International support for the Arab uprisings: Understanding sympathetic collective action using theories of social dominance and social identity

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Abstract
Inspired by the popular Arab protests against oppressive regimes that began in 2010, people around the world protested in sympathy with the Arab peoples. The present research draws on two major theories of intergroup relations to develop an initial integrative model of sympathetic collective action. We incorporate social dominance theory’s (SDT) concept of (rejectionist) legitimizing myths with the solidarity and emotional mediation concept of the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) to understand motivations for sympathetic collective action among bystanders. Using data from 12 nations (N = 1,480), we tested three models: (a) SIMCA (i.e., solidarity, anger, and efficacy), (b) a social dominance theory model of collective action (i.e., social dominance orientation and ideologies concerning Arab competence), and (c) an integrated model of sympathetic collective action combining both theories. Results find the greatest support for an integrated model of collective action. Discussion focuses on theoretical pluralism and suggestions for future research.

Keywords
collective action, ideology, identity, social change, social dominance

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On December 17, 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire, inspiring mass protests across Tunisia and other Arab nations in the subsequent months (Abouzeid, 2011). Many Arab people who were similarly situated by oppressive regimes identified with Bouazizi’s economic and political frustrations, and his dramatic act bared the illegitimacy of their oppressive regimes. With the hasty retreat of Ben Ali, people’s sense of efficacy in changing those regimes increased, prompting more protest and active opposition (e.g., Lynch, 2012). One theoretical understanding of these events is that the perceived illegitimacy and instability of status differences between Arab peoples and their rulers provoked collective protests against the peoples’ disadvantaged position (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). In addition to the Arab people’s protests within their societies, many international observers engaged in sympathetic collective action in support of the Arab people’s collective action (Strenger, 2011). The explanation derived from social identity theory may provide an adequate theoretical account of why the Arab people protested, but we may need to expand our theoretical understanding to explain the motivations of bystanders who protested in support of the Arab popular protests.

Using the 2010–2011 Arab uprisings as a case in point, this paper integrates two major theories of intergroup relations to understand what motivates sympathetic collective action, that is, political participation on behalf of people in other groups. One major missing part of the story is that to analyze significant social and political protests against oppression, we must acknowledge what enabled oppression to exist in the first place. Simply understanding what motivates people to work against oppression does not address what enabled oppression. Therefore, this paper considers aspects of oppression, using social dominance theory and social identity theory, to address more deeply motivations for sympathetic collective action.

**Social Dominance Theory and Collective Action**

Violence and its threat are major tools of repression; the near-monopolization of economic resources is another (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Both these methods are practiced by several repressive Arab (and other) regimes. However, the nation-state is not an adequate unit of analysis for understanding this oppression and the struggles against it because many Arab political factions are intertwined across borders, and also entangled with, challenged, or supported by agents outside those nations, including, notably, the US, Russia, Iran, Israel, Turkey, and the EU (Pratto, Sidanius, Bou Zeineddine, Kteily, & Levin, 2014). Hence, we should also consider why people in those nations and others tolerate or support the oppression of Arabs and/or tolerate or support ways their governments support domestic oppression of Arabs. Sympathetic collective action by outsiders or third-party publics, whose social categories and fates are not tied to the primary oppression victims, may also be a significant aspect of power struggles (Saab, Tausch, Spears, & Cheung, 2014; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Subasic, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008; van Zomeren, Postmes, Spears, & Bettache, 2011). In fact, Pratto, Stewart, and Bou Zeineddine (2013) have extended social dominance theory to analyze such complexities in intergroup power dynamics.

Another missing part of the story of the contemporary popular Arab uprisings is that proregime protests immediately followed antigovernment protests. Although the plethora of research on collective action considers collective action towards “progressive” goals, it is a fact that all collective action is not counterdominant. More importantly, pro- and anti- do not always come in different age cohorts or eras. Rather, as social dominance theory has emphasized, all large collectives contain elements of both pro- and antimainstream forces and ideologies, and they are in a struggle for predominance. Further, as social identity theory has emphasized, the very boundaries of groups also change; for example, the new coalitions within Syria and Arab nations changing relationships to Turkey, Iran, and the West, and those nations changing relationships to each other. Both these facts necessitate a different way of categorizing political groups and ideologies that is linked to particular times and places.
For this reason we draw on social dominance theory and consider that some political movements may be intended to or serve to maintain hierarchies (called hierarchy-enhancing) whereas others may be intended to or serve to attenuate or eliminate hierarchies (called hierarchy-attenuating). In the case under study, the initial popular uprisings were largely perceived to be hierarchy-attenuating and the counter (proregime) protests as hierarchy-enhancing. The more people prefer group hierarchy in general, the more we would expect them to favor proregime protests, despite the fact that those protests are also collective action. Conversely, the lower outsiders are on social dominance orientation, the more they should support the popular Arab uprisings (Pratto, Saguy, et al., 2014).

Social dominance theory’s distinction between forces that mitigate against oppression and those that maintain it is also useful for understanding how legitimizing myths play into power struggles. Legitimizing myths are widely known ideologies, stereotypes, worldviews, moral philosophies, or other frames that serve to legitimize social orders. For example, scholars have persuaded Western political leaders that oppressing Arab nations makes the world more safe and stable (e.g., Little, 2002, pp. 118–155). Further, the stereotype of Arab incompetence is widely promulgated by scholars who influence U.S. presidents (e.g., Patai, 1973), in Western mass media and in political commentary, including from prominent politicians (e.g., Friedman, 2006; Little, 2002, pp. 9–42; Parker & Opell, 2012; Zogby, 2010, p. 39). Such legitimizing myths likely persuade publics against the agenda of the Arab uprisings.

However, people do sometimes reject myths that legitimate hierarchy and oppression, and eventually invent rejectionist legitimizing myths to be used for progressive changes (see Pratto et al., 2013, for a discussion). Rejection of hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths may not only lead to opposition to hierarchy-maintaining policies (e.g., Pratto, Stallworth, & Conway-Lanz, 1998), but to collective action intended to reduce or eliminate oppression. Prior studies have shown that endorsement of legitimizing myths can statistically predict preferences about political factions and vote choices (Pratto, Sidanius, et al., 2014; Pratto et al., 1998). Extending social dominance theory’s reasoning to a new outcome measure, rejecting stereotypes of Arabs as incompetent can be expected to be associated with sympathetic collective action on their behalf. Moreover, social dominance theory hypothesizes that endorsement of legitimizing myths should mediate the statistical influence of the more general social dominance orientation on political action and attitudes. We tested both of these predictions in the present study.

