

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH: THE PROMISE OF TAHRIR SQUARE
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LECTURE 1:
**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND DEMOCRACY:
THE CLASH OF OLD AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN EGYPT**

The brief history of the January 2011 revolution in Egypt could be seen as a clash between two types of social movements: old and new. The old or classical type of social movement is a polyclass, composed of individuals, organizations, and parties all sharing one global ideal, regardless of its ambiguity. The new type of social movement on the other hand, is limited mostly to people belonging to one social class and has far less ambitious goals. In the case of the January revolution in Egypt, the former type is represented by the Islamist movement, while the second type is represented by a host of groups made up mostly of middle-class young people like the Kefaya, the April 6, and the March 9 movements.

These two types of movements took part in the January revolution, although the initiative was taken mostly by people belonging to the new movements. But once Mubarak was overthrown, sharp disagreements divided the two types. Those who were never seen as advocates of democracy, namely, the Islamists, were determined to push for early elections to establish a parliament that would, through a constituent committee, draft a constitution and prepare the country for presidential elections that would mark the end of military rule by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces which ruled the country since the ouster of Mubarak. The new movements, which had initiated the revolution in the name of democracy were opposed to holding early elections and insisted that enough time should pass before the country goes to the polls.

The election for a people's assembly—the lower house of the parliament—was held, and won massively by the Islamists. The new social movements are not happy with this outcome of their initiated revolution. They are calling for popular mobilization on the first anniversary of the revolution in order to press their demands for the revolution to continue. The country is divided therefore between two claims of legitimacy: the legitimacy of the ballot box and the legitimacy of the revolution.

The lectures will analyze the distinction between these two types of social movements, its applicability to Egypt and will explain in detail the divergences and commonalities between the two types and explores the implications of their clashing ideals for the future of democracy in Egypt.

LECTURE 2:
**Social Movements' Strategies and Modes of Engagement with the State and Non-State
Actors: Comparison between Old and New Social Movements of Egypt**

Old and new social movements exhibit different modes and strategies in engaging with civil society and non-state actors. One may say that old social movements, in the Egyptian case at least, have realized that their ideals can only be achieved gradually in a long term process and that control over the state will come only when they manage to penetrate a wide variety of civil society organizations. Without reading Gramsci, they adopt a strategy of war of positions. New social movements, on the other hand, are impatient to effect the revolutionary transformations they long for. They discredit most civil society organizations as either ineffective or tools manipulated by conservative forces, preferring direct protest actions as they continue to wait for the day when the masses would follow them in a frontal assault on all sites of power in society.

The fall of Mubarak's regime constituted a turning point for both old and new social movements. The older Islamist movement has a history of working through civil society organizations, such as citizens' associations, professional associations, university students' and professors' bodies. It also did not shun any opportunity to work with the government. The governments of Sadat and Mubarak, suspicious of their final goals, not only rejected any cooperation with the movement, but also harassed its members. Sadat, at one point in September 1981, put many of its leaders in prison. Mubarak allowed candidates of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) to participate in elections and to become members of the parliament, but was determined to purge government bureaucracy of any sign of their presence. Things have changed immediately after the January Revolution. Leaders of MB accepted willingly to engage in direct talks with most senior officials and later to support the military council which ruled the country following the ouster of Mubarak. Opponents of the group however, denounced what they considered a deal between the military and the MB. The electoral victories of the Muslim Brothers and the Salafists who constitute another wing of the Islamist movement confirm such suspicions among liberal and leftist groups.

The new social movements on the other hand, were also victims of repression under Mubarak. Only Facebook groups managed to escape such repression mainly because the regime underestimated their capacity for large mass mobilization. Following the revolution, although repression continued, they shunned cooperation with governmental bodies, especially the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. They resort to some professional associations as a public space for them and are also active within human rights groups. But their favorite mode of action is mass protest through demonstrations, strikes and sit-ins. Their electoral successes are limited. They do not trust parliament as a tool for revolutionary transformation. They believe that masses are on their side. They are waiting for a second act of the revolution that would bring them to the helm of the state or at least leaders who are more sympathetic with their aspirations.

The strategy adopted by the old social movement seems to be working as its leaders are about to control both the legislature and the executive powers in post-revolutionary Egypt. If they do not fulfill their promises of decent living to those who voted for them, the new social movements may finally get the opportunity to have the masses on their side again.