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# From 328,513 Likes to 1 Million Protestors: How Social Media Amplified Collective Action During the Egyptian Revolution Through Increased Communication and Identity Formation

Jessica Baca  
*Regis University*

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# **FROM 328,513 LIKES TO 1 MILLION PROTESTORS:**

**How social media amplified collective action during the  
Egyptian Revolution through increased communication and  
identity formation**

**A thesis submitted to  
Regis College  
The Honors Program  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for Graduation with Honors**

**by  
Jessica Baca**

**May 2013**



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## INTRODUCTION

### WE ARE ALL KHALED SAIEED

*“The huge thing with Khaled Saieed wasn’t his picture after he got killed. It was his picture before he got killed. A little innocent-looking guy who looks like your son, your cousin, your nephew. That’s what galvanized people...Khaled Saieed showed the middle class that...being silent and minding their own business wouldn’t protect them.”~*

*Mahmoud Salem, aka Sandmonkey*

On June 6, 2010 in the seaside Cleopatra district of Alexandria, Egypt, twenty-eight year old Khaled Saieed unintentionally became a revolutionary rallying point for the citizens of Egypt. The night of June 6<sup>th</sup> around 11 o'clock Saieed was brutally murdered by a couple of plainclothes policemen. Haitham Mesbah, Saieed's close friend, recalls his last moments as immediate, terrifying, and violent. The instant Khaled Saieed walked into the Space Net Cybercafé, located down the street from his apartment, he was immediately grabbed by the back of his neck by two plainclothes police officers. According to Hassan Mesbah, Haitham's father and owner of the Space Net Cybercafé, Khaled was shouting "What do you want? Don't grab me like this!" Before he could finish his sentence one of the officers slammed his head into the hard marble counter (Khali, 2011, p. 73). The policemen continued to drag Saieed outside into the foyer of an apartment building continually banging his head into metal doorways and slamming his head into the concrete floor. Mohammed Naieem, a witness to the beating, remarks how the officers spent twenty minutes kicking Saieed and slamming his head down as he pleaded for mercy (Khali, 2011, p. 73). Yet, despite Saieed's pleading the beating did not end.

As the policemen beat Khaled Saieed a crowd began to form in the streets. When some of the neighbors tried to interfere with the policemen the officers shouted, "Anyone who interferes will go in his place" (Khali, 2011, p. 74). Other people within the crowd began to reply for them to mind their own business and allow the policemen to carry on with their work. Khaled Saieed went limp and the policemen continued to beat him when Mohammed Naieem told the officers that the boy was dead. The officers denied his



remark and remained relentless in beating the lifeless body. According to witnesses a local physician walked to the scene and managed to inspect the body proclaiming that the man was dead (Khalil, 2011, p. 74). Once the officers finally realized that Saieed was dead they began to take systematic damage-control steps.

One of the officers made a call to a senior police officer who arrived at the scene and loaded Khaled's body into their car. Hassan Mesbah remembers how they took the body and came back with a dozen more officers tossing the body back into the area where he was first pronounced as dead (Khalil, 2011). Around midnight an ambulance was finally called to the scene. When the ambulance arrived, they at first refused to take the body stating that removing the corpse was a job for the coroner's office. Haitham Mesbah witnessed the exchange and says that the senior officer had to bully him into compliance loading the body into the back of the ambulance (Khalil, 2011). Later in the morning, Saieed's family was taken to the morgue to identify the body. When identifying the body one of the relatives used a camera phone and took a picture of the body that will remain an important symbol within the history of Egypt.

The picture taken from the morgue speaks of violence and horror. The picture that can be accessed from the internet depicts a deformed and broken face with teeth missing and blood caked onto the side of his face and pooling beneath his head. The second picture, along with the one taken from his death, is a generic one taken from his passport. The picture is one of a common modern Egyptian. This picture portrays an innocent man who can resemble your son, grandson, nephew, or cousin. By social media outlets, specifically Wael Ghonim's "We are all Khaled Saieed" Facebook page, and mobile

phones the picture was distributed throughout Egypt and globally. The recognition of Khaled being a common man created a common identity for the Egyptians to rally around as they began to understand that even the most common man cannot be protected from the brutality of the police state under the regime of Mubarak. The death of Khaled Saieed and the distribution of his photographs was one of the final catalysts that sparked mass protests demanding for President Hosni Mubarak to resign.

As Khaled's pictures went viral within days, jumping from the online activists to ordinary citizens, a common Egyptian identity was beginning to form. Over Facebook Khaled Saieed's picture became others' avatars—the embodiment of a person or idea that represents the online user—and attention to the case via social media networks began to leak out to mainstream newspapers and mass media. With both social media networks and mass media covering the case extensively, more people were becoming aware of the situation to the point where there were few people in Egypt who did not know who Khaled Saieed was. Furthermore, the Facebook page “We Are All Khaled Saieed” became a gathering point for many activists and organizers of the protest. Social media was not only used to create a common space, but also as a communication tool for people to converse and identify themselves within the movement.

The picture of Khaled Saieed became the defining image of the uprisings occurring within Egypt. Communication was a significant component within the Egyptian Revolutions as the streets were filled with young men and women holding up their BlackBerry phones to snap photos of the protests, to tweet their involvement on the social network site Twitter, as well as receive updated information through Facebook.

This modern technique of communicating enhanced cooperative participation from the citizens throughout the country enabling collective action to occur.

This thesis will begin by discussing the events of Mubarak's presidency leading up to the Egyptian Revolution in order to gain insight on the intrinsic motivations that are necessary for the citizens of Egypt to voluntarily participate within the Revolution. The frustration and anger witnessed throughout Mubarak's regime helped to determine whether or not the citizens would collectively act. The debate of collective action has existed since Mancur Olson's commonly known "zero contribution thesis" (Ostrom, 2000). Olson's accepted theory of collective action has stated that individuals will not collectively act unless a group is small or there is coercion to force individuals to act (Ostrom, 2000). Although this theory is extremely popular among scholars, this theory has been disproved through countless game theory experiments arguing that not all individuals are rational or act on self-interest. Many scholars have found that individuals will act based on how many other people are acting, as well as on how much information is received. Although the theories of collective action have strived to examine how people are motivated to act for a common goal, these theories alone are inadequate to contemplate how quickly the Egyptian citizens were able to organize and push for Mubarak's resignation.

Social movement theories and collective action concepts are both necessary notions to examine in correlation to the Egyptian Revolution. These notions help to reveal the impact social media had on the communication and identification process within the protests and overall revolution in Tahrir Square. Social media had an essential

role in enabling Egyptians to communicate and form a common identity among one another, dissolving a psychological fear of the regime and developing an open space for conversation. However, the role of social media should not indicate that the Egyptian Revolution was in fact a “Facebook Revolution” (Aouragh, 2012). Rather, social media was the means for the Egyptian population to communicate, organize, and form a common end goal. The willingness of a vast number of people to become physically engaged in the protests enabled for the demands of the people to be heard—Mubarak resigned February 11, 2012, just eighteen days after the Revolution started. Social media networks contributed to over three thousands likes of the “We Are All Khaled Saieed” Facebook page, and the action of the government denying access to the Internet contributed to over a million individuals physically protesting within Tahrir Square.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE RISE OF EGYPT OUT OF MUBARAK'S REIGN

*“We have started an uprising with the will of the people, the people who have suffered for thirty years under oppression, injustice, and poverty. Egyptians have proven today that they are capable of taking freedom by force and destroying despotism.” ~Egyptian pamphlets distributed among protesters*

Mohammed Hosni Mubarak began his career in May 1928 when he entered into the military to serve in the Egyptian Air Force (Khalil, 2011). As a fighter pilot and aviation instructor serving in the military, Mubarak was eventually promoted to commander of the Egyptian Air Force (Khalil, 2011, p. 9). He was praised as a war hero in October of 1973 when the former President Anwar Sadat attacked across the Suez Canal into the Sinai Peninsula occupied by Israeli forces. The conflict between Egypt and Israel could have ended in a military deadlock and by the time a ceasefire could be declared the Israeli forces would have advanced on Cairo (Khalil, 2011). However, the strategic surprise attack shocked Israeli personal to the point where Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was able to negotiate terminating any opportunity for Israeli forces to advance on Cairo. Sadat was able to begin open peace negotiations with Israel that resulted in the Camp David Peace Accords with Israel on November 20, 1977 (Khalil, 2011). Sadat then continued to use Mubarak as the face of victory for the conflict, promoting him to Vice President in the year of 1975.

Despite the attempt to have peace between Egypt and Israel, the Campy David Peace Accords ultimately made Egypt a regional outcast to other Arab countries. The Peace Accords placed Egypt in the American camp during the Cold War that ensured billions of dollars' worth of aid from the United States (Khalil, 2011). However, this deal led to the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League in 1979, secluding Egypt from the Arab world. Domestically, Sadat imprisoned more than fifteen hundred dissidents including Islamists and activists who criticized his rulings. On October 6, 1981, during a parade to memorialize Sadat's military victory in 1973, President Anwar Sadat was killed

by an Islamist group within his own army (Khalil, 2011). After the assassination of Sadat, Mubarak became president and the Egyptian people cautiously accepted him as the leader of their country.

At the beginning of Mubarak's reign he immediately released the dissidents that were imprisoned and pledged to stay in power for no more than two presidential terms (Khalil, 2011). During his first presidential term Mubarak began to take positive steps in moving the country forward by hosting a conference of prominent economists to design a new economic vision, launching an anticorruption campaign, imprisoning several regime-connected businessmen including Sadat's brother (Khalil, 2011). However, domestically Mubarak faced threats from militant Islamist groups, as well as infrastructure issues. Numerous infrastructure issues were solved and the significant amount of debt that accumulated during the 1980s was forgiven by Mubarak's foreign policy with the United States. After the Persian Gulf War, the United States and Europe collectively forgave Egypt approximately \$20 billion of debt as a reward for participating within the Anti-Saddam Hussein alliance. The increasing dependence on United States aid to solve numerous infrastructure issues, as well as the increasing seclusion from the rest of the Arab world began to stir up domestic opposition.

Despite limited domestic opposition, Mubarak and the National Democratic Party (NDP) held the popular vote within the executive and legislative branches of the government. Along with Mubarak's re-elections the Emergency Laws were repeatedly renewed. The Emergency Laws, first imposed by Sadat, grant the President sweeping powers to arrest and detain anyone that they feel may be a threat. Throughout Mubarak's

rule there were various degrees of oppression and injustice that highlighted Mubarak's relationship with Egyptian citizens. Mubarak treated the people of Egypt with contempt ultimately taking away their dignity, respect for themselves, and the idea that they could change their own situation. Through Mubarak's reign, the people of Egypt began to lose their self-identity. Ashraf Khalil, the author of *Liberation Square*, writes that Mubarak's reign had a corrosive effect on Egyptian society. Mubarak:

Took a proud and ancient civilization and presided over the virtual collapse of its citizens' sense of public empowerment and political engagement. He taught them how to feel helpless, then made them forget they had ever felt any other way. His reign spread cynicism, apathy, and eventually, self-loathing (Khalil, 2011, p. 22).

The government of Egypt worked to make the people feel that trying to change their circumstances would prove to be futile. Generations of people growing up under Mubarak's were instilled with the ideal that the only way they could go about their lives was to "walk next to the wall" or in general to keep their heads down and stay out of government affairs (Khalil, 2011, p. 22). The government eventually demoralized the people, putting them in desperate situations that backfired and worked as a means for the people to collectively organize themselves. Pre-revolutionary, there were several moments along with the death of Khaled Saieed that would motivate the people to action.

Events that would begin to turn the tide were in response to the unchallenged law and actions of the police. The power of the police began to grow after the Luxor Massacre on November 17, 1997. In the temple of Queen Hatshepsut in southern Egypt, Islamist gunmen killed over fifty tourists, a tour guide, and a couple of police officers (Khalil, 2011). Although Egypt has a reputation as an effective police state, the response from local forces was incredibly slow costing the lives of tourists and negatively



affecting the tourism in the Khan al-Khalili bazaar. In the aftermath of the massacre, Mubarak quickly responded by publicly firing the Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfy and replacing him with the new Interior Minister Habib al-Adly. New Interior Minister Al-Adly was given permission to secure the state from any Islamist threats, essentially leading to the coercive power of the police and State Security influencing all institutions. Under the Emergency Laws many people were targeted and institutions were told how to be run by the State Security. Ashraf Khalil writes:

With no real checks on their behavior, the internal culture of Egypt's security forces deteriorated rapidly. Supported on paper by the Emergency Laws and backed by the full power of all aspects of the government, the police devolved into Egypt's largest and most heavily armed criminal mob. The entire relationship of the police to society changed and warped (Khalil, 2011, p. 26).