Social dominance theory’s broad conception of legitimizing myths includes conceptions of ideology. In a comprehensive review, Klandermans (2003, p. 697) advocated for integrating ideology along with identity and instrumentality to understand why people engage in collective action. The present study contributes to such integration by also considering how identity issues and perceived instrumentality (efficacy) as well as ideology and social dominance orientation might motivate sympathetic collective action (see also van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & van Dijk, 2011).

Social Identity Theory and Collective Action

Using social identity theory to understand sympathetic collective action requires careful consideration. The social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) is a prominent model of collective action inspired by social identity approaches (van Zomeren et al., 2008). SIMCA focuses primarily on people who experience collective disadvantage and who can categorize themselves as members of disadvantaged groups. When people are highly identified with their disadvantaged social group, they are more likely to experience anger at perceived injustices (van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004) and feel efficacy in participating in political processes (van Zomeren, Saguy, & Schellhaus, 2013) to address their group’s disadvantaged position. These feelings increase people’s willingness to engage in
collective action on behalf of their disadvantaged group.

Social identity theory has always allowed that there is both fluid individual subjectivity in one’s own definition of one’s ingroup, and more consensual changes in collective definitions of group boundaries. Self-categorization is said to occur when a particular social category becomes a salient basis for self-definition (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Contemporary work has further emphasized that the basis for self-categorization can be broad, including opinion-based groups (Thomas & McGarty, 2009) and multiple group memberships at different levels of analysis (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Given the right context, virtually any social category can form the basis for self-categorization and therefore motivate collective action (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Thus, although many people around the globe who demonstrated in support of the Arab uprisings did not share the same fate, ethnicity, or nationality as the Arab protestors, their protests may have been motivated by their sense of solidarity with the (nonelite) Arab peoples.

In fact, SIMCA suggests that when people feel connection to or solidarity with a disadvantaged group, they are more likely to engage in collective action on the group’s behalf (see also Subasic et al., 2008). Solidarity causes feelings of anger at the group’s collective disadvantage, and this anger motivates them to engage in collective action (Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012). Recent research has extended SIMCA to understand why people in advantaged group positions may engage in collective action on behalf of other low power groups. This research examines actions done on behalf of another group, which has been largely ignored by social identity approaches. In one line of research, van Zomeren et al. (2011) argue that “moral convictions” are an important variable for understanding collective action among the advantaged. Moral convictions are conceptualized and operationalized as how strongly people feel about their support or opposition to social inequality. They found that advantaged group members who rejected inequality and then felt strongly about their opinions toward discrimination (regarding Dutch Muslims) were more likely to engage in collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged group. Research on opinion-based groups (Bluc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007) argues that when people form groups on the basis of opinions (e.g., political attitudes as a basis for political party membership), people are likely to engage in political behavior. This research demonstrates the importance of intergroup beliefs in motivating collective action from a social identity theory perspective.

When people feel solidarity with their disadvantaged group, they also feel that they can be successful at correcting the perceived injustice and are more likely to engage in collective action (Giguère & Lalonde, 2010). Although the original research on SIMCA examined group efficacy as a predictor of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2004), recent research points to the importance of examining other forms of efficacy (Hornsey et al., 2006). Because our study examines collective action willingness among international bystanders to the Arab uprisings, a form of participative efficacy may be most relevant. For international observers, it may be difficult if not impossible to change the contentious Arab political systems, but international observers may believe that they can affect their own political systems in order to rally support for the Arab popular protests. The general belief that people’s collective action participation can affect their own political system to correct the perceived injustice can be an important predictor of collective action (van Zomeren, Saguy, & Schellhaus, 2013). Thus, we use political efficacy to predict collective action in the present study. In sum, SIMCA proposes that anger at perceived injustice (i.e., affective injustice; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and efficacy are two routes through which solidarity can lead to collective action. SIMCA predicts that, for example, if Syrians identify strongly with Syrians, they are more likely to become angry when the group is oppressed and disadvantaged, and to feel that they can successfully do something about their collective disadvantage, viz., to engage in collective action to protest against their oppressive regime.
An Integrated Model of Collective Action

The social identity model of collective action and the social dominance theory model of collective action can be integrated to understand the dynamics of collective action (e.g., Cameron & Nickerson, 2009) when one considers the meanings of social identities and considers ideology. The developers of the SIMCA model state “Ultimately, it may not necessarily be social identity or identity per se that prepares people for collective action, but rather the content of social identity” (van Zomeren et al., 2008, p. 522). Likewise, social dominance theory implies that social representations of other groups, such as stereotypes, could also be important in motivating sympathetic collective action (e.g., Pratto, 1999). Thus, shared stereotypes constitute the meaning of social groups, and the particular kind of contents relates to the kinds of expectations people have for the group and how one’s own group should respond to or treat them (e.g., Alexander, Brewer, & Livingstone, 2005; Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005). These beliefs can prescribe behavior or support for behavior that is consistent with these ideologies (e.g., “I support the Arab uprisings because the Arab people are competent to govern themselves”). Competence stereotypes can sometimes increase active facilitation to help the stereotype target (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007), so beliefs in Arab competence may increase collective action on behalf of Arabs. Integrating intergroup ideologies such as stereotypes alongside the SIMCA predictors can give a more comprehensive understanding of sympathetic collective action.

Further, although it is the social dominance theory tradition that has highlighted the importance of legitimizing myths, including political and cultural ideologies, in the practices that increase or decrease group power differentials (e.g., Green & Auer, 2013; Gutierrez & Unzueta, 2013; Lee, 2013; Pratto et al., 1998; Rosenthal, Levy, & Earnshaw, 2012), work on collective action from the social identity perspective has also highlighted the importance of ideology (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For example, one study found that ideology (vs. identity and instrumentality) was the strongest reason that people engage in protest (van Stekelenburg et al., 2011). Thus, this body of research also points to the content of collective ideologies or legitimizing myths as the central mediators of motivation to participate in collective action.

