [rebuild Egypt], we need the people's buy-in," said the donor to one private foundation. "But if you're in business," or connected to a business as this foundation was, "they don't trust you" (Interview, February 26, 2012). Foundation leaders acknowledged that they needed to "unlearn cultures of unproductive, corrupt practices," but did not want to "throw out what works" and were still struggling to figure out, "what is to be kept, what is to be set aside, and . . . how to begin where ordinary Arabs stand" (Participant observation, May 6, 2011).

Egypt's community foundations, by contrast, were deeply embedded in their neighborhoods. Their offices coupled as community gathering places, and in fact during my first visit to one community foundation, I wondered if I had found the correct space. Instead of rows of offices, I walked into a large room filled with long tables covered with paint, brushes, paper, and smocks. The walls were plastered with art. While prior to the 2011 uprisings, art classes hosted at the foundation served as revenue-generating activities, after the uprisings the classes turned into activism as the students depicted scenes of democratic political practices (e.g., voting in elections) that would be used to educate the illiterate members of the local community. That same room full of tables was also a convening site for local activists. Before the uprisings, they met to discuss local priorities and build the foundation's agenda. After the uprisings, they gathered to launch an advocacy campaign to recognize local community members who had been killed during the protests and to press charges against the government for complicity in the protesters' deaths.

Egypt's community foundations rooted themselves locally from their establishment, despite the fact that their founders were to different degrees somewhat removed from their beneficiary populations. The founder of one community foundation was only a part-time resident of the local community, spending the other part of the year in the United Kingdom. The other founder was a longtime community resident but had earned university degrees from elite institutions and also participated in philanthropy fellowships abroad. Although inspired by the global community foundation movement, the founding donors wanted to create "something local" (Interview, January 23, 2010) that would be a "trusted vehicle" (Interview, October 22, 2011) for community philanthropy in the Egyptian communities they served. Toward this end, they invoked the concept of *waqf* when establishing and describing their foundations. Ultimately, their foundations brought together the U.S.-based community foundation practice of raising funds from a wide variety of community members, with the *waqf* concept of using endowed funds for community development.

Egypt's community foundations were structured for community ownership, employing local residents as staff members and volunteers and relying on community input when making decisions about program and funding priorities. The aim was to "facilitate [local citizens] having a voice" (Interview, October 22, 2011) not only in the foundations' operations but also, by extension, in their communities' futures. When the 2011 uprisings occurred, the foundations felt a moral obligation to propel the new-found spirit of political engagement that sprang forth among local citizens. The foundations' political reform programs were designed and administered "through and by local community members" (Interview, October 22, 2011). "It doesn't work when people in Cairo decide what people want," the founder of one community foundation said. "We sit and drink tea [with our beneficiaries] and listen to what people want" (Interview, October 22, 2011).

Conclusion

The conceptual model developed in this article proved to be a useful tool for analyzing private and community foundations' divergent responses to the 2011 uprisings. Foundations' levels of political, financial, and civic independence did shape their capacity to lead civil society's social change efforts, but sometimes in surprising and nuanced ways. Egypt's private and community foundations both had low levels of political independence and were subject to extensive government regulation, monitoring, and harassment. But the foundations' stances toward the Mubarak regime—with private foundations aligning with the regime and community foundations opposing it—positioned them with different capacities to lead change efforts in the post-Mubarak era. Whereas community foundations were seen as natural change agents, private foundations struggled to disentangle themselves from Mubarak and realign with civil society.

Both types of foundations also had low levels of financial independence, but their sources of funds affected foundations' ability to lead change. Private foundations' ties to corporate donors led to constrained grant making budgets and conservative grant making strategies, while community foundations' international donors provided them with a global community who supported their change efforts and the foundations' small budgets forced them to subtly integrate reform activities into their existing operations rather than make grants that might draw the government's watchful eye.

Finally, private foundations' high level of civic independence left them perceived by civil society as illegitimate leaders of grassroots change efforts, whereas community foundations' deep local embeddedness—and corresponding low level of civic independence—positioned them as natural leaders of local civil society's reform initiatives. This is the one factor that played out largely as theory would predict.

The case of Egypt is unique due to its political, economic, and cultural nuances; the foundations' young ages and particular financial and operating structures; and the specific features of the 2011 uprisings. However, the article makes some key contributions to theory building. First, it brings two quite disparate literatures—that which studies private foundations and that which studies community foundations—together

in the same study and builds a comprehensive model of foundations' capacity to lead change efforts. Second, the article applies the model to a real-time social movement. Unlike most studies, which analyze social movement patronage long after the movement ended, this study includes data gathered before, during, and after the heady days of Egypt's 2011 uprisings. Third, it expands the burgeoning literature on foundations in non-Western contexts.

The private and community foundation forms that are the subjects of much of the literature are becoming increasingly obsolete as foundation leaders experiment with new structures and new conceptualizations of, for example, what constitutes "community" and what values beyond the money foundations bring to their grantees, beneficiaries, and wider communities (Jung et al., 2013). Although much of the literature on community foundations suggests that older foundations with larger core endowments have more discretion over strategy and thus greater change leadership potential (Graddy & Morgan, 2006), the case of Egypt shows that even young foundations with small budgets but large volunteer bases can nimbly position themselves as facilitators of community members' advocacy efforts (see also AbouAssi, 2014). As small community foundations proliferate globally, particularly in states where governments repress NGOs, foundations' roles as community conveners, rather than grant makers, may gain even greater relevancy.

In addition, foundation sectors are increasingly proliferating in nondemocratic contexts where organizations have far less political independence than Western foundations. Alice O'Connor (2010) has shown that even in the U.S. case, the level of government support for a movement's goals has affected the leverage of foundation social movement patronage. O'Connor argues that

the most effective movement funders have taken this into account; not . . . by pulling back in the face of an adverse political establishment but by anticipating future moments of expanded political possibility with resources for activists to develop more innovative change agendas. (p. 346)

Not only were Egypt's community foundations able to maneuver around political repression; they did so creatively through alignment with community-based activists—a model that is becoming increasingly common throughout the developing world. Given these contributions, the conceptual model should be tested in additional settings.

On a final note, neither the conceptual model nor the case study seeks to evaluate the impact of foundation social movement patronage. Rather, this article focuses on foundations' capacity to act. Future studies should address the question of impact by developing measures to evaluate impact and identifying the factors that affect impact levels.

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