The police became oppressors limiting the amount people could participate within the government and essentially protecting the regime rather than the people themselves. The police were fueling resentment from the civilians that would continue to build leading up and acknowledged throughout the revolution.

Along with the police force growing other events occurred that would continue to turn the tide. In September 1999, the National Democratic Party controlled Parliament and was to present a candidate in what would be a “national yes [or] no referendum” (Khalil, 2011, p. 29). Mubarak was re-nominated by a vote of 445-0—taken from the National Democratic Party as a yes or no referendum—and the media was presenting Mubarak as the war hero from the 1973 conflict and the father of the nation (Khalil, 2011). Mubarak's campaign depicted a national consensus of saying “yes” to his presidency, whereas in reality the nation, demoralized under his reign, felt like all the

choice in the matter was taken away from them. The government worked to make sure that no other candidate would prove to be a better option than Mubarak. However, this election would prove to be the last one that people felt indifferent as events began to unfold questioning and doubting Mubarak's reign.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a sociology professor teaching at the American University in Cairo, was detained and prosecuted by the State Security for various crimes such as accepting foreign funding without attaining any government permission, as well as seeking to impair upon Egypt's international reputation (Khalil, 2011). Ibrahim's case kept being referred back to a specially created court under the State Security and eventually entered the main legal system on appeal. Twice, under the State Security court Ibrahim was sentenced to prison and twice the case was appealed and dismissed. This specific case would be highlighted by the media as they depicted NGOs similar to the Ibn Khaldoun Center as being merely puppets for foreign interest. The Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, under Ibrahim, was producing a film funded by the European Union to encourage voter participation in parliamentary elections for the upcoming fall (Khalil, 2011).

The Ibn Khaldoun Center was one of many NGOs that were training people for election monitors. According to many people working in the NGOs the arrest of Ibrahim was designed to warn other NGOs to not become involved in politics let alone the upcoming election in the fall (Khalil, 2011). However, despite the warning the arrest and court case of Ibrahim also illustrated the growing number of NGOs and civil society

groups that were emerging across the state. These actors would prove to be important in the construction of social movement and collective action.

In the early years of the 2000s, activists were able to conduct small protests organized around foreign policy issues. More often than not, the protests were broken apart by the State Security or by the Central Security—the troops of the Interior Ministry (Khalil, 2011). Numerous citizens began to become more and more frustrated with the presence of the Israeli Army, specifically conflicts against the Palestinian youth (Khalil, 2011), and an embassy within Cairo. While there was growing unrest among the civilians a strong social movement could not be formed as many of the activists had differing opinions. With no centralized movement and citizens too afraid to participate in correlation with the activists, the security forces were able to limit the unrest and control the small protests. Amidst the protesters the internal conflict centered on the question of who was to be blamed—were they angry against Israel or the Mubarak regime?

Along with no centralized movement there was a lack of group identity and minimal participation. The majority of the Egyptian civilians refused to participate in the protests with the Palestinians and go against the government. Many of the demonstrators were young students protesting within the boundaries of Cairo University's campus. One day when Central Security officers chased protestors down the street a local man reported to Ashraf Khalil that "if we [the Egyptian people] had any dignity, we would be with them" (Khalil, 2011, p. 38). With that small recognition the group identity was beginning to be recognized; however, participation would remain to be an important element in maintaining the activists' protests. The Central Security forces would always outweigh

the protestors in numbers easily taking the advantage and becoming proficient in dismantling the demonstrations. An increased amount of participation from all members of the Egyptian society is needed in order for there to be a social movement that will be sustainable and strong enough to cause change within the country.

March 20, 2003 became a day that foreshadowed the revolution that would occur eight years later. When the United States-led coalitions invaded Iraq, enraged Egyptian protestors overwhelmed the security forces and took over Tahrir Square (Khalil, 2011). As Mubarak gave the United States the permission to use the Suez Canal as a position to invade Iraq, many of the civilians in Egypt saw that as a means for U.S. expansionism. Angry and frustrated citizens took to the streets and for the first time under the reign of Mubarak the Central Security was outnumbered. This was the first time that the anger and frustration from the foreign policy issues was redirected at the regime. That night the protestors tore down a poster of Mubarak hanging from the National Democratic Party's headquarters just outside of Tahrir Square (Khalil, 2011). The hostility for the imperialistic movement of America invading Iraq turned to Mubarak as people began to want and demand for his resignation. That was the beginning of the end to any legitimacy Mubarak might have claimed and the start to opposition parties forming and beginning to be recognized.

An opposition movement that emerged in the summer of 2004 was the Kefaya movement meaning "Enough" (Khalil, 2011). The goal and focus of the movement was to prevent Mubarak's son, Gamal Mubarak, from succeeding him. The movement branded themselves and advertised under yellow stickers with the one-worded slogan "Enough."

In the years of 2004 and 2005, the movement formed a couple of protests that was highlighted by mass media exaggerating the group's efforts against Gamal Mubarak. Although the group made mass media news, it failed to connect and form a local group identity with the remaining Egyptian population. Without recognition from the Egyptian population the group could not sustain itself and ended up disbursing. While the movement proved to be unsuccessful, many of the leftist activists continued to remain politically active and the fear to directly chant against the dictator was eliminated.

*Al-Masry Al-Youm*, a large independently-owned newspaper, stated that there were approximately nineteen hundred separate labor actions that involved more than 1.7 million workers across Egypt (Khalil, p. 51-52). Two years following the Kefaya movement there was the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement that was first recognized for its use of social media by the youth. On April 6<sup>th</sup> workers at "Egypt's largest textile factory in the Nile Delta city of Mahalla al-Kubra engaged riot police in two days of violent clashes" (Khalil, p. 51). Egyptian workers angered by the government's push to privatize state-owned industries, the rising cost of living, and unchanging salaries became motivated to react and openly protest. On April 6, 2008 the Mahalla dispute became a premeditated plan to strike on the factory floor of the state-owned Misr Spinning and Weaving Company. The premeditated plan was initiated and police attempts to break up the strike turned extremely violent. The clashes left two dead and dozens injured primarily from the security forces using both stun guns and live ammunition to diminish the protest.

From the April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement, many youthful activists used Facebook to organize demonstrations. The youth used social media to form what can be categorized as cat and

mouse quick strike actions—the protestors would appear to protest and then be gone before the police could arrive (Campbell, 2011). The actions and protests would be filmed and later publicized on YouTube where other Internet activists would post the footage onto their Facebook page in order to show the growing unrest in Egypt. Despite the Kefaya movement breaking down political barriers, the Mahalla dispute was the first that the country saw a protest bridge together politics and economics.

A popular satellite news channel, *Al Jazeera*, filmed the workers at the Mahalla dispute tearing down posters of Mubarak. The network ran the footage for a day and was immediately threatened by the government. The government responded to these movements by banning all political organizations making it illegal for more than five people to gather. Simultaneously, newspapers were increasingly monitored by the Ministry of Information in order to censor information criticizing Mubarak (Campbell, 2011). However, in running the footage, *Al Jazeera* contributed greatly to linking the grievances from one city in Egypt to another. The Mahalla dispute became a national issue sparking activity from multiple labor organizations that continued throughout the revolution. With strikes and protests now occurring monthly, the legitimacy of Mubarak's reign began to dwindle.

As Mubarak's legitimacy grew weaker, online activists began to increase building a virtual community where they could find each other. Within this virtual space activists were able to discuss politics and present a sense of hope that was lost within the non-politicized community of Egypt. Throughout Mubarak's reign the culture of Egypt became more and more violent and harsh. "As the citizens internalized the realities of a

society with almost no reliable and uncorrupted institutions, Egyptians began to genuinely forget about the concept of right and wrong, or justice under the law” (Khalil, 2011, p. 56). Conversations and arguments began to evolve into power games where “wusta”—influence or connections—were emphasized (Khalil, 2011, p. 56). A wealthy business woman commented to Ashraf Khalil that, “Mubarak destroyed Egypt. He destroyed the morals and the conscience of the people” (Khalil, 2011, p. 56). Young adults were graduating from college with no jobs and forced to live back at home, essentially stuck from continuing on with their lives—not having any opportunities to move out, buy an apartment, get married, and have children of their home. Many were becoming angry at a permanent state of emergency law, rampant police abuses, and a sixty percent unemployment rate (Campbell, 2011). These societal problems ultimately fueled the desperation, internalized rages, and utter hopelessness of the people.

One of the final rallying points leading to the revolution was the death of Khaled Saieed. Similar to how Mohammed Bouazizi’s self-immolation in December of 2010 fueled the Arab Spring in Tunisian, Saieed’s death added to the growing grievances in Egypt leading to the escalation of protest activity. The self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi took place in the central of a Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid that triggered the unfolding of tragic events being leaked on social networking sites (Beaumont, 2011). Communicating via social media became a transformative event for the Arab Spring as the circumstances in Tunisian were being identified as part of a “Twitter Revolution” (Beaumont, 2011). The citizens of Tunisian believed that the footage and video being uploaded onto the internet gave them credibility and assurance as to why their revolts

were successful. However, Twitter was only a part of the pre-revolutionary stage in Tunisia. Within the pre-revolutionary stage there was only 200 active tweeters out of over 2,000 accounts, yet activists within the Twitter group were able to communicate to the Facebook group fueling participation (Beaumont, 2011). Overall, social media was crucial to the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary stages within Tunisia as everybody saw images of Bouazizi's self-immolation.

Although Khaled Saieed was not the first ordinary citizen to be killed by the Security State or even to have documentation of his death spread virally via Facebook and Twitter, Saieed was the first man to be killed that everyone could relate to. Mohammed El Dahshan quoted to Ashraf Khalil that, "people could relate to that guy more than they could relate to some microbus driver. Before that, people could always brush [police brutality cases] off by saying 'Well, he must have done something to begin with if he was in the police station'" (Khalil, 2011, p. 77). The microbus driver refers to the case where police forces viciously sodomized Emad al-Kebir (Human Rights Watch, 2007). In the article "Egypt: Bus Driver Raped by Police Faces New Risk of Torture," Emad al-Kebir recalls how the police circulated a video of his rape to break down his spirit (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Activists would also circulate the video as a rallying point for NGOs similar to the Human Rights Watch in Egypt; however, the rallying point ended with the two police officers sentenced to three-years. The fact that Saieed was so young and there was essentially no reasoning behind his attack fueled the anger and frustration people in Egypt had been experiencing throughout Mubarak's reign. However, it was revealed later that in June of 2010, Khaled Saieed filmed a group of policemen in



Alexandria dividing the proceeds of a drug deal and later posted this video on Facebook (Campbell, 2011). The reasoning of his attack was in consequence to his capability to access the Internet and display the corruption of the police force in Egypt. Saieed's death became a common point for people to find solidarity as each person was enraged by the emergency laws and the unchallenged power of the police.

As social media and mainstream newspapers began to cover the case of Saieed's death, more and more people spoke out against the Security State giving interviews and details about the case. Furthermore, international human rights organizations and local citizens began to demand a proper investigation and a permanent repeal of the emergency laws. With the story going viral and spreading not only nationally, but also internationally, there were weeks of demonstrations occurring across Egypt. Some of the demonstrations consisted of flash-mob-style tactics and live streaming videos of protests (Khalil, 2011). One memorable demonstration was a silent vigil where participants wearing black stood in a line along the Nile in Giza. For the first time, under these demonstrations, people became focused targeting their anger and frustration against police violence.

As the police report about Khaled Saieed took form, there was no mention of any kind of beating that could have been facilitated by the civilian-clothed police officers. Instead the police report stated that Saieed was a criminal who choked to death on a packet of hashish that he proceeded to swallow when he noticed the police officers approaching him (Khalil, 2011). The coroner's report backed-up the police officers statements never pointing out how the pictures of Saieed depicted a man with a broken

nose, a broken jaw, and blood pooling beneath his head. In response to the first report many protests were formulated leading to a second autopsy of the body. However, the second autopsy confirmed the first report and added that Saieed must have collided with blunt objects while trying to run from the police, therefore causing his severe injuries. “No one looking at the photos could reasonably believe, as the government claimed, Saieed had died choking whilst trying to swallow/conceal a packet of hashish” (Campbell, 2011, p. 30). With the government dismissing the case existing organizations began to mobilize and consequently new movements were made.