There are also a number of studies that lead us to expect that social dominance orientation (SDO) will be negatively associated with identification with disadvantaged groups. In numerous samples in the US, Pratto and Stewart (2012) showed that people tended to differentially identify with low (vs. high) powered social categories for race, gender, and sexual orientation to the extent they were low on SDO. Likewise, Cameron and Nickerson (2009) conducted a field study during actual social protests associated with the Americas Summit. Their results revealed that social dominance orientation, in particular anti-SDO disposition, lead individuals to identify with social movement groups challenging intergroup inequality, which in turn motivated them to engage in collective action. Further, Green and Auer (2013) also found that union identification mediates the relationship between SDO and active union participation. This study offers an encouraging first exploration of the presently proposed integration.

We therefore see social identity theory and social dominance theory approaches to collective action as complementary in that the SIMCA highlights the importance of the collective self and how the collective self feels about collective disadvantage, whereas social dominance theory approaches highlight the importance of belief systems about outgroups that can compel people to engage in sympathetic collective action. The integrated model of collective action we present unites these two perspectives as follows. People’s general opposition to inequality (e.g., low social dominance orientation, Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; moral convictions about opposing inequality, van Zomeren et al., 2011) should increase their solidarity with oppressed other groups (i.e., Arab people) and also their endorsement of
hierarchy-attenuating beliefs about oppressed groups (i.e., belief in Arab competence). Then, as in the social identity model of collective action, solidarity-based identification should increase anger at injustice and political efficacy to engage in collective action, and all three of these variables should then increase willingness to engage in sympathetic collective action. Simultaneously, according to the social dominance theory approach to collective action, the beliefs in Arab competence can increase collective action willingness and also increase group-based anger. This integrated model incorporates social dominance theory’s analysis of ideologies with the SIMCA’s analysis of group solidarity, emotion, and efficacy to understand the psychology of sympathetic collective action.

Overview of the Present Study

The present study tests a theoretical integration of social dominance theory and the SIMCA as applied to sympathetic collective action. We test our model with an international sample where we predict willingness to engage in a sympathetic collective action in support of the Arab uprisings from solidarity with the Arab people, anger, efficacy, beliefs concerning Arab competence, and social dominance orientation. We test the fit of these models and attempt to explain sympathetic collective action from this theoretical integration. As we used members of the public as participants, we used very few items to assess each construct.

Method

Participants

Participants were 1,480 people from 12 nations: Belgium (N = 113; francophones), Canada (N = 90; Québécois), China (N = 90), Greece (N = 150), Italy (N = 228), Lebanon¹ (N = 132), Netherlands (N = 60), Poland (N = 62), Switzerland (N = 50), Turkey (N = 124), the United Kingdom (N = 228), and the United States (N = 153). Demographic information and descriptive statistics for each nation are displayed in Table 1. Participants were 676 men, 732 women, and 82 had unreported gender. Participants also self-reported their socioeconomic status (SES) relative to others within their own countries: wealthy (N = 31), better than most (N = 255), good (N = 543), so so (N = 416), poor (N = 143), or destitute (N = 18) with 74 missing or unreported SES. Participants were 36 years old on average (SD = 14.42, Min = 14, Max = 78).

Procedure

Data were collected from late July through September 2011. For data collected by interviews and self-administered questionnaires, adults were approached by the researchers in public places (e.g., at coffee shops) and were invited to participate in a study called “International Social and Political Life.” Data from Belgium, Canada, China, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, and the US were collected online. Data from Italy were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Most data from Lebanon (N = 86) were completed using self-administered questionnaires. Three participants in Lebanon were interviewed, and the rest were recruited online.

Measures

The original questionnaire was written in English, Arabic, and Spanish simultaneously, and all items were written so that they were short and straightforward to make them easy to translate. After the original questionnaire was written, it was sent to and translated by native speakers who are social scientists of each other language (i.e., Chinese, Dutch, French, Italian, German, Polish, Greek, and Turkish). All translations were back-translated by a different set of native speakers and refined in discussion with the second and third authors. The final questionnaire was then administered to all participants in their native languages. Only measures relevant to the present study are reported here, but the full survey is available from the authors. Because of time constraints, we sometimes used one item to measure certain constructs as described in what follows.
Table 1. Demographic information and descriptive statistics for each nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>SDO</th>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Solid</th>
<th>Comp</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>Anger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3.12 (.78)</td>
<td>20.79 (3.81)</td>
<td>2.57 (1.31)</td>
<td>4.70 (2.48)</td>
<td>4.95 (2.88)</td>
<td>6.46 (2.32)</td>
<td>3.55 (2.99)</td>
<td>4.57 (2.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.52 (.55)</td>
<td>42.03 (15.83)</td>
<td>3.43 (1.57)</td>
<td>5.73 (2.63)</td>
<td>4.53 (2.58)</td>
<td>5.95 (2.51)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.73 (1.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.90 (.89)</td>
<td>26.10 (2.95)</td>
<td>2.88 (1.45)</td>
<td>4.52 (2.68)</td>
<td>3.98 (2.41)</td>
<td>6.71 (2.01)</td>
<td>2.94 (2.19)</td>
<td>3.13 (2.50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.47 (1.19)</td>
<td>36.25 (14.34)</td>
<td>2.49 (1.26)</td>
<td>5.66 (2.83)</td>
<td>6.25 (2.52)</td>
<td>7.73 (2.03)</td>
<td>4.96 (2.97)</td>
<td>2.85 (2.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>228</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.97 (.88)</td>
<td>40.00 (12.63)</td>
<td>2.79 (1.53)</td>
<td>5.90 (2.57)</td>
<td>6.04 (2.86)</td>
<td>6.03 (2.67)</td>
<td>3.73 (2.83)</td>
<td>4.23 (2.99)</td>
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<td>3.36 (.82)</td>
<td>31.89 (12.59)</td>
<td>3.00 (1.53)</td>
<td>5.07 (3.44)</td>
<td>7.31 (2.70)</td>
<td>6.58 (2.99)</td>
<td>5.32 (3.57)</td>
<td>4.95 (3.16)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.13 (2.59)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>37.62 (12.87)</td>
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<td>5.49 (2.75)</td>
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<td>7.54 (2.97)</td>
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<td>3.63 (3.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.76 (.91)</td>
<td>45.31 (13.88)</td>
<td>3.96 (1.64)</td>
<td>4.58 (2.37)</td>
<td>3.99 (2.52)</td>
<td>5.97 (3.00)</td>
<td>3.45 (2.40)</td>
<td>4.13 (2.44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.59 (1.11)</td>
<td>38.08 (15.14)</td>
<td>3.80 (2.06)</td>
<td>5.40 (2.54)</td>
<td>3.68 (2.54)</td>
<td>6.79 (2.67)</td>
<td>3.29 (2.63)</td>
<td>3.46 (2.80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Means are presented with standard deviations in parentheses (except for female, which is the percentage of female respondents in the survey). N/A = data were unavailable for these nations. CA = collective action, SDO = social dominance orientation, Comp = belief in Arab competence, and Solid = Solidarity with the Arab people.
All participants were given the following introduction to the survey: “We have an international team of scholars doing research about how people in your country feel about social and political changes that have happened recently or may happen.” The survey was also titled “International Survey on Social and Political Life.” Thus, the survey made it clear that participants were to think of their nation in relation to other nations, so participants answered the survey items with the international context in mind. For all measures, except for anger and political efficacy, participants read a short description about the Arab uprisings. This description stated: “We have a few questions about the Arab protests that have received global attention starting in December 2010. How much do you agree or disagree with each statement below?”