When a month went by, the government decided to put the two officers, Mahmoud and Suleiman, on trial (Khalil, 2011). The two officers stuck to the same story contradicting physical evidence, as well as multiple accounts from eye-witnesses. Officer Mahmoud testified that Saieed was “wanted in two cases of theft and possession of a knife” (Khalil, 2011, p. 84). He continues to testify that there was never any violence used against Saieed and that the man choked to death without anyone ever touching him. Mahmoud claims that, “He was holding something in his hand. When I tried to take it from him, he put it in his mouth and swallowed it. Then he fell on the ground and his legs started to shake violently” (Khalil, 2011, p. 84). Both the police and the coroner’s report persistently denied that violence or force was ever used on Khaled Saieed. As the case continued to move throughout the court system the government worked to officially dismiss the case and sweep it under the rug.

In order to patch things up and calm the civilians Gamal Mubarak, Mubarak’s son, made a statement that the National Democratic Party insisted that any wrongdoer be

hold accountable for their actions under the rule of law (Khalil, 2011). The government also issued stories within the newspapers about Saieed's criminal record including written reports on drug dealing. The newspaper, *The Arab Nation*, contained a segment on Khaled, his family, and the multiple eye-witnesses willing to testify against the officers titled "The Marijuana Martyr" (Khalil, 2011). The attempt to smooth things over and portray Khaled as wrongdoer needing to be held accountable eventually backfired for the government as more people began to understand that fighting against the regime was necessary for their everyday survival. Wael Khalil reports to Ashraf Khalil that, "what Khaled's case did was get people involved who didn't view what they were doing as politics. They saw it simply as doing the right thing" (Khalil, 2011, p. 81). Khaled's death and the cover-up of how he died helped to politicize enormous amounts of numbers in Egypt and encouraging ordinary citizens to attend demonstrations.

Three weeks after the death of Khaled Saieed, in June 2010, there was a protest against police brutality in Alexandria. This protest contained people who admitted to it being the first protest they have ever attended—the protest was larger and angrier with approximately three thousand people (Khalil, 2011). For the first time people began to care about politics and become active within their own state. After the Khaled Saieed case and his post-mortem picture going viral through social media networks the whole country began to move and collectively act. The death of Khaled Saieed was fresh in the minds of the youth and in using the hatred for the police the people of Egypt began to organize January 25<sup>th</sup> as the Day of Rage (Campbell, 2011).

Mancur Olson, a leading American economists and social scientist, argued that unless there is a small percentage of individuals or there is coercion, people will not collectively work together to reach a common goal. However, the Egyptian Revolution accounted for over one million people protesting against the presidency of Mubarak. In examining the Egyptian Revolution along with other theories of collective action, it becomes clear that Olson's argument is inadequate in explaining how people in reality organize for change. Furthermore, the elements of communication and collective identity must also be considered when analyzing how people collectively act and work together to reach a common goal.

## CHAPTER 2

CLASSICAL ARGUMENTS ON COLLECTIVE ACTION;  
Notions on how individuals will naturally self-organize to reach a common end goal

*“As Egyptians, one of our problems is that we don’t know how to work together.” ~Maha Elgamal*

The Egyptian Revolution, first inspired by the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in central Tunisia and the cruel death of Khaled Saieed in Egypt, led to widespread anti-government uprisings throughout the Middle East becoming the Arab Spring. The defining movement is characterized by individuals utilizing technology in order to enhance communication and ultimately act collectively. Social media networks like Facebook and Twitter enabled like-minded groups to speak with one another, when organizing and assembling on the streets resulted in arrest or detention (Campbell, 2011). Social media platforms became vehicles for communication and mobilization allowing for a vast number of people to organize and act towards a distinguished end goal, defying Mancur Olson's argument on collective action. Beginning with Mancur Olson's argument in 1965, the discussion of collective action or how people have come to understand the theory has existed for the past quarter of the century as scholars strive to identify key elements to why people will work together to form change.

Mancur Olson's theory, commonly known as the "zero contribution thesis" by scholars like Elinor Ostrom, was made in disagreement with a naively optimistic notion that groups will naturally self-organize when there is joint interest or shared interest (Ostrom, 2000). The discussion has continued since Mancur Olson's concept of collective action with well-known scholars disproving the notion that all people are ultimately rational and self-interested and would thereby not participate unless forced or within small groups. Recent studies and experiments have revealed that there are intrinsic motivations existing when people decide to voluntarily participate in collective action. Furthermore, Mancur Olson's classical argument remains inadequate in today's society

due to increasing technology that enables individuals to gain information and communicate with one another.

The popular argument of collective action made by Mancur Olson in 1965 emphasizes the problems of individuals contributing to the group that involves some public good or outcome. Achieving the public good or outcome would be better attained by forging a common cause or containing a joint interest; however, Mancur Olson argued that unless the number of individuals in a group is small or there is coercion to force individuals to act within the common interest, self-interested individuals will not act together (Udén, 1993). Mancur Olson predicted that a member of large group would not voluntarily participate within a movement even if that movement could support a group's common interest including that of the individual (Jones, 2007). In large-scale groups individual contributions are less noticeable and allow self-interested individuals to free-ride on the efforts of others while receiving all of the benefits. To free-ride is to receive benefits without paying or contributing to any of the costs (Ostrom, 2000). Therefore, it would be more cost-efficient not to contribute anything because one can enjoy all of the benefits without making any sacrifices (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012,). Secondly, if there are not enough people contributing then the efforts made to contribute would be wasted reaffirming the position of the free-rider.

Olson's argument surrounds the ideal of the rational egotist who will not act in the common interest due to it being cost-inefficient. Furthermore, the temptation to free-ride ultimately prevents individuals from choosing to contribute to the group without receiving benefits or rewards (Ostrom, 2000). The individual, therefore, finds it to be in

his or hers best interest to not contribute since others can free-ride and their contribution would ultimately go unnoticed (Jones, 2007). The solution Mancur Olson offers to motivate people to contribute to the collective action is coercion or selective incentives. Selective incentives are benefits that are only available to those participating within a group. These incentives can be economic, political, or social increasing one's status or prestige. For instance, a selective incentive can include insurance or reaffirmation that they will receive a reward and recognition for their contribution.

Olson's overall argument relies upon the assumption that all individuals will act rationally and self-interested—the individual will not contribute to the group because they are rational and aware that there are others who would free-ride rather than actively participate. Nonetheless, in correlation to Olson's solution, by creating selective incentives in order to encourage or force others to contribute there will eventually arise another dilemma. The incentives created and enforced would become costly to those providing the incentives and the benefits would not only be received by cooperatives, but also free riders (Ostrom, 2000). Although Mancur Olson illustrates that self-interest is not enough for people to be motivated for collective action his call for incentives simply encourages people more easily when they are participating within smaller groups (Udén, 1993). Olson believes that “as the size of the group increases, there is a decrease both in the relative importance of each individual's contribution and in each individual's share of the value of the collective good for the group as a whole” (Udén, 1993, p. 240).

As the group size increases, the overall change in the outcome becomes less noticeable and the benefits for individuals to participate will decrease. Corresponding to



less benefits, individuals will begin to question why they should act at all when their own actions will go unnoticed and not be perceptible to the end goal (Jones, 2007). Whether or not a person's actions are perceptible within a collective movement becomes a primary distinction between large and small groups. Within the large group specifically the individual does not highly benefit and therefore does not fully support or participate in the collective group diminishing any noticeable difference to be made towards the common good.

According to Mancur Olson's argument, individuals living within Egypt would not want to participate within the protests because their contribution would remain unknown and the risks of becoming arrested and detained outweighed the common interest of the group. In order for the majority of the Egyptian population to want to participate within the protests, activists would need to rely on a form of coercion to motivate and mobilize people. Mancur Olson claimed that for any change to exist or benefits to be accumulated, large groups would need to rely on coercion in order to secure cooperation. Therefore, coercion, sanctions, and other selective incentives become significant in securing support for the movement.

Olson developed a 'by-product theory' of pressure groups declaring that if the common good is not enough to motivate people to join the movement, then they have to organize around another purpose or motive (Udén, 1993). Once more Olson is assuming that self-interest is not enough to assemble people collectively and that there needs to be an activist or political leader to set up sanctions or incentives to fully mobilize people. Contrary to small groups, the activists or political leader is more essential to encourage

people to act within large groups and display the appearance that each individual is making a difference towards the end goal. Social control becomes effective by these leaders pointing out the importance of the identified selective incentives that are usually social concepts including: class status, prestige, and social pressure norms (Udéhn, 1993). In utilizing the selective incentives, the individual primarily acts rationally while working within the large group.

In participating within the group, each individual will receive a type of gain or benefit. Olson's argument has clarified that the individual's benefit will decrease as the group size increases making participation likewise decrease. Consequently, collective goods become another means of influencing individual participation within the group. Collective goods are characterized by a necessary condition of jointness, as well as non-excludability (Udéhn, 1993). "Non-excludability makes for free-riding and works against the provision of public goods" and jointness tends to "increase the probability that collective goods will be provided" (Udéhn, 1993, p. 241). Under the terms of jointness the utility of a person is not grounded within the common good and cannot be diminished as other people use the good; therefore, individual benefit is independent from the group. Rather than focus on jointness as part of his argument, Olson emphasized non-excludability in order to support his free-rider notion working against meeting any common good. Unlike non-excludability, jointness increases collective goods that are designed to ultimately increase the benefits of participating in the group while diminishing the risks.

In circumstances where the provisions of collective goods depend upon a protest or revolt, there can be increasing returns of scale (Udén, 1993). Revolutions, petitions, or demonstrations depend on the numbers of people actively participating within the social movement. In order to place pressure on the social issues or to reach the common good the movements require a vast number of people. The large numbers of movements can act as a social mechanism to persuade more people to join the group. The ability to apply pressure on people to conform within the group becomes a vital point as individual benefit will rise with the group size—contrary to Olson’s belief of individual behavior in large groups. Furthermore, social control is more difficult to achieve in large collective groups, as well as achieving any conditional cooperation. We cannot assume from Olson’s argument that every individual has a common interest. Rather, individuals have complex interests and more importantly diverse resources to allow them to acquire their interests.

The research prepared by Mancur Olson was not intended to be applied to non-economic groups because, according to Olson, collective action within social, political, or religious mass movements are irrational. Olson’s argument is focused on individuals seeking an investment from the common good. Olson critiques the aspect of groups naturally self-organizing revealing that individuals will not act collectively because they have similar feelings or ideals. Rather, Olson makes the distinction between common and individual interests stating that individuals might be aware of the common interests, but have no incentive to express identity with these common interests (Jones, 2007). Therefore, individuals have the possibility to derive utility from the action that correlates

to a common identity, but remain unwilling to incur the costs of the collective action (Jones, 2007). Olson acknowledges that moral incentives exist when organizing social, political, or religious movements, yet, he maintains that an individual acting rationally will not commit to a large group because their individual benefit would decrease as the group sizes increase (Udén, 1993). Although his argument was intended for economic groups, Mancur's distinction between individual and common interests plays a vital role in the discussion of identity and intrinsic values within social movements that are derived from collective action. Furthermore, other scholars have continued to analyze Olson's argument critiquing his work on the basis of what distinguishes a large and small group, as well as the importance of communication when collectively acting.

Russell Hardin criticizes Olson's analysis indicating that Olson assumes that small groups are more privileged or manifested, whereas large groups are dormant or inactive. Hardin points out that Olson assumes that the net or disposable benefit for individuals unavoidably declines as the number of the group rises. Hardin argues that there could be two circumstances where the net benefit becomes a decreasing "function of group size": "individual benefits decrease [and] individual costs increase" (Udén, 1993, p. 241). In analyzing Mancur Olson's logic of collective action, Hardin related the issues to the N-Person Prisoner's Dilemma.

The question of how to avoid a situation where a rational individual's decisions leads to a collective irrationality is highlighted throughout the N-person Prisoner's Dilemma game (Udén, 1993). Mancur Olson assumed that people would remain static in a Prisoner's Dilemma game; however, Hardin points out that people in real life will

meet again and again. Hardin continues to make the observation that when people remember this meeting that memory becomes extremely important when developing cooperation (Udén, 1993). Michael Taylor also distinguished that collective action does not work in pairs interacting; rather, an N-person Prisoner's Dilemma game would be more adequate to depict numerous people interacting (Udén, 1993).

The N-person Prisoner's Dilemma game established by Michael Taylor also has some limitations. Taylor recognizes that for cooperation to occur there would need to be 'conditional cooperators'—an individual's cooperation is not dependent upon another's; however, there needs to be enough cooperation amongst the group in order to illicit more. Another limit to the game is that it assumes people to be in a static environment. In order to illustrate reality the game would need to develop a method that would be ever-changing with the environment, the circumstances, and even the people playing the game.