**Collective action willingness.** To measure willingness to engage in sympathetic collective action, participants indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with the item, “I would join a sympathy protest in support of the Arab uprisings” on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

**Solidarity with the Arab people.** To measure solidarity with the Arab people, participants rated the item “I feel solidarity with the Arab people” on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). This item was taken from the multidimensional identity measure reported by Leach et al. (2008). Because our participants did not include Arabs living under the contested regimes, the other dimensions of identity, including centrality, satisfaction, ingroup homogeneity, or individual self-stereotyping were not relevant forms of identification for our participants. Solidarity, however, is a form of identification that can be felt by people who are not a part of the social group in question (Subasic et al., 2008).

**Arab competence beliefs.** Participants rated the item “The Arab people are competent enough to govern themselves” on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). This competence stereotype is typical of groups with high social status (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and is a rejection of the long-standing stereotype of Arabs that Western elites have used to justify backing oppression within Arab nations. As such, we view endorsement of this assertion of Arab competence as a hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myth (see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

**Social dominance orientation.** Social dominance orientation was measured using a new short four-item measure (α = .67; Pratto et al., 2013). The items were “In setting priorities, we must consider all groups” (reversed), “We should not push for equality between groups,” “Group equality should be our ideal” (reversed), and “Superior groups should dominate inferior groups.” The items were rated on a scale from 1 (extremely oppose) to 10 (extremely favor). This short measure was shown to be valid across a variety of nations by its correlations with attitudinal support for the poor, women, and ethnic minorities (Pratto et al., 2013).

**Anger regarding the counterprotests.** Participants read the following about the counterprotesters who protested in favor of the government and against the popular uprisings: “The Arab protests also evoked some counterprotests. When you hear Arab counterprotestors say ‘We must maintain the rule of government to have stability,’ how much do you feel each emotion about the counterprotests?” They then indicated how much they feel outrage and resentment toward these counterprotests on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely intensely). These two emotion terms were averaged to create an anger scale (α = .74). This measure captures participants’ emotional experience of injustice committed by oppressive Arab regimes and their supporters.

**Political efficacy.** Political efficacy was measured by one original item, “It doesn’t matter what I do, I can’t affect anything that happens in politics” (reversed), and was rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). This measure captures people’s belief in whether they can make a difference in politics.
Results

Our data come from participants in 12 nations, so we adopt both an etic and emic approach to our analyses (see Cheung, van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011). Using multilevel structural equation modeling (MSEM), we test the proposed models controlling for between nation differences. Thus, this approach attempts to identify a single model that fits the data best across nations, while treating national differences as error variance, just as traditional statistical analysis (e.g., ANOVA) treats individuals as error variance. After identifying the best general model of sympathetic collective action, we then conducted multiple groups analyses to identify the best fitting model for each nation individually. Because no research study (to our knowledge) has examined beliefs in Arab competence cross-nationally, we have no specific predictions about how these models should work within individual nations. The multiple groups analyses are therefore exploratory and attempt to document cross-national differences in sympathetic collective action. However, social dominance theory and social identity theory approaches to collective action argue that their respective models would work equally well across cultures, so we are not expecting much cross-cultural variability in the models. The MSEM analyses treat nations as random effects and estimate the model parameters while controlling for national differences. The multiple groups analyses treat nations as fixed effects where we can examine each nation individually and how they contribute to the overall model. We believe that these two approaches to analyzing the data allow for us to find a general best fitting model while also examining cultural nuances.

Multilevel Structural Equation Models

We tested three path models: the social identity model of collective action, the social dominance model of collective action, and an integrated model of collective action (Figure 1). Our data have a multilevel data structure because participants are nested within nations. We therefore used multilevel structural equation modeling in MPlus v.6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2011) to control for between nation variance. Our models include variables that exist only at the individual level, so no nation level variables were included. Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix for all of our variables, calculated at the within-nation level.

Our goal with the analyses was to assess the adequacy of each of the three models (Figure 1) and to select the best fitting model given the data. First, we tested the adequacy of a model using only the parameters from the social identity model of collective action. We then tested the adequacy of a model using only the parameters from the social dominance theory model of collective action. Third, we tested the full, saturated, integrated model of collective action using all parameters specified by both social identity theory and social dominance theory. Then, we built a final reduced model, trimming nonsignificant paths from the saturated model. A comparison of all of the tested models is displayed in Table 3.

Because the data are multilevel data, we used Monte Carlo simulations conducted in R v.3.0.2 (R Core Team, 2014) to estimate indirect effects in all models presented (Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006). A Monte Carlo simulation uses the parameter estimates and associated standard errors to create thousands of random distributions of the indirect effects (the product of two paths, namely estimates from the predictor to the mediator and from the mediator to the outcome). From these random distributions, we can estimate the overall standard error in the indirect effect and compute accompanying confidence intervals (Bauer et al., 2006). In the present analyses, we drew 20,000 random distributions given the parameter estimates in order to calculate the standard error of the indirect effect. We also present the percent of the total effect that is mediated by the mediator variables to assess partial or full mediation (Preacher & Kelley, 2011).

Social identity model of collective action. In the SIMCA model, solidarity (i.e., a form of identification with a disadvantaged group) should statistically predict anger and efficacy, and all three variables should reliably predict willingness to engage in sympathetic collective action (see Table 3). Results from the multilevel path analysis support the SIMCA model. Solidarity significantly
predicted anger, efficacy, and collective action. In other words, participants who felt more solidarity with the Arab people were angrier about the counterprotests, felt more politically efficacious themselves, and were more willing to engage in sympathetic protests. Anger and efficacy significantly predicted collective action in the hypothesized ways. Monte Carlo simulations revealed
Table 3. Path estimates for integrated model of collective action from multilevel structural equation modeling analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paths</th>
<th>SIMCA only</th>
<th>SDT only</th>
<th>Reduced model</th>
<th>Saturated model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE(b)$</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO $\rightarrow$ Solidarity</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$-0.26^{***}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO $\rightarrow$ Competence</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$-0.19^{***}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity $\rightarrow$ Anger</td>
<td>$0.32^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.30$</td>
<td>$0.03$</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity $\rightarrow$ Efficacy</td>
<td>$0.17^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.16$</td>
<td>$0.03$</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity $\rightarrow$ CA</td>
<td>$0.57^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.57$</td>
<td>$0.02$</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence $\rightarrow$ Anger</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence $\rightarrow$ Efficacy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence $\rightarrow$ CA</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$0.34^{***}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger $\rightarrow$ CA</td>
<td>$0.14^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.14$</td>
<td>$0.03$</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy $\rightarrow$ CA</td>
<td>$0.05^{*}$</td>
<td>$0.06$</td>
<td>$0.03$</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO $\rightarrow$ Anger</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO $\rightarrow$ Efficacy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO $\rightarrow$ CA</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$-0.09^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlations</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$SE(r)$</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$SE(r)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence $\leftrightarrow$ Solidarity</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger $\leftrightarrow$ Efficacy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model fit

- $\chi^2 (df)$
- CFI
- RMSEA
- SRMR within
- SRMR between

Note. $\beta$ = standardized regression coefficient, $b$ = unstandardized regression coefficient, $SE(b)$ = standard error of the unstandardized estimate, CA = collective action, SDO = social dominance orientation, and Competence = belief in Arab competence. The saturated model is a perfect model, so fit statistics are unavailable.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
statistically significant indirect effects from solidarity to collective action through anger, $IE = .04$, 95% CI [.02, .06], and through efficacy, $IE = .01$, 95% CI [.0001, .02]. Anger and efficacy mediated 7% and 1% of the total effect from solidarity to collective action, indicating partial mediation. This model, however, had worse fit than the integrated model of collective action, as demonstrated in poor values for all of the fit indices shown in Table 3.

**Social dominance theory model of collective action.** According to the social dominance theory approach to collective action, social dominance orientation should statistically predict belief in Arab competence. Arab competence beliefs should then predict anger and collective action, and anger predicts collective action. Results from the multilevel path analysis support the social dominance theory model of collective action. Social dominance orientation significantly predicted disbelief in Arab competence. Belief in Arab competence significantly predicted anger and collective action, and anger predicted collective action. Monte Carlo simulations revealed statistically significant indirect effects from social dominance orientation to collective action through belief in Arab competence, $IE = -.12$, 95% CI [-.16, -.08]. Belief in Arab competence mediated 58% of the total effect from SDO to collective action, indicating partial mediation. However, this model had worse fit than the SIMCA only model than the integrated model of collective action, as demonstrated in poor values for all of the fit indices (Table 3).

**Integrated model of collective action.** For the integrated model of collective action, we first tested the saturated model, which of necessity had perfect fit. We then deleted four nonsignificant paths (SDO$\rightarrow$Anger, SDO$\rightarrow$Efficacy, SDO$\rightarrow$Collective Action, and Competence$\rightarrow$Efficacy), which were not predicted by any theory, and reran the reduced model without these deleted paths. This model is the actual integrated model we developed theoretically. Figure 2 displays our final specified model along with standardized regression coefficients. Our final model demonstrated exceptional fit, $\chi^2 (4) = 6.53, p = .16, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .02, SRMR_{within} = .01, SRMR_{between} < .001$. There were significant direct effects of SDO on solidarity and beliefs in Arab competence. Solidarity also had significant effects on anger and efficacy. Beliefs in Arab competence had a significant effect on anger. Solidarity, anger, efficacy, and beliefs in Arab competence were all significant predictors of collective action willingness. Thus, all the theoretically derived paths were statistically significant and in the predicted directions. This integrated model had better fit than either the proposed SIMCA or SDT models alone.

Again, Monte Carlo simulations revealed some statistically significant indirect effects.
Solidarity ($IE = −.25, 95\% CI [−.30, −.19]$) and belief in Arab competence ($IE = −.05, 95\% CI [−.08, −.03]$) mediated the path from SDO to sympathetic collective action. Anger ($IE = .04, 95\% CI [0.2, 0.6]$) but not efficacy ($IE = .01, 95\% CI [−.001, .02]$) mediated the path from solidarity to sympathetic collective action. Neither anger ($IE = .01, 95\% CI [−.001, .02]$) or efficacy ($IE = .002, 95\% CI [−.002, .01]$) mediated the path from belief in Arab competence and sympathetic collective action.

**Multiple Groups Analyses**

After identifying a good-fitting integrated model in the MSEM analyses, we then conducted a multiple groups analysis on the integrated model (see Table 4 for the results of these analyses). In this analysis, we run several path models for each nation. The first model we tested was a test for structural invariance among the path estimates for the integrated model across all nations, so we fixed all path estimates to be equal across all nations. This model demonstrated adequate to good fit, $\chi^2 (133) = 255.04, p < .001, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .09 (90\% CI: [.07, -.10]), SRMR = .09$. However, if we compare this structural invariance model to a completely unconstrained model (where all estimates can vary freely), model fit is better, $\chi^2 (33) = 55.09, p < .01, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .07 (90\% CI: [.04, -.11]), SRMR = .03$. A chi square difference test revealed that the constrained model was a statistically worse fitting model than the unconstrained model, $\Delta \chi^2 (100) = 199.95, p < .001$. This analysis suggests that there are cross-national differences in the structural model, but because the fit statistics indicate that the constrained model is not substantially worse than the unconstrained model, the cross-national differences may not be large.