A concept that is important within the Prisoner's and N-person Prisoner's Dilemma games is the social interaction. Lars Udén (1993) writes that "even though collective action presupposes a common interest, members of the collective also have diverging and more or less intense interests, and unequal resources to back them up (p. 244). Furthermore, in analyzing how people collectively act, an N-person Prisoner's Dilemma game was established assuming the players understood the logic of the situation, had perfect information about the moves of other players, and could then estimate the probability of meeting a pushover— or someone they could easily manipulate—again and be recognized by that player (Udén, 1993). These terms can only be met where there is a high degree of social control and the game is not being repeated

under the same conditions. Referring back to Hardin's distinction, it is important that people continuously meet and that they remember each meeting. In order for people to continuously meet they need to be engaged with overlapping activities and the people who defect in one game are punished by exclusion from the group (Udén, 1993).

The Prisoner's Dilemma is correlated to Olson's distinction between small and large groups. According to Olson, if the group consisted of small individuals that tended to be heterogeneous the group was therefore privileged; however, if the group tended to be large individuals would need to rely on leadership or organizations in order to reach their common goal (Udén, 1993). Within a small-varied group, cooperation is possible because there is a close proximity of social interaction that is essential to solving the problems of information becoming redundant, especially within the Prisoner's Dilemma game (Udén, 1993).

The one aspect that is missing from the Prisoner's Dilemma game, as well as from Mancur Olson's argument, is the lack of communication. Communication is said to be the most distinctive feature of social life and can have a major impact when people are acting collectively. Within the contemporary time period, the access to the internet and other technological devices allows for society to communicate more easily than ever before. Specifically with the aid of social media people from all over the world are able to express themselves in a multitude of ways. Especially in consideration of contemporary social movement the role of identity, culture, emotion, social networks, political process, and opportunity structures have become more of a vital role (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). However, these roles cannot become manifest without the

communication and networks that are formed between people. Mark Granovetter's analysis of collective action and behavior is important in understanding the behaviors and motivations of people collectively acting.

In analyzing collective action or the behavior of people when they are acting collectively, Mark Granovetter developed the notion of threshold, indicating that a fundamental aspect of a social life is the idea that an individual's actions depend in various ways on the actions of others (Udén, 1993). Granovetter determined that people's decision on whether or not to participate within a movement depends on the number of people already participating. This observation is in correlation to Olson's argument that the pressure of groups can be an effective mechanism for persuading people to get involved. Granovetter continues to define an individual's threshold as "the number, or proportion, of others who must take action before" that individual does (Udén, 1993, p. 245).

When using the actions of others to base your decision to act allows for Granovetter to assume that people are acting strategically. Strategic planning is determined by the knowledge of the circumstances instead of on the "subjective estimation of probabilities" (Udén, 1993, p. 245). Granovetter's model is sequential where people know at every instant how many other people have joined in the movement or collective action—people are acting on the basis that all the information is provided. In order to foster his argument, Granovetter uses riots to show that people gain information from their immediate surroundings and can gather how many people are already involved within the movement. However, other information that is not within the immediate

surroundings can be reduced to as merely rumors. From Granovetter's analysis we recognize that collective action may be "highly accidental, in the sense that small differences in the distribution of thresholds in the population [can] make a big difference to the aggregate outcome" (Udén, 1993, p. 245). Therefore, one cannot deduce the reliance on thresholds from the outcome.

Another aspect of Granovetter's argument is the amount of social ties, as well as structures of the networks within the population that influence how people participate. Granovetter argues that "strong ties are possible only within small circles of friends, whereas ties that connect small groups with one another are usually weak" (Udén, 1993, p. 246). However, weak ties are important within their possible function as channels for the distribution of messages and ideals. Therefore, these weak ties can enhance the capacity for communities to become involved within the collective action. Specifically, weak ties have the capability to form from social media sites enabling people to be more aware of ideals and information. Granovetter explicitly argues for strong ties that would continue to influence the individual's threshold as the person is more inclined to act with a friend or someone that they have developed a close relationship with. This relationship is a key point for individuals to come together for the same ideal (Udén, p. 246).

Referring back to the N-Prisoner's Dilemma game, the game was assuming that the players understood the logic of the situation and overall contained all of the information of what was happening and what would occur if certain elements were met. The social ties and information received during the game allowed for individuals to observe who was willing to collectively act and therefore, place all of their efforts



organizing around those individuals. Collective action no longer is just about the investment as Olson described it, but also about intrinsic values developed through interaction and collective identity among others.

In social dilemma situations many individuals follow norms of behavior that reflect reciprocity, fairness, and trustworthiness in order to take action, therefore, completely contradicting Olson's argument (Ostrom, 2000). The behavior of individuals is based on intrinsic preferences related to how they would prefer to behave to achieve the benefits and avoid any of the harms that may exist. Elinor Ostrom (2000) makes the distinction that some individuals act on these intrinsic preferences forming some conditional cooperators who are willing to contribute to the collective action as long as other people are contributing, while other individuals behave as rational egotists acting towards their self-interest. When the individuals receive complete information about how the other one may act they can begin to choose how they themselves want to act—further emphasizing the role of intrinsic value.

An intrinsic value can be derived in various ways as individuals begin to believe that they are acting with dignity. Through such a belief an individual's self-esteem is increased and they are intrinsically motivated to act where they feel good about the activity and are not expecting a reward (Jones, 2007). Selective incentives then become a flag, a badge, or a banner showing that the individual is associated with and overall feels a part of that movement (Jones, 2007). Through intrinsic motivation, a person feels like they belong to something bigger than themselves as they begin to form their identity. Identity is used to describe a person's social category and individuals define who they are

in terms of who and how they interact with (Jones, 2007). Overall, individuals begin to derive intrinsic value from expressing their identity in correlation to the common interests of the group they are interacting with.

Social media enables individuals to obtain a vast amount of information about each other. In gaining a considerable amount of information they are able to become engaged in collective action with those that share the same norms (Ostrom, 2000). Furthermore, social media networks diminish the psychological barrier of fear enabling for the people to communicate with one another and develop intrinsic values that are essentially backed up by free access to the Internet. “Psychological research provides evidence that intrinsic motivation is diminished when individuals feel that their own self-determination or self-esteem is adversely affected” (Ostrom, 2000, p. 9). Therefore, the Internet allows for people to feel like they are a part of something and to feel supported by instantly receiving feedback on how many people are involved or feel the same way and how they are willing to act to reach the common goal. For instance, Facebook gives instant feedback when witnessing how many people click with their computer-mouses that “yes” they will attend a certain event or “yes” they do essentially “like” that idea. “Institutions that enhance the level of information that participants obtain about one another are essential to increase the capacity of individuals to solve collective-action problems” (Ostrom, 2000, p. 10). The Internet provides a space where self-esteem is fostered and the individuals feel that they have the freedom to act, which essentially increases self-determination.

Today, large protests around the world are using digital media to enhance communication beyond sending and receiving messages. The emergence of digital media as a tool to communicate heightens the aspect of communication becoming a prominent part of the organizational structure, specifically in social movements. By sharing personal information across media networks, people are forming collective identities and forming the new argument of connective action.

As seen within the Arab Spring movement, individualized orientations result in a direct engagement with politics as an expression of personal struggles, grievances, lifestyles, and hope. With the access to various technologies and social networks, numerous individuals can organize collectively and personalized action groups are formed. Personalized action formations is where the ideas and mechanisms for organizing action become more personal on the basis of social group identity, membership, or ideology (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Group identity becomes a vital influence within collective action as people develop political identifications based on their given circumstances and personal lifestyles. The identity is derived from an all-encompassing and diverse large-scale personal expression (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), rather than just a common group identification highly influencing people to join actions in large quantities.

There is a shift between group-based to individualized societies that are complemented with flexible social “weak tie” networks first argued by Granovetter. The social weak tie networks enable the navigation and ability for identity expression within complex and changing social and political settings (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

According to Granovetter's argument the social weak tie networks enables individuals to also navigate from group to group. Furthermore, two components of personalized communication that are important within large-scale connective action formations are: political content and various personal communication technologies (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, large-scale protests are now using digital media establishing hybrid relations with organizations and enabling increased personalized public engagement. Communication is becoming an essential mechanism for organization and is heightened within social and digital media. Today, the use of digital media to create social networks and communicate various viewpoints has become a focal point for coordinating action of individuals and organizations; furthermore, the technology within digital media creates a highly personalized and socially mediated communication process that is fundamental to the organization of connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

There is not one simple or general theory for collective action. Rather, collective action can be perceived as a broader theory of human behavior, the existence of various collective goods, the attributes of groups that affect individual behavior, and diverse rules that affect individual behavior (Ostrom, 2000). Mancur Olson did not take into account the aspect of identity within his collective action argument and focused more on the instrumental willingness of individuals to take action in order to ensure a share of the common good (Jones, 2007). Therefore, Olson's argument remains inadequate to examine contemporary revolutions as it focuses on the self-interest of the individual,

rather than the factors influencing an individual to act. Within the Egyptian Revolution the collective behavior transformed into a social movement.

Collective behavior within social movements is a complex effort in response to a disposition that needs to be bypassed, the translation of feelings and ideas into actions, and that this action then takes place collectively rather than singly (Turner & Killian, 1997). A social condition rather than a miniscule event is necessary for the focus of the collective movement. Furthermore, this social condition must be perceived as amenable and achievable in order to convince people to act for change. Complex communication and decision-making structures are then necessary to facilitate the cooperation and reach a vast number of the population surrounding the movement (Turner & Killian, 2007).

Mancur Olson failed to take into account complex communication structures, as well as intrinsic motivations needed to foster the common interest and collective identity. The Egyptian Revolution disproved Olson's argument that individuals will not collectively act in large numbers. Rather, more than a million people gathered in Tahrir Square demanding the resignation of Mubarak and ultimately striving for democracy and an end to police violence. Egyptians were able to communicate through social media to form a collective identity and distinguish intrinsic motivations to collectively act. This collective action transformed into a social movement as people were pushing against the norms set by the government for change. Therefore, in order to fully understand the impact of social media it is not only important to comprehend the factors affecting collective action, but also the features in social movement theory that characterized the

eighteen day Egyptian Revolution.

## CHAPTER 3

### SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY; The mechanisms necessary to meet a common end goal

*“In every oppressed person’s fight to be free, there is struggle, pain, and when successful, pure joy and celebration in that first penultimate moment when they realize success.”*  
~Denis G. Campbell

As the harsh circumstances in Egypt escalated, many citizens began to push against Mubarak's regime. In memory of the death of Khaled Saieed, a Facebook page was made and became a communication technique for announcing the upcoming January 25<sup>th</sup> protest. Over eighty thousand people clicked with their computer mouse "yes", they would essentially attend the protest via the social media network Facebook (Khalil, 2011). However, clicking "yes" on a computer screen is completely different than leaving the safety of your home and physically showing up and participating in a protest. Anticipation was running high as many people were questioning exactly how many people were truly going to show up and actively participate. Twitter became a journalistic and communicative tool as people were using their cell phones to sum up the events happening on the streets and willing each other to participate (Campbell, 2011). Twitter allows for every person to become a journalist asking the essential question: What is happening at this very moment? The social media network is an online service allowing for an individual to share their thoughts and as each message is re-tweeted it becomes viral across inter-connecting networks so as many people as possible become aware of the issue or event taking place (Campbell, 2011). Following the example set by Denis G. Campbell in his book *Egypt Unshackled*, I will be using tweets taken from Twitter of events prior and during the Egyptian Revolution throughout this chapter and the next in order to demonstrate the real-time affect social media had impacting the way we all perceive and communicate the events spanning across the world.

The social media networks like Facebook and Twitter amplified the way people were communicating with each other and becoming increasingly aware of the existing



circumstances. Mancur Olson argued that people are self-interested and rational and would therefore not be willing to act collectively unless forced or within small groups. However, as previously discussed, Mancur Olson's argument proved to be inadequate as there are various intrinsic motivations that encourage people to voluntarily participate in collective action. These intrinsic motivations become clarified within social movement theory as social movements represent central mechanisms at work for social change (Buechler & Cylke, Jr., 1997). Social change occurs as people begin to act collectively creating social conflict with an opposing force. Acting collectively individuals begin to question the norms of their society and their constant doubts stir unrest. Once this unrest has been recognized and experienced by a vast amount of people, social conflict becomes inevitable.

@GSquare86 Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria...let the revolution drums roll down North Africa!!  
Down with all dictatorships  
@DJAmEnRa RT @GSquare86: We will all take to the streets...2011 WILL be different  
#Jan25 #Egypt (Campbell, 2011, p. 25).

An individual acting collectively has the ability to gain momentum, pushing an idea into a movement. Individual expression has the ability to create an action that excites everyone surrounding the individual creating a crowd like behavior that transforms into a social movement. Similar to the argument presented by Granovetter, people act partly on the basis of calculation and primarily on the basis of vague feelings believing they can succeed in their objective and it is the time to act (Turner & Killian, 1997). Acting collectively requires certain mechanisms including communication and social ties in order to reach the common good. As people communicate with each other they are able to form an intimate relationship that is needed to create social conflict and push for a social

movement. People develop similar understandings and norms concerning the current circumstances collectively and then translate these feelings and perceptions into collective action (Turner & Killian, 1997). A focus on an existing social condition is necessary for collective action to occur. Similar to the argument of collective action presented by Olson, social movement theories require communication and other mechanisms for progressing a movement from an elementary collective group to a specific social movement working towards a common goal.

In his article “Elementary Collective Groupings,” Herbert Blumer (1997) defines three main elementary collective groupings. The first collective grouping is the crowd, the second the mass, and lastly the public. The characteristics of each collective group are different from one another with some overlapping similarities that allow for one group to become the other. For instance, a crowd begins to act by developing understandings and relationships, a mass by various individuals becoming loosely organized and converging ideas, and a public by reaching a collective opinion or decision (Blumer, 1997). All three elementary collective groupings operate outside of a society’s structures or rules, norms, and culture. Overall, these groups are spontaneous forming in response to the existing circumstances and as a prelude to social change as new forms of collective behavior and social life are continuously forming.

A social movement in its most basic form is a crowd of people. In the occurrence of an exciting occasion a multitude of people become interested and move towards the transpiring events. With the attention solely on the event the individual is likely to lose some self-control and become transfixed with the event itself. Herbert Blumer (1997)

writes that the experience of such an event establishes tension that presses the individual to act out. With a number of people stirred by the same event and excitement as the individual the crowd begins to form.

The Egyptian Revolution was the result of increased corruption from the State, the previous revolution in Tunisia, youth unrest due to financial hardship, increasing unemployment rates, anger at the false attempts for democracy, and the cruelty of the emergency rule that was exemplified through the brutal death of Khaled Saieed (Khalil, 2011. & Campbell, 2011). With increased tension among the Egyptian people there was a plethora of events that excited the citizens encouraging them to form small crowds that engulfed each individual's self-control as they developed cat-and-mouse tactics for protests that had the potential of turning violent. The unrest of the Egyptian population increased tension within the State becoming an explosive that was ready to ignite under the right circumstances.

A year before the revolution, Khaled Saieed was brutally killed by members of the secret police. The post-mortem photograph of Saieed was released on the Internet and quickly went viral. Google executive Wael Ghonim created the Facebook page "We are all Khaled Saieed" in memory of Khaled Saieed, as well as against the emergency laws and police violence that existed throughout Egypt. The death and photograph of Khaled Saieed stirred-up high emotions of anger and outrage across the entire State as both young and old citizens began to defy the government's 'no assembly' law and demand accountability for their actions (Campbell, 2011).

@Ghonim Over 1000 people are protesting now in Alexandria blocking the street...#KhaledSaid is me, you, and everyone (Campbell, 2011, p. 31).

The death of Khaled Saieed was an event that stirred many people as a virtual crowd began to form through the social media sites like Facebook. Within the virtual crowd many people became anxious and excited as across Egypt everyone was stirred and motivated through Saieed's post-mortem photograph. Facebook and Twitter spread the photo virally and mainstream media picked it up and ran the story across the nation. Facebook and Twitter became the vehicles for communication and amplified the milling process.

@Souihli Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. [Barack Obama] (Campbell, 2011, p. 29).

The second stage of the crowd, developed by Blumer (1997), is the milling process where people being caught up in the movement begin to move around and talk to one another about the events that are taking place. "The excitement of each [event] is conveyed to others, and, as we have indicated above, in being reflected back to each other, is intensified" (Blumer, 1997, p. 73). By communicating with one another a common attitude begins to form among the crowd stimulating each individual to act in a collective set.

In the events leading up to the revolution, Egypt had over 20,000 subscribers to Twitter which is approximately one percent of the globe's users (Campbell, 2011). In using Twitter to communicate with one another the Egyptian subscribers became a part of an interlocking web of interconnected users making the events prior to and during the Egyptian Revolution go viral—meaning they spread quickly. The social media networks became organization tools as the Egyptian youth began to organize the January 25<sup>th</sup>

protest, choosing the day intentionally as it was declared a national holiday in honor of the Egyptian Police (Campbell, 2011). Rallying around Khaled Saieed, the media was alerted to the transpiring events and all that was needed was for the people that clicked “yes” to attending the protest to actually show up.

@nelaontherun TIME.com: 85,000 Facebook users pledge to attend protests tomorrow Jan 25, 2011 in Egypt #tunisia #activism #politics (Campbell, 2011, p.36)

Deriving from the milling process is the ability for the group to become an active group. As an acting or active group the common attitude is focused onto one objective. Herbert Blumer (1997) identifies that this objective usually revolves around an image that has been built-up by people communicating with one another and ultimately becomes shared by the crowd. In having a shared objective the crowd is able to act in unison and with a purpose to achieve the common good. A week before the protests took place, on January 18<sup>th</sup>, a twenty-six-year-old veiled woman posted a four minute YouTube video that instantly went viral (Khalil, 2011). The young protagonist and active founder of the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement, Asmaa Mahfouz, used direct language to emphasize that the upcoming protest was a simple call for national honor and dignity. In her video she speaks to the Egyptian citizens:

Four Egyptians have set themselves on fire thinking maybe we can have a revolution like Tunisia. Maybe we can have freedom, justice, honor, and human dignity... We want to go down to Tahrir Square on January 25<sup>th</sup>. If we want to have honor and want to live in dignity then we have to go down on January 25<sup>th</sup> (Khalil, 2011, p. 131).

Through her YouTube videos, Asmaa Mahfouz urges the Egyptian people to act with her around the objectives of honor and dignity—about regaining their own human dignity and becoming a proud nation identifying themselves as Egyptians. Mahfouz demands that

the people of Egypt speak to their neighbors, colleagues, family, and friends to encourage them to participate in the protest and take a stand declaring that “you are free human beings” (Khalil, 2011, p. 132).

The first video that Asmaa posted on YouTube instantly went viral as many people became inspired and motivated into action. The evening of January 24, Asmaa Mahfouz posted another video that was seeking to ensure last minute fears and encourage everyone to join her on January 25<sup>th</sup>. She speaks directly that:

All of Egypt waits for tomorrow. I know we are all nervous and anxious, but we all want to see tomorrow’s event happen and succeed. I’d like to tell everyone that tomorrow is not the day that we will change it all. No, tomorrow is the beginning of the end. Tomorrow we make our stand despite all that the security will do to us and stand as one in a peaceful protest. It will be the first real step on the road to change (Khalil, 2011, p. 133).

Asmaa speaks with encouragement believing that the protest will be a successful beginning to what would become the Egyptian Revolution. Her viral YouTube videos focused on a common attitude of honor and dignity that was being restored back into the Egyptian people—the pride that Mubarak’s regime slowly took away from them was beginning to return. This common attitude was channeled into the people to form an action and a cry that their demands be met.

The acting crowd, described by Blumer (1997), acts within the present lacking established rules and important components of society such as: a set of norms, an awareness of its own identity, and a recognizable “we-mentality” or consciousness. Without the presence of any established rules or norms the crowd acts on impulses. The structures that stem from the acting crowd are derived directly from the milling process and in projecting the objectivity as extremely important the acting crowd is organized

around a central idea or image. Mancur Olson argued that people who collectively act do so in small numbers in order to efficiently achieve the common good. However, within the acting crowd the number of people participating does not need to be confined into small groups. Rather, the size of the crowd is irrelevant and the behavior of the acting crowd may be found in a large or small group (Blumer, 1997). Similar to the acting crowd and on a larger scale, the mass is formed by people who become aroused by a nation-wide event.

The mass is composed of a multitude of people that vary in their class status, careers, values, and beliefs. Thus, the mass group is composed of anonymous individuals who identify themselves within the mass group. William Kornhauser (1997) identifies the mass society as being composed of an aggregate of individuals that are only related to one another by their relation to a common authority that they are pushing back on. Contrary to the acting crowd, the mass also has minimal interaction between the members of the group (Blumer, 1997). By being anonymous and only identifying themselves through the group, as well as commonly physically separated, the individuals do not contain any opportunity to communicate with one another. Therefore, the mass is not able to become successfully organized or move with unity and purpose (Blumer, 1997).

Without the technological tools of the Internet and social media websites, the Egyptian protests would have integrated into a mass of people. However, social media avenues allowed for an effective form of citizen communication and journalism. Ultimately, social media tools provided forums for ordinary citizens to document the protests, spread the word of activities, provide actual evidence of what was taking place

on the streets, and create a national identity (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Without this communication the members would form into a mass and lack the ability to act as a solid unit. In lacking this ability people would begin to act as individuals disconnected from one another. Deprived of the resources to communicate, as well as the resources to restrain their own behavior the members would not be able to constrain the behavior of others, thereby losing any control or organization within the movement (Kornhauser, 1997). Therefore, unlike the acting crowd, the mass contains no unity consisting of only an aggregation of individuals.

Although the mass consists of individuals acting separately from one another, these individuals are able to be acutely aware of their surrounding and what is occurring within the event (Blumer, 1997). Rather than acting in frenzy with those around the individual, he/she will act in response to the objective that has gained his attention. Thus, the individual will act on his own needs that are recognized in association with the objective. Contrary to Herbert Blumer's findings, William Kornhauser (1997) has found that social atomization enhances feelings of alienation. Social atomization refers to the separation of individuals, as well as breaking them into small fragments so they cannot formulate into groups. The mainstream media in Egypt functioned under strict government supervision and control up until the mid-1990s (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The media was mostly controlled by the government—Mubarak's regime—in order to keep most of the people uninformed and incapable in participating within the politics of the state (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). This impacted the way people were able to stay informed and thereby separated individuals. Furthermore, the emergency laws and the



brutality of the police instilled a fear within the people further isolating them from one another. Daron Acemoglu in the article “The Middle East and the Groupon effect” by Freeland (2011), argues that “what really stops people who are oppressed by a regime from protesting is the fear that they will be a part of an unsuccessful protest” (Retrieved from Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 3). Living in the Egyptian regime people were afraid to communicate with one another—only receiving information from mainstream media controlled by the state—due to the increased violence performed by the secret police of Mubarak.

In correlation to the enhanced alienation there is an inclination for individuals to become attached to symbols and leaders in order for them to feel like they have a purpose and some sense of belonging within a group (Kornhauser, 1997). The introduction of the Internet and social media networks within the mid-1990s was ironically due to the Egyptian government wanting to use Internet proliferation and access as a means for economic development (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Ironically, internet access was used as a tool for individuals to communicate within a virtual community expressing their resentment and frustration towards the regime as the regime itself was promoting Internet usage (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Furthermore, the rise in social media usage followed a rise in overall Internet and mobile phone usage.

@Ghonim Internet is the only free media in the Arab world. It's the media that no one controls. Thanks Facebook/YouTube/Twitter (Campbell, 2011, p. 33)

Over the last ten years prior to the Egyptian revolution, technology was increasing at a rapid pace. The Internet was becoming a medium for the youth of Egypt to communicate. Approximately fifteen to seventeen percent of the population in Egypt who

are active Internet users consisted of the youth, the 20 to 30 year old age group (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The user-generated content is transmitted through popular sites like Facebook, the video-sharing YouTube site, Twitter, and short message service (SMS) or commonly known as text messaging (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). These social media networks began to link the individuals together as they were becoming attached to symbols or images like the post-mortem photograph of Khaled Saieed.

@Zeinobia Khaled Said you may have been killed physically in 2010 but you managed to become one of our greatest icons in 2011 bless you (Campbell, 2011, p. 31)

As social media was being used as a means for individuals to become attached to symbols, individuals, or leaders the mass behavior was becoming more solidified. Furthermore, when mass behavior begins to become more organized into a collective action, it shifts into a movement becoming more societal or in other words becoming a mass movement. Mass movements ultimately mobilize atomized sections of the population and lack internal structure of independent groups (Kornhauser, 1997). As the Internet was solidifying the active internet users across Egypt to mobilize and hand out flyers a week before the protest, more of the atomized sections of Egypt or those without Internet access began to take part or at least become aware that something was about to occur.