Our next step was to identify which paths in the integrated model differed across nations. We systematically set all estimates to vary freely for each structural path in the model one by one and compared the model with one unconstrained path to the fully constrained model. If model fit became significantly better by unconstraining a specific path, we would then conclude that cross-national differences existed for that structural path. Consequently, we identified four (out of 10) structural paths that varied significantly across nations. Compared to the fully constrained model, model fit improved when unconstraining the path from social dominance orientation to solidarity, $\Delta \chi^2 (10) = 30.79, p < .001$, the path from belief in Arab competence to anger, $\Delta \chi^2 (10) = 18.17, p = .05$, the path from solidarity to anger, $\Delta \chi^2 (10) = 25.029, p < .01$, and the path from solidarity to collective action willingness, $\Delta \chi^2 (10) = 42.11, p < .001$. There was no evidence for cross-national variability in the other six structural paths, all $p > .05$.

We then identified which nation’s path estimate differed from the other path estimates. For the SDO to solidarity path, China and the United Kingdom’s path varied from other nations, so we set these two paths to vary freely while constraining the other nations’ path estimates to be equal. For the belief in Arab competence to anger path, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom’s path was in opposite direction from the other nations, so we allowed these nations’ paths to vary freely while constraining the other nations’ paths to be equal. For the solidarity to anger path, Turkey, Poland, and Greece’s path estimates were statistically zero, so we free the path estimates from these nations while constraining the other nations’ paths to be equal. For the solidarity to collective action willingness path, China, Italy, the United States, and Turkey’s path estimates were smaller (though in the same direction) than the other nations’ path estimates, so these three nations’ estimates were allowed to freely vary while constraining the other nations’ paths to be zero. Freeing these 11 path estimates while constraining all other path estimates across nations yielded a good fitting model, $\chi^2 (122) = 166.69, p < .01, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05 (90\% CI: [.03, -.07]), SRMR = .06$. This final model fit better than the fully constrained model, $\Delta \chi^2 (11) = 88.35, p < .001$, and the final model demonstrated statistically equivalent fit to the fully unconstrained model, $\Delta \chi^2 (89) = 111.60, p > .05$. Because our final model was more parsimonious than the equally fitting unconstrained model, the final model is the preferred model.
Table 4. Standardized path estimates for integrated model in multiple groups analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>SDO→S</th>
<th>SDO→C</th>
<th>S→A</th>
<th>C→A</th>
<th>S→E</th>
<th>C→E</th>
<th>A→CA</th>
<th>E→CA</th>
<th>C→CA</th>
<th>S→CA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unconstrained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>(-.33 (.21))</td>
<td>(-.20 (.23))</td>
<td>(.08^* (.10))</td>
<td>(.30 (.09))</td>
<td>(.26 (.09))</td>
<td>(-.11 (.08))</td>
<td>(.31 (.09))</td>
<td>(.06 (.09))</td>
<td>(.03 (.08))</td>
<td>(.44^* (.08))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>(-.48 (.15))</td>
<td>(-.25 (.17))</td>
<td>(.40 (.11))</td>
<td>(.21 (.09))</td>
<td>(.12 (.12))</td>
<td>(.06 (.10))</td>
<td>(.13 (.11))</td>
<td>(-.01 (.08))</td>
<td>(.31 (.10))</td>
<td>(.50 (.12))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>(-.30 (.10))</td>
<td>(-.56 (.11))</td>
<td>(.35 (.09))</td>
<td>(.13 (.08))</td>
<td>(.18 (.08))</td>
<td>(-.01 (.07))</td>
<td>(.29 (.06))</td>
<td>(-.04 (.06))</td>
<td>(.12 (.05))</td>
<td>(.48^* (.07))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>(-.27 (.21))</td>
<td>(-.15 (.20))</td>
<td>(.05^* (.13))</td>
<td>(.12 (.15))</td>
<td>(-.17 (.12))</td>
<td>(.26 (.13))</td>
<td>(.09 (.08))</td>
<td>(-.06 (.08))</td>
<td>(-.01 (.09))</td>
<td>(.67 (.09))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>(-.54 (.20))</td>
<td>(.42 (.14))</td>
<td>(-.09^* (.20))</td>
<td>(-.15 (.14))</td>
<td>(.19 (.18))</td>
<td>(-.22 (.17))</td>
<td>(.11 (.14))</td>
<td>(.26 (.18))</td>
<td>(.80 (.16))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>(-.81 (.20))</td>
<td>(-.70 (.21))</td>
<td>(-.03^* (.10))</td>
<td>(.22 (.10))</td>
<td>(.32 (.09))</td>
<td>(-.03 (.09))</td>
<td>(.01 (.08))</td>
<td>(.19 (.07))</td>
<td>(.06 (.09))</td>
<td>(.60 (.09))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>(-.46 (.12))</td>
<td>(-.23 (.12))</td>
<td>(.41 (.07))</td>
<td>(.10 (.08))</td>
<td>(.21 (.07))</td>
<td>(.00 (.07))</td>
<td>(.24 (.06))</td>
<td>(.09 (.06))</td>
<td>(.05 (.07))</td>
<td>(.37^* (.07))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>(.15^* (.20))</td>
<td>(-.31 (.26))</td>
<td>(.29 (.11))</td>
<td>(-.01 (.08))</td>
<td>(.12 (.11))</td>
<td>(.08 (.08))</td>
<td>(.18 (.09))</td>
<td>(.10 (.08))</td>
<td>(.16 (.06))</td>
<td>(.16^* (.09))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>(-.58 (.16))</td>
<td>(-.22 (.17))</td>
<td>(.53 (.17))</td>
<td>(.10 (.16))</td>
<td>(.06 (.15))</td>
<td>(.11 (.15))</td>
<td>(.01 (.17))</td>
<td>(.19 (.17))</td>
<td>(.24 (.18))</td>
<td>(.58 (.20))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>(-.62 (.20))</td>
<td>(-.19 (.18))</td>
<td>(.26 (.08))</td>
<td>(.06 (.10))</td>
<td>(.07 (.09))</td>
<td>(.04 (.11))</td>
<td>(.23 (.09))</td>
<td>(.14 (.08))</td>
<td>(.07 (.09))</td>
<td>(.71 (.07))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>(-.07^* (.11))</td>
<td>(-.36 (.14))</td>
<td>(.45 (.11))</td>
<td>(-.15^* (.08))</td>
<td>(.02 (.07))</td>
<td>(.03 (.06))</td>
<td>(.09 (.06))</td>
<td>(.07 (.05))</td>
<td>(.08 (.04))</td>
<td>(.63 (.06))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constrained</td>
<td>(-.17 (.03))</td>
<td>(-.16 (.03))</td>
<td>(.32 (.04))</td>
<td>(.08 (.04))</td>
<td>(.16 (.04))</td>
<td>(.03 (.03))</td>
<td>(.15 (.03))</td>
<td>(.05 (.02))</td>
<td>(.11 (.03))</td>
<td>(.56 (.04))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>(-.26 (.04))</td>
<td>(-.17 (.03))</td>
<td>(.32 (.04))</td>
<td>(.12 (.03))</td>
<td>(.10 (.02))</td>
<td>(.02 (.02))</td>
<td>(.14 (.02))</td>
<td>(.06 (.02))</td>
<td>(.08 (.02))</td>
<td>(.45 (.03))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Standardized path estimates presented with standard errors in parentheses. The estimates from the fully unconstrained model are presented for each nation, and the second to last row display the path estimates from the fully constrained model. The preferred model’s estimates are presented in the final row. *Path estimate was allowed to freely vary in the preferred model. SDO = social dominance orientation, S = solidarity with the Arab people, C = belief in Arab competence, A = anger toward counter protests, E = political efficacy, CA = collective action.
Discussion