The last elementary grouping that Blumer (1997) identifies as a collective grouping is the public. The public refers to a group of people who are confronted by an issue; however, these groups of people do not have any solidarity because they are divided in how they want to address the issue, yet, are still willing to engage within the issue (Blumer, 1997). Despite their dividedness, these groups of people are also willing to

communicate with one another creating a collective opinion of the issue. As a collective grouping, the public comes into formation as a natural response to a situation; therefore, the collective groupings of publics will always vary according to the issue. For instance, the issues of Mubarak's regime and the nature of the police state were causing several responses from the people. One popular response was the April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement organized in 2008 by the youth using Facebook (Campbell, 2011). The online platform was used to mobilize support for striking industrial workers from El-Mahalla El-Kubra. The youth worked to promote democracy by encouraging public involvement within politics.

Another popular response was the creation of the Facebook Page, "We are All Khaled Saieed" by Wael Ghonim in response to the brutal beatings of the police. Despite various responses there was no denying that Mubarak's regime was creating issues for the Egyptian population. "And the fact that an issue exists signifies the presence of a situation which cannot be met on the basis of a cultural rule but which must be met by a collective decision arrived at through a process of discussion" (Blumer, 1997, p. 79).

Within the formation of the public, it is necessary that communication be made possible in order to ensure a collective opinion on the matter at hand.

@ramyraoof tomorrow @ Cairo, April 6 movement is organizing a march. A network of 27 NGOs & about 50 lawyers are ready to provide (Campbell, 2011, p. 27)

Although the members of the public can hold discussions with one another there is, however, no form of organization or collective identity existing. The very existence of the public is derived from the issue and given circumstances at hand with varying sizes and numbers of participants within the public. Lacking a collective identity and an essential "we-ness" the public is characterized as having conflict relations creating

opposition within the group. Therefore, unlike the other elementary collective grouping the public must reach a collective opinion or decision in order to form solidarity within the group. However, the public is able to be transformed into a crowd when the individuals participating in the public all become excited or touched by the same image, sentiment, or propaganda (Blumer, 1997). Moving away from collective opinion and towards collective sentiment, the public begins to mill and build rapport within one another becoming a crowd. The public not only can transform into a crowd, but also into a mass where members of the group begin to act more on an individual level than a collective one. According to Herbert Blumer (1997), the increasing detachment of people from local life, the multiplication of public issues, the expansion of agencies of mass communication, together with other factors” (p. 80) have all contributed to members acting on an individual level. The important factor within all the groups remains to be communication in order to increase solidarity and build a sense of nationality to overcome the issues and work towards a common end goal. Furthermore, the communication that exists within the elementary collective groupings will enhance as social movements begin to form essentially honing in on the issues that existed within the crowd, the mass, and the public.

Social movements work to establish a new order of life from the current issues and circumstances that people began to push on within the elementary collective groupings of either the crowd, the mass, or the public. Social movements revolve around the dissatisfaction of the current form of life, as well as the hope for a new order of life (Blumer, 1997). Overall, there are three distinctive features: the occurrence of a

disposition to transcend established institutional patterns or structures; the translation of perceptions, feelings, and ideas into action; action that takes place collectively (Turner & Killian, 1997). In the beginning stage, social movements are poorly organized, lack a unified group identity, and have limited methods for communicating that is normally seen within the elementary collective groupings. Social movements are primarily characterized by their impulsive behavior that is based on collective excitement, as well as a lack of any objective or a strategic way of thinking. Strategic thinking implies that there are no organizational or small goals that can be recognized to reach an objective or end goal. However, as social movements begin to progress they begin to resemble a society with a clear organization and form, an established leadership and norms, as well as social rules and values (Blumer, 1997). As a result of becoming more organized the social movements develop solidarity and persistence to reach end goals. Three types of social movements can be categorized as general, specific, and expressive. In examining the characteristics and formations of social movements the primary focus will be on specific social movements because of its focused objective in reaching a common end goal and solidified identity.

Specific social movements are the manifestation of the hope for a new social order derived from the dissatisfaction seen within the general social movement (Blumer, 1997). Moving away from a general movement towards a specific social movement, the motivation is focused on a specific objective. Herbert Blumer (1997) writes that a specific social movement is “one which has a well-defined objective or goal which it seeks to reach” (p. 83). In trying to reach the movement’s well-defined goal it becomes

more organized, recognizing a membership to the movement that essentially creates the “we-ness.” In developing the “we-ness,” the social movement ultimately forms a body of traditions, set of values, set of rules, expectations, and a loyalty to the group (Blumer, 1997).

Social media served as a channel for expressing collective consciousness and national solidarity (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 3). The significance of the use of social media was that it challenged the overall censorship of the government providing a virtual community that allowed for information to flow in and out freely. Social networking allowed for the Egyptians to share their views with one another and more importantly to see if their views were shared with other citizens within the state. Using this tool the citizens were able to develop a “we” against a “them”—the “them” pertaining to Mubarak and his secret police. Throughout Mubarak’s regime tension was mounting as people became increasingly frustrated and resentful toward the government. Using the virtual community these emotions were expressed and met by others, enabling the active Internet users of the Egyptian population to form a common goal—for Mubarak to leave. As Asmaa Mahfouz expressed; “We’ll defend each other as one. We’ll come prepared to spend the whole day, or two days or even three days...no matter what they do to us, we will not leave until our demands are met” (Khalil, 2011, p. 134). With this demand the people of Egypt began to form a specific social movement leading up to the date of January 25, 2011 and the eighteen day revolution.

The two primary types of specific social movements include reform and revolutionary movements that seek to make changes within the social order (Blumer,

1997). A reform movement endeavors to modify a specific phase or a specific area of the existing social institutions and structure. “It advocates a change that will implement the existing value scheme more adequately than present conditions do” (Turner & Killian, 1997, p. 133) Contrary to the reform movement, a revolutionary movement pushes to reconstruct the entire social order in order to build a new way of life. The revolutionary movement challenges the fundamental values of a society (Turner & Killian, 1997). Furthermore, the distinction of reform or revolutionary movements are important because it corresponds to the strategies used within the movement and the way people talk about the movements (Turner & Killian, 1997). The use of illegal or coercive strategies are most commonly associated with revolutions and legal or socially approved tactics correspond with reform movements. Despite a variety of differences both reform and revolutionary movements are dependent on the “we-ness” in order to manifest collective behavior.

In increasing organization and “we-ness,” there are several stages categorized and developed by C.A. Dawson and W.E. Gettys in their *Introduction to Sociology* (1935) and further reevaluated by Herbert Blumer. The stages of social movements include: social unrest, popular excitement, formalization, and lastly institutionalization (Blumer, 1997). Furthermore, within each stage there exists a level of influence by developed roles of agitation, esprit de corps, morale, group ideology, and tactics (Blumer, 1997). Complementing these developments are the ideals of emergent norms, feasibility and timeliness, and a sense of hope that help the social movement for form and sustain collectively (Turner & Killian, 1997).

In the stage of social unrest, the individual participating within the movement are restless and act spontaneously. There is a vital sense that some establishment or some established mode of thought is wrong and needs to be replaced. The first stage of the development of social movement is highly influenced by the role of agitation as people become aroused. Essentially as more people become aroused there is more movement and communication allowing for people to focus their restlessness on a more centralized objective. The Egyptian people were becoming increasingly frustrated and agitated with the degree of corruption within the elections, dictatorship, economic distress, and humiliation from Mubarak's regime as various movements began to form in response to these circumstances. These movements include the Kefaya or Enough movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, the April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement, and other various political parties (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011. & Khalil, 2011). Each organization and movement focus their energy and restlessness on a centralized objective that they saw as a solution to the previous issues listed.

@leloveluck Egypt election results are shocking, even given that we knew they'd be neither free nor fair. Seems opposition won only 8 seats out of 518  
@TravelSafety #Egypt: Election protests continue- Polling stations, cars set alight. Police fire tear gas at protestors #egyptprotests (Campbell, 2011, p. 27)

The role of agitation pushes members of the social movement to enter the second stage of development—the stage of popular excitement. As more and more people become aroused and excited, they begin to communicate in a more direct way as they are able to communicate their frustrations effectively placing significance on certain objectives. The stage of formalization is considered to be the stage where the movement becomes organized with rules, values, tactics, and discipline. The Egyptian activists were



using the Internet to fight back and question the existing norms of the State prior to the Egyptian Revolution (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). These activists were communicating directly with one another through cell phones, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in order to organize meetings and protests, alert one another of police movements, and document police activity. Through this virtual community many activists were freely expressing their discontent with the regime and police force.

@Advox Egypt: Using Online Media & Digital Devices to Release Detainees: Earlier this month, the April 6 Youth Movement... (Campbell, 2011, p.27)

In the last stage, the stage of institutionalization, the movement has solidified into an organization with a definite structure used to meet the ultimate end goal. For the Egyptian Revolution this structure surrounded social media networks as a means for organization and mobilization. Furthermore, specific social movements would not be able to progress through the stages without the roles of agitation, esprit de corps, morale, ideology, and tactics. These means play a significant role in mobilizing and solidifying the members of the social movement.

@Sandmonkey Guys, the Egyptian revolution has a Facebook event, so that even the government can participate #KossOmelGhaba (Campbell, 2011, p. 25)

As seen within the first and basic stage of the specific social movement, the role of agitation is used to arouse and excite people into agents for the movement. The role of agitation is essentially used as a means “of exciting people and of awakening within them new impulses and ideas which make them restless and dissatisfied” (Blumer, 1997, p. 84). A movement generally begins with the dissatisfaction and frustration experienced by a group of people, ultimately the agitation is used to heighten those frustrations in order

for people to break away from their conventional way of thinking (Blumer, 1997). For instance, within a community people generally have a way of thinking that revolves around their local society's norms, rules, culture, government, and general way of life. However, when individuals become unhappy with their way of life from emerging issues and circumstances they become frustrated. Agitation, therefore, allows for the individual to become excited and aroused by the actions that are being taken to push against the given circumstances. The events must first capture the attention of the individual, exciting and arousing impulses that lead them in a direction where they can constructively convert the impulses into ideas (Blumer, 1997). Eventually, the excitement experienced by one individual will arouse the same impulses in other individuals building momentum for the social movement. This momentum will liberate people to wanting and more importantly feeling the desire to act towards building a new way of life that changes the conceptions of what the people are entitled to as human beings. However, while agitation sparks the movement into mobilization it would be short lived without the roles of other mechanisms to push the movement through all of the development stages.

@GSquare86 we need to stop venting about “poor us” “we the repressed people”..Go TO THE STREETS don't just write about it #Egypt (Campbell, 2011, p. 35).

Along with the role of agitation, the development of esprit de corps is important for organizing the beliefs and feelings of the movement. Esprit de corps is the “sense which people have of belonging together and of being identified with one another in a common undertaking” (Blumer, 1997, p. 85). In order to ensure solidarity among the movement, people must develop relationships and intimacy with one another as they share a common experience. This is enhanced throughout the milling stage as people

communicate with one another and spread their excitement and eagerness to generate change. This mechanism is vital in the social movement stage because, for example, it generates cooperation that is lacking in an elementary collective group like the public where the individuals are divided and referred to having conflict relations. Furthermore, unlike the mass, individuals develop a new conception of themselves as a part of their participation among the other group members (Blumer, 1997).

The YouTube videos Asmaa Mahfouz sent out manifested the development of esprit de corps of the Egyptian people. The young protagonist issued a demand to the people of Egypt to come together as a nation and redeem their honor and dignity. In calling upon each other to change their circumstances, individuals were able to form new conceptions of themselves taking pride in their nationality. A day after the Revolution had begun, January 26<sup>th</sup>, Asmaa Mahfouz issued another video where she proclaimed that she is proud to be an Egyptian (Khalil, 2011).

@Hawary #Jan25 People should not be afraid of their governments. Governments should be afraid of their people

@Elshaheed We should all use one hashtag for our talk about the Revolution of the Egyptian Youth, I suggest #OneEgypt #Egypt #Mubarak (Campbell, 2011, p. 41)

In relation to the development of esprit de corps, the development of morale provides the persistence and motivation to meet the end goal of the movement (Blumer, 1997). This mechanism is necessary because it provides the test needed to determine if the specific social movement can withstand any adversity that may occur. The development of morale is based on three sets of convictions including the “goodness” of the movement (Blumer, 1997). The goodness or morality of the movement can be answered by asking the question of whether or not the end goal would produce a common

good for the people that would benefit them and form a new way of life. The reign of Mubarak ultimately had a corrosive effect on the people of Egypt, making the citizens feel helpless spreading apathy and cynicism (Khalil, 2011). Mubarak's regime overall instilled a sense of hopelessness that nothing could be done to change the dynamic of their country. However, the days prior to and during the Egyptian Revolution the activists using the Internet were able to develop a virtual online community where free speech was welcomed. The capability to have free speech enabled people to realize that despite their differences they all wanted Mubarak to step down and resign and with this resignation they wanted democracy. The Internet and social media networks were used as a platform for civic engagement where people could discuss with one another methods of reaching this common end goal that they deemed worthy of the protests and revolution.

@Gsquare86 There is nothing that #Mubarak can do now to prevent the madness that will end his regime..IT WILL HAPPEN THIS YEAR!! #DownWithMubarak 2011  
(Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 28)

The second component used to develop moral is the overall faith in the ultimate attainment of its end goal (Blumer, 1997). The last conviction is that the movement is sparked and motivated by a sacred mission (Blumer, 1997). In developing morale for the movement, it is important to develop a certain type of attitude that the movement is for the greater good and that the end goal is worth reaching. Through the popular Facebook page "We are all Khaled Saieed," Wael Ghonim advocated that "this is your country; a government official is your employee who gets his salary from your tax money, and you have your rights" (as cited in Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 6). The Google executive's words inspired those communicating in the online community to realize the importance

of democracy and working towards the resignation of Mubarak. The mission was to then go out into the streets on January 25<sup>th</sup> to demand their rights.

@TravellerW Yes, I'm worried about tomorrow. Which is exactly why I am going-we cannot, will not let them scare us. #25Jan (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 29)

The development of group ideology is necessary for the overall persistency and progression of the movement (Blumer, 1997). The ideology is constructed from a body of doctrine, beliefs, morals, and values. Herbert Blumer (1997) outlines the development of ideology of consisting of a “statement of the objective, purpose, and premises of the movement,” a “body of criticism and condemnation of the existing structure which the movement is attacking and seeking to change” (p. 88). The development of ideology can also be referred as a defense doctrine which justifies the movement and the objectives to reach the end goal, “a body of beliefs dealing with policies, tactics,” as well as operational strategies and the myths revolving around the movement (Blumer, 1997, p. 88). Usually, the development of ideology can take the form of symbols, phrases, and arguments igniting emotions and impulses to act from those that are participating. Ultimately, the development of ideology is necessary for the formation of direction, justification, and hope that is needed throughout the stages of the social movement.

@TravellerW our strength is in our collective action. Egyptians, Believe in Yourself. BELIVE IN US. #25jan #Egypt (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 36)

Through the use of the internet, Egypt had a vibrant communication environment where activists could have their opposing voices heard. The best social network that was used to build both morale and ideology was Facebook. Through Facebook information could be spread to thousands of people within an instance and then shared between

friends within seconds. The post-mortem picture of Khaled Saieed became a symbol of the Egyptian Revolution igniting angry within the people and a motivation to seek change. The “We are all Khaled Saieed” Facebook page was used as both a central space for activists to communicate with one another, but also as a rallying point where the psychological barrier of fear could be broken (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Furthermore, during the revolution Tahrir Square became a space of unity, resistance, celebration, and Egyptian pride becoming the ultimate symbol for the new developed Egyptian ideology.

@tarekshalaby Today's our day as #CitizenJournalists to cover and share the truth freely. Regardless of the outcome we are winners cuz we're a team #Jan25  
@Sarahngb amazing sight as masses were coming from every direction towards Tahrir square. It's the demo's meeting point. Amazing #jan25 (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 34 & 42)

The last mechanism needed for the progression of a specific social movement is the role of tactics. The role of tactics involves gathering supporters and maintaining advocates in order to reach the objectives identified throughout the movement (Blumer, 1997). The role of tactics will vary depending on the circumstances and issues that people want to challenge and change. Tactics are highly dependent on the situation and circumstances themselves and will, therefore, revert back to the cultural background of the movement (Blumer, 1997). The development of tactics, as well as agitation, esprit de corps, morale, and group ideology are important steps in creating a social movement and the overall public image of that movement.

In their article “Toward a Theory of Social Movements,” Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian argue that once people become aware of a movement, observers begin to assign the movement an identity and image that serves as a reference for interpreting the events

that took place (1997). The Egyptian social movement has been labeled as a revolution pushing against the entire Mubarak regime. Consequently, in being labeled as a revolution access to mainstream media in order to spread their demands across Egypt was denied considering that the government controlled and censored most of the information projected from mainstream media (Turner & Killian, 1997). However, the youthful activists used the Internet and social media networks to communicate their ideas and form a virtual community of resistance. Social media became a powerful tool for the protestors to organize and expose the corruption and wrong doings of the regime and the movement has since been labeled as the Facebook and Twitter Revolution (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). However, although social media played a key role in the communication and organization of the Egyptian population it was not until the blackout—the government blocking Internet access—that more than one million people marched out into the streets. Social media was merely an effective organizational tool as the power and determination of the Egyptian people to act and physically mobilize on the streets contributed to the success of the revolution.

@Ghonim They lied to us. Told us Egypt died 30 years ago, but millions of Egyptians decided to search and they found their country in 18 days #jan25 (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 218)

## CHAPTER 4

### SOCIAL MEDIA, COMMUNICATION, & IDENTITY; As seen during the Egyptian Revolution

*“If you want to free a society, just give them Internet access” ~ Wael Ghonim*



Mancur Olson's argument in 1965 was that individuals will not collectively act towards a common good unless the number of the group is small or there is coercion to force individuals to act within the common interest (Udén, 1993). Mancur Olson's argument proved to be inadequate as it did not take into account that people will communicate with one another forming bonds and relationships necessary for the formation of social movements. Traditional theories of collective action lacked the key communication possibilities and identity formations that are enhanced by information and communication technologies, like the internet and social media networks, influencing people to act collectively. Olson's theory lacked acknowledgement of intrinsic values and the realization that individuals will act in various ways. Individuals contain mixed motivations defined as either self-interest, altruistic, or based on moral or social norms (Udén, 1993). These motives also help to characterize the intrinsic values of individuals acting collectively that ultimately help to form a collective identity. These key elements are all fostered through the Internet that helped to further characterize the protests as a social movement.

Social movements are formations of collective behavior that contain three distinctive features: the occurrence of a disposition to transcend, turning feelings and ideas into action, and finally the action that exist occurs collectively reaching towards to common goal (Turner & Killian, 1987). Furthermore, because social movements are based on individuals collectively acting together it is necessary to have a process of milling or communication established in order to facilitate cooperative action. Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian (1987), argue that both formal and informal communication

networks are essential. Communication is the central power within contemporary society that can stimulate change, transforming frustration into the desire to act.

Social movements require elements of organization in order to form a collective identity where the members would be held accountable, as well as a means of organization for people to feel solidarity with one another. The historical events of Egypt and Mubarak's regime created the conditions for the people in Egypt to feel dissatisfied and frustrated; however, the internet and access to social media allowed for people to interact amplifying a collective identity and increasing the process of communication. Ultimately, the eighteen day revolution began with text, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. The specific social movement from Egyptian revolution stems from the solidification of the motivation and the willingness of the Egyptian people. The Egyptian population were experiencing an excessive amount of dissatisfaction and frustration from the regime that ultimately fueled their desire to act towards a common end objective—to see the resignation of President Mubarak. In a 60 Minutes report on *CBS News*, Wael Ghonim remarks that the regime woke up eighteen million Egyptians (CBS News Online, 2011). Although the revolution has been characterized as the Facebook or Twitter Revolution, it would be inadequate to say that social media was anything more than just the tools to organize the people. Social media amplified and magnified the revolutionary process; however, it was the physical interaction of the people to march into the streets that allowed for the revolution to become a success.

Over the past decade information and communication technologies have become indispensable in providing a vast amount of information to people, as well as new

communication capabilities that allow people to communicate with one another in real-time via instant messaging or video-conferencing. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) provide access to information through telecommunications that is primarily focused on communication technologies including the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums ("Techterms.com," 2010). Furthermore, social media networks like Twitter and Facebook are user-generated websites that allow for people to remain in contact with one another while communicating and sharing information with one another. Overall, modern communication methods and access to the Internet have changed the way people communicate with one another and the way they collectively act in social movements.

The eighteen day Egyptian Revolution was a great story that we were able to witness up close in real time via the television and the Internet. "This story was always real, live, factual and never changed. It was about a group of people wanting to breathe free. It played out in real time over 18 days and was mostly uninterrupted by a commentariat trying to explain what it was they thought you saw" (Campbell, 2011, p. 10). As the Internet and social media websites began to develop, similar like-minded people began to communicate with one another when communication or assembly outside of the virtual community could subject them to arrest or detention. Twitter became a journalistic tool as people became willing to go onto the streets during January and February of 2011 to capture the unfolding events with their cell phones and tweet to the world the circumstances that were taking place (Campbell, 2011). Howard (2011) recognized that social media allowed for citizens to become journalists who are

dissatisfied with traditional media and their perspective of events. Therefore, social media enabled for citizens to tell their own stories, creating a democratic environment of free speech. Activists using the Internet and social media sites like Facebook channeled one of the most dangerous of elements—rage.

In their article “Reconceptualizing Collective Action in the Contemporary Media Environment,” Bimber et al. (2005) argue for a new form of collective action that is reliant on technological aspects addressing interpersonal interaction, as well as what is ultimately used for the engagement shapes the overall interaction. Challenging prominent collective action theories since Olson’s argument in 1965, the authors address the choices of participation that was originally assumed to rely on strong ties and a formal or traditional organization method that is necessary for locating and contacting participants (Bimber et al, 2005). Furthermore, they argue that collective action is more of a concept that crosses between private and public domains, rather than just existing within the public domain (Bimber et al, 2005). The internet creates a medium for collective action to cross between private and public domains building both online and offline networks that essentially create the informal and formal networks necessary to sustain a social movement (Aouragh, 2012).

The internet was a means for activists to communicate by using user-generated websites and other sites such as emails, blogs, twitters, and text. The internet ultimately created a space where people could become semi-activists in order to contribute and participate within the movement. The internet became a tool in which communication could facilitate cooperation by eliciting information about the choices and decisions of

others, enhancing trust and transparency between participants, amplifying social values and responsibilities, and lastly creating a group identity (Udén, 1993). In using user-generated sites to communicate, human agency is overall made possible by social structures that are conditioned from the users (Bhaskar & Callinicos, 2003; cited in Aouragh, 2012). Therefore, in echoing Miriyam Aouragh's argument in her article "Social Media, Mediation, and the Arab Revolution" (2012), the internet and social media can be perceived as both a space for activists to use and a mechanism to enhance communication.

On February 9, 2011, 30-year-old activist Wael Ghonim commented in a CNN interview that "if you want to free a society, just give them Internet access" (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Many people believe that ICT positively promotes democracy and freedom by generating the essential tools and spaces for people to participate in—giving people the ability to effectively communicate their wants and needs forming a discussion that could be reached to find a common objective. For instance, on the popular Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said" dedicated to the death of Khaled Saied and to end police violence, many people began to post about other maltreatments performed by the police on Egyptian citizens. These stories began to shape the page to become a statement against torture in Egypt, as well as inhuman treatment of Egyptians within their own country (Facebook page We Are All Khaled Said). Furthermore, the stories emphasized the ideal that everyone was Khaled Saied, everyone could become a victim to the police brutality, and it was time that these stories came into light to fuel the motivation to act against Mubarak's regime. Overall, the participation from the people of Egypt sharing the

information formed a common anger, rage, and frustration at the police and the regime. This common emotion could then be shaped into a common objective for the community to become motivated to act upon.

The revolutionary movement grew largely out of anger at a permanent state of emergency laws, unemployment, and rampant police abuses (Campbell, 2011). As the Internet grew it exposed people to information and communication networks. However, for many Egyptians a computer was too expensive to own and for years young Egyptians were using their cell phones to take videos, pictures, and to send text messages. Towards the beginning of the revolution many youthful activists began using social media like Facebook and Twitter connecting across the state (Campbell, 2011). Social media sites encouraged users to form groups becoming a dominant mode of engagement. Social media tools could send out graphic images and organizing messages more quickly and effectively than ever before.

“Online activism facilitates offline liberation strategies” (Aouragh, 2012, p. 529). In order to understand what the activists are pushing on social media networks, it is important to realize the political and historical actions that are taking place in offline networks. Prior to the revolution, there was consistent turmoil existing within the country leading to people feeling frustrated and dissatisfied. These events had a major effect on the politics that were taking place in the online communities as people began to share their experiences. The widespread anger and the increasing percentage of the unemployed, as well as price increases all played a vital role leading to the tipping point of the revolution. Technology was of essential importance in projecting these conditions.

Technology enabled people not only around Egypt, but around the world to fully visualize the events that were taking place rather than analyzing the realities existing within Egypt.