Heretofore, the vast majority of collective action research has been conducted within democratic societies or societies with democratic pretensions. Within democratic nations, by which we mean nations that are compelled to show some responsiveness to the desires of the people (e.g., Bou Zeineddine, & Pratto, 2014), the social-political and psychological factors that lead to collective action include identifying with causes, identification with people’s own disadvantaged groups, and a sense of political efficacy. In an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, however, understanding the political influence of “outsiders”—both elites and publics and what influences their political actions—is increasingly important. Although it is possible that greater knowledge of the world increases universalism and concern with people in other nations (e.g., McFarland, 2010), the history of colonization and the rift between the developed and developing world remain not only political and economic chasms, but social-psychological chasms between peoples as well. Nonetheless, although peoples’ social contexts differ substantially, social psychological processes may be widespread in many peoples, just as values and ideologies may be somewhat shared across nations (Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

The present study tested an integrated model of collective action using the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) to predict people’s willingness to participate in sympathetic collective action in support of the popular Arab uprisings. Using an international sample of participants from 12 nations, we found strong support for the proposed integrated model of collective action. We also found support for both the social identity and social dominance models of collective action but the integrated model of collective action was the best model in terms of model fit. While SIMCA focuses on how individuals interpret and feel about the disadvantaged group and while SDT model focuses on beliefs about outgroup members, an integrated model of collective action involves both perspectives (i.e., perceptions of the self and the other), providing a more comprehensive and integrative analysis of why people engage in sympathetic collective action. Further, the multiple groups analyses demonstrated that the integrated model was cross-culturally general. Only 11 of the 110 path estimates had to be freed in order to obtain acceptable model fit, and only three path estimates (out of 110) were in the opposite direction predicted by the theories of intergroup relations. These results demonstrate the cross-cultural generality of models of collective action we have tested.

Our study has several strengths that contribute to the understanding of collective action. First, our study was conducted in the context of the ongoing Arab uprisings, which have changed the lives and sociopolitical situation of millions of people and foretell further change. Rather than pertaining to a given locale or polity, these uprisings have such broad consequences (across millions, across nations) and deep consequences (e.g., a million Syrian refugees) that they invite considering more complexity about collective action given the complexity of some sociopolitical contexts. Second and related, because outside interference in Arab politics is so common and influential (e.g., Fund for Peace, 2011), the sympathetic collective action supported by some of our participants may be important in instigating sociopolitical change within and between several nations, including non-Arab states. This line of research suggests that as more substantial relations between people and nations occur, theories of collective action might need to be developed to incorporate both more proximal and more distal sociopolitical processes. Third, this study draws attention to the fact that unlike many of the collective action movements studied so far, movements such as the Arab uprisings, antiglobalization, student movements, and some environmental movements are cross-national and target a number of different political systems. This not only suggests that more attention be paid to sympathetic collective action in social psychological approaches, but to expanding our conceptions of “collective” and the targets of collective action.
Fourth, our study included data from a diverse international sample of participants, so we had a breadth of perspectives from a variety of cultural regions, ages, and both genders. Such samples remain uncommon in social and personality psychological research (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Fourth, the present study explicitly integrates constructs from two theories of intergroup relations. Thus, we demonstrate the utility of theoretical pluralism in understanding important intergroup behaviors, such as sympathetic collective action. In the remaining sections, we describe the implications of our study for social identity theory and social dominance theory, along with general comments on theoretical pluralism and the utility of multilevel analyses.

**Social Identity Processes in Collective Protest**

We found strong support for the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008), applied to sympathetic collective action in the present study. When people feel connected to a social group, they are willing to help that social group improve its quality of life (Subasic et al., 2008). The Arab uprisings have involved many people standing up to their oppressive leaders and regimes in order to improve their economic conditions, health, and freedom. Our results showed that international observers who feel a bond with the Arab people are willing to engage in sympathetic collective action to support the Arab uprisings. Feelings of efficacy about political participation and anger toward counterprotests that support the oppressive regimes also increase people’s willingness to join sympathetic collective action. When people feel capable and their emotional experience motivates them to take action, they will be more willing to take action. In all, SIMCA provides an important analysis to understanding why people engage in sympathetic collective action.

However, SIMCA focuses primarily on the collective self and does not include intergroup beliefs as a predictor of collective action, which is a limitation of the SIMCA as general model of collective action. Recent extensions of SIMCA have sought to include intergroup beliefs in order to address this shortcoming (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2011). Initial theorizing in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) placed an emphasis on ideological beliefs (e.g., meritocracy and upward mobility in the United States, p. 35), so models of intergroup behavior based in social identity theory, such as SIMCA, can incorporate ideological beliefs and outgroup attitudes in those models (see also Abrams & Hogg, 1988, pp. 64–91). SIMCA’s omission of ideological beliefs and intergroup attitudes as predictors of collective action does not follow from social identity theory and its long history of examining stereotypes and other intergroup beliefs (Brown, 2000).

**Improving Intergroup Relations With Social Dominance Theory**

Social dominance theory provides an alternative theoretical view that complements the social identity model of collective action. Traditionally, however, social dominance theory has been used to understand intergroup behaviors that exacerbate unequal intergroup relations (e.g., individual and institutional discrimination; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Despite its empirical attention to discrimination and similar intergroup behaviors, social dominance theory has always acknowledged the role of hierarchy-attenuating intergroup behaviors, such as protests. However, the present study is among the first studies within the social dominance theory tradition to examine intergroup behaviors, like sympathetic collective action, which improve intergroup relations. Because social dominance theory focuses on the ways in which intergroup ideologies (e.g., competence stereotypes of Arab people) inform intergroup behaviors (e.g., sympathetic collective action), it can add another dimension of explanation to the social identity model of collective action. Social dominance theory argues and the present study found empirical support for the role of intergroup beliefs in increasing willingness to engage in sympathetic collective action. Therefore, social identity theory and social dominance theory can both uniquely contribute to an
understanding of collective action, as we have demonstrated in the present study.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, for many of the measures, only one item was used, so the reliability of the measures cannot be assessed. This likely weakened the relationships among the variables (Cole & Preacher, 2013). Second, although we used an international sample to test our hypotheses, the sample was not nationally representative. Therefore, the results from and interpretation of the multiple groups analysis may not generalize or represent the perspectives of the nations surveyed. The results of our analysis should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. Although we found cross-national similarity in the models tested, we cannot be certain that these results would replicate in another international sample or with nationally representative data. In spite of this, we purposely sought to include demographic diversity in our data collection, and the data we did collect is a marked improvement of most social psychological studies on collective action. Third, we have portrayed a somewhat simplistic labelling to whether the popular protests and counterprotests were hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing. At the time the study was conducted, these labels would replicate in another international sample or with nationally representative data. In spite of this, we purposely sought to include demographic diversity in our data collection, and the data we did collect is a marked improvement of most social psychological studies on collective action. Third, we have portrayed a somewhat simplistic labelling to whether the popular protests and counterprotests were hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing. At the time the study was conducted, these labels would be widespread, and the fact that the signs of the relevant paths in our model were the same demonstrates that participants interpreted them in the same way. However, it is not always possible to cleanly label a given set of actions, political movement, or ideology as either hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating. As Pratto, Stewart, and Bou Zeineddine (2013) illustrate, some movements (e.g., repressive liberation movements) may be hierarchy-enhancing within one collective but hierarchy-attenuating in the world. Similarly, a given movement may be considered both hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating, depending on which actions one focuses and on one’s vantage point. For example, admitting the Muslim Brotherhood to legal participation in Egyptian politics could be considered a hierarchy-attenuating change against the decades of repression of this organization. On the other hand, to the extent that the new Egyptian government under their leadership promoted its own acolytes and not people of other religions or political persuasions, this group was being hierarchy-enhancing. Although social dominance theory does prescribe an empirical tool for testing whether particular political attitudes are functioning as hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing, it has not addressed in detail how the meanings of actions and ideologies are created.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that social identity theory and social dominance theory can be integrated to understand why international observers would engage in sympathetic collective action to support the Arab uprisings. Using data from a large international sample, we found empirical support for both the social identity model of collective action and the social dominance theory approach to collective action. An integrated model of social identity and social dominance yielded the best model fit, and parameters from both theories uniquely contributed to an understanding of sympathetic collective action. The present study highlights the importance of theoretical pluralism and cross-cultural methods in analyzing sympathetic collective action.

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Notes

1. Lebanon, though an Arab nation, was not undergoing mass protests against oppressive regimes, so the participants from Lebanon were not directly involved in the popular Arab uprisings, which were only occurring in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia at the time of data collection. Although higher on collective action willingness and solidarity (along with Switzerland), Lebanon's data do not appear to be an outlier among the nations sampled, and the variances in the measures are similar to other nations. Further, upon further inspection of
2. A separate model was estimated including political orientation as a covariate. Participants read the following instructions: “In politics, people talk of ‘left’ and ‘right.’ Circle a number from 0 to 10 to show how left or right you are.” Political orientation was specified as an exogenous variable, correlating with SDO and predicting all other variables in the reduced model. Inclusion of political orientation does not substantially change the effects presented in the model without this covariate. However, political orientation was a statistically significant predictor of collective action willingness, $\beta = -0.59, SE(\beta) = 0.07, p < .001$. In this model, the effects from SDO to solidarity and belief in Arab competence do not differ from the effects displayed in Table 3. Although beyond the scope of the present study, inclusion of political orientation as a predictor of collective action is warranted. One finds such a “left-wing accent” of protest politics from the mid-1970s onward. Collective action as a social change strategy is linked to the basic value-orientations characterizing the left and the right, respectively. Rebels on the right tend to have authoritarian and materialist values, and prefer (orderly) conventional political action over (disorderly) protest politics, while rebels on the left tend to share libertarian and postmaterialist values, which predispose them for unconventional protest politics (Hutter & Kriesi, 2013). Authoritarians are joiners of “conventional” groups, such as political parties or professional associations, in essentially equal proportions with libertarians. However, they are not as likely to join political action-oriented groups. Based on more recent data, van der Meer, van Deth, and Scheepers (2009) once again show that left-wing citizens are more likely to turn to protest activities than their counterparts on the right in all 20 Western democracies that they study during the early 2000s. Dalton, van Sickle, and Weldon (2010) find also a significant effect of postmaterialism and left ideology on protest behavior in their 87 nations study based on World Value Survey (WVS; wave 1999–2002). Using multilevel models, the authors show that both the effects of left/right self-placement and postmaterialist attitudes are magnified by the democratic and economic development of a country. More specifically, the effects are most pronounced in established and affluent democracies—that is, the countries which we focus on here.

3. Because collective action willingness was not measured for Canadian participants, their data were removed from the multiple groups analysis. In the MSEM analyses, we could use full information maximum likelihood estimation to estimate the parameters given the implied values on the collective action variable for Canada. In multiple groups analyses, we cannot use these modern missing data analyses, so they are omitted from this analysis.

References