The Internet amplifies important aspects in social movements including scalability—the expanding of social ties—and operational continuity or how the social movement can sustain itself (Castells, 2009; in Aouragh, 2012). As a tool for activists the internet is used as an operational factor and as a space it is used for expanding networks (Aouragh, 2012). The online spaces for interaction intensify the political agendas of everyone retrieving its sources from the political networks and physical, collective protests that are taking place in the actual community—outside of the virtual realm. Social media networks were especially useful in communicating and expanding networks because they were both user-generated and malleable to the experiences of the people in Egypt, as well as the application for everyday communication by the younger generation. The social media spaces provided platforms for online public spheres that were convenient for political deliberation and where opinions are shaped leading to unanimous decisions (Aouragh, 2012).

Miriyam Aouragh (2012) argues that the Internet is also a dichotomy that empowers and disempowers the people of Egypt as both the government and the people use the space to gain power on information. Both the government and the activists used the internet for gaining imperative information about the other. During the revolution people were using social media, cell phones camera, and text messages to avoid the police, as well as speak with and gather up other marchers across the densely populated

city of over seven million people (Campbell, 2011). The Tuesday morning, the first day of the revolution which would be known as the Day of Rage, was a day of transition from the planning amplified by social media to the execution. As the morning progressed key Tweeters alerted protestors of the location of the police, as well as to misdirect the police themselves sending them false information.

@ManarMohsen Those tweeting about the protest in Egypt, please use the hashtag #Jan25 in order to spread any information (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 33).

@gharbeia Police on every street entrance in Garden City, also in front of Parliament

@adamakary reports that ppl have already started protesting down dar es sallam st, shouting long live Egypt, freedom and bread for all Egyptians #jan25 (Campbell, 2011, p. 47)

However, the protestors were not the only ones using twitter. The police were using fake twitter IDs in order to misdirect the protestors and manipulate them into getting them to do or follow where the police wanted them to (Campbell, 2011). The following tweets emphasize how important citizen-journalists like Sandmonkey and Salamander were trying to communicate to other people the locations of the police. These Twitter accounts were trusted among the activists to give accurate details about what was occurring especially during the times the police would use fake twitter IDs to manipulate the protestors.

@Salamander Security surround protestors in Cairo and Asuit #jan25 via front to defend Egypt protestors

@Sandmonkey More police trucks at mostafa Mahmoud. People almost nonexistent. #jan25 (Campbell, 2011, p. 50)

“The overwhelming materiality of power over technology in capitalist nation states—a power of structure itself was practiced during the internet shut-down in Egypt at the start of the revolution. Showing us just how ‘free’ the free market is” as companies worked to



comply with governmental orders and shut down the access to the Internet (Aouragh, 2012, p. 528). The only company left with access to the internet was Noor since they worked on the stock exchange. This indicates that while the Internet is deemed to be the ultimate means for reaching freedom it, however, has limitations in that access to the internet is politically and economically dictated by the state. Thereby, the state can determine when its citizens will have access to the internet and the overall ability to communicate state-wide. Overall, the social media sites built on expanding the social ties of participants of the movement, the local citizens, and people all over the world. During the revolution it built a solidarity that spanned across the globe. However, when access to social media sites were denied people began to mobilize in an effort to sustain the social movement.

The crowds of Egyptians continued to gather the morning and afternoon of January 25<sup>th</sup> communicating with each through Twitter and other social media sites until the Internet began to jam. Suddenly protestors within Tahrir Square did not have any access to Twitter, as well as mobile networks like Vodafone went down (Campbell, 2011).

@itsBuddhaBlaze Egypt has blocked twitter? You cant block what people want in masses? Its called democracy!

@fouad marei via @Salamander #Egypt #Mobinil suspends mobile coverage service for subscribers in Tahrir Square, helps censor protest #jan25 (Campbell, 2011, p. 60)

Wael Ghonim declared that the regime made a stupid strategic mistake when they blocked the access to Facebook because the regime sent the message that they were afraid of what the people of Egypt could do (CBS News Online, 2011). When the government

blocked the access to Facebook, many citizens began to use pre-digital technologies such as dial-up modems to gain Internet access to maintain network and continue organizing.

Although social media was an important mechanism for the development of the revolution, technology was only actually used by several factions critical to the revolution and Facebook became less relevant once people were already in the streets (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). While online tools like SMS text alerts, Google maps, and Twitter were important for coordination, citizen journalism, and mobilization, the blackout emphasized the crucial role played by the physical on-the street mobilization before and especially during the revolution (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Idle and Nunns (2011) recognize the importance of the physical numbers as they observed how protestors would walk down the streets calling out to people as they went while tweeting about their location and the unfolding of the events.

@GSquare86 I am not comfortable with all this talk on #Jan25 on social networks, it better show on the streets...I will be there, will u? (Campbell, 2011, p. 41)

Although January 25<sup>th</sup> was the start to the Revolution and the start to the jamming of the Internet, on January 28, 2011 the Egyptian government shut off the Internet and mobile phone services for the entire country resulting in a blackout that lasted for over a week (Khalil, 2011). The blackout forced the activists to find more innovative ways to communicate with each other and the rest of the world as they used landlines to connect to internet services in neighboring countries, used Morse code, filed transfer protocol accounts to send videos to international news organizations, and created a Speak-2-Tweet service where users could call an international telephone to post and hear Twitter messages (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

The government's choice to shutdown Internet access overall backfired as it enraged Egyptians who were accustomed to using the Internet. "Young, educated, Egyptians were affected by their years of access to the Internet, which shaped their outlook and connections to each another and led to a sense of entitlement to Internet access" (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 11). The barrier of fear was essentially broken and activists became resilient and determined.

@GSquare86 I have Internet access from an unknown location, the people are in MILLIONS in the streets and will NOT stop until MUBARAK is OUT!

@GSquare86 The government has blocked everything because they are so afraid, but the people are not and will not give up!! (Edited by Idle & Nunns, 2011, p. 67-8)

What the regime realized too late was that Facebook could have been seen as a distraction as people were spending too much time participating in virtual activism rather than real activism. Therefore, when the government shut down access to the Internet there was a surge of real activism as people had to move outside of their homes and virtual communities into the streets of the protests. "The regime realized too late that many, if not most, of the people in the streets were not Internet users. In fact, some of the protesters in Tahrir Square have never heard of Facebook before, but they were energized and inspired by the huge numbers of people" (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 11). Since the blackout, the citizen journalism that was taking place on the streets and told by using Twitter, became more for the world to know Egypt's story and struggle, rather than for the people in Tahrir Square who could not even easily read the tweets.

Clay Shirky (2011) remarks that as:

Communications landscapes get denser, more complex, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more

opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action. In the political arena...these increased freedoms can help loosely coordinated publics demand change (cited in Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 15).

Activists using the Internet in Egypt were able to use social media effectively to express themselves, share information, organize protests, and ensure that their story was told and heard by millions spanning across the globe. The momentum of the Egyptian Revolution was characterized by collective actions built upon networks rather than institutions or political organizations. Social media enhanced the ability for people to mobilize and act collectively in an expression of the public's common desire to see the resignation of Mubarak.

Social media empowered activists to associate and share their ideas with others globally and amongst themselves. The Internet and social media created a space for free expression seen on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and blogs. Furthermore, access to social media sites allowed for protestors to plan, organize, and execute peaceful protests (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The blackout of the Internet access further revealed the determination of the people themselves to physically act and protest within the streets of Egypt to characterize the social movement.

Wael Ghonim spoke to CBS News Online in the 60 Minute segment (2011, February 13) that "Without Facebook, without Twitter, without Google, without YouTube, this would have never happened...If there was no social networks it would have never been sparked." Social media and technology does not cause political change, but it did provide new opportunities for organization, mobilization, and group identity

(Howard, 2011). Social media gave the Egyptian population a chance to become cyber-activists.

In intertwining ways, the Egyptian Revolution enabled a population to become citizen journalists and cyber-activists, becoming a trigger for street activism that was emphasized through the blackout, which finally encouraged civic engagement (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Cyber-activism is the act of using the internet to advance a cause that would otherwise be difficult to advance outside of online communities (Howard, 2011). Using the internet to advance a cause can consequently promote civic engagement where the whole of society is invited to participate in the social efforts to bring about change. Once the government blocked access to the Internet the civic engagement was amplified as citizens poured into the streets and collectively worked together to have their demands heard.

From the theories of social movement we know certain elements like agitation, the development of group ideology, the development of morale, and the development of esprit de corps are essential. Utilizing social networking spaces, such as the “We are all Khaled Said” Facebook page, the activists were able to share posts and messages that enhanced the elements of social movements and ultimately encouraged those on the sites to become mobilized. Without the posts, pictures, and videos uploaded onto popular sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter the revolution would not have been experienced with the same intensity and have ended as quickly as eighteen days with the resignation of President Mubarak. However, it was the physical interaction and emphasis of civic

engagement through on-the-street activism that encouraged people to actively participate shown within the sheer numbers of people pouring into Tahrir Square.

## CONCLUSION

### AN ENDING WITH ALL OF EGYPT

*@syazwinasaw It began with Khaled Saieed, facilitated by Wael @Ghonim and Facebook, and ended with all of Egypt. A story for our children. Inspiring. ~Twitter  
Retrieved from Campbell, 2011*

On the eighteenth day of the Revolution the crowd's rage was growing, as well as their anticipation to see what would be Mubarak's next move in addressing the citizens in Egypt. Many citizens began to flood into the streets after witnessing the previous speeches given by Mubarak, as well as the emotional interview of Wael Ghonim. There were over one million protestors in Alexandria as the day was approaching into late evening. Across the country the people were chanting Leave! Leave! Leave! to both Mubarak and his government—the people had had enough. Tensions were high among the crowd as people were unsure who was controlling Egypt—was it Mubarak or the army? People continuously walked into the streets resulting in recorded estimates of over ten million people gathering within the streets across Egypt participating in the massive demonstrations (Campbell, 2011). Then finally the news of Mubarak's resignation hit the crowds gathering in Tahrir Square.

@nytimes Mubarak Leaves Cairo as Crowds surge #Egypt #Jan25  
@Camanpour Suleiman sends less than 1 min statement: President Mubarak hands over power to the military  
@NigelCNNpr #BenCNN "One man listening on his phone shouted the President has resigned and the crowd went wild" #CNN #Jan25  
@mmcohen Mubarak steps down #Cairo has exploded in celebration. It is a good day for #Egypt #Jan25 was worth it (Campbell, 2011, p. 296-7)

The night of February 11 turned into a night of celebration for the Egyptians as the people celebrated the fall of Mubarak. Since the eighteen day revolution, people in Egypt have continued to occupy Tahrir Square in protest of the Army and underlying economic issues. When Mubarak resigned from office, cyber-activism did not end. National issues are still being discussed and debated online, as well as through mainstream media. The recent 2011 constitutional referendum was discussed throughout



both mainstream and social media via newspapers, Twitter, and Facebook (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

During the 2011 constitutional referendum debate many social media sites like the popular “We Are All Khaled Saieed” Facebook page was polling members and encouraging them to vote no to the constitutional referendum in order to draft a whole new constitution for Egypt (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). However, the voters ultimately voted yes passing the referendum for the new amendments to be added into the constitution, rather than just drafting a new constitution. Many political activists believe that this was in result to many people not being aware of what the referendum to the constitution stood for and that the military council did not allow for enough time for citizens to learn about what their vote would go towards (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). As social media continues to play a role in the political sector of Egypt, it also plays a role for civic debate as online activists create websites to encourage discussion and Wael Ghonim’s Google Moderator that sketches where the future of Egypt may lie (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Furthermore, since the revolution, more than two million Facebook accounts have been created and used for citizens to communicate with one another. Activists Dalia Ziada remarks that social media “will be vital in building a democracy that respects the rights of women and minorities” who contributed to the vast numbers of protestors during the eighteen day revolution (cited in Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 15). Overall, social media will remain an important tool for citizens to work towards democracy and equal rights.

The final outcome of the Egypt Revolution and their transition to democracy remains to be seen. Yet Egyptians and people around the world have learned about the power of social media and the Internet as effective organization and communication tools. Furthermore, it is these tools that can be used to ensure democracy especially if the Internet is granted access to everyone across the state of Egypt.

Although social media will continue to play an important role in the transition for Egypt to democracy, it is important to understand that this transition will mostly depend on the people's will and determination to continue to put pressure on the Egyptian military council. As our world becomes increasingly linked through technology transforming the way we collectively identify ourselves, organize, and act it is important to remember the significance of physical interaction that enables us to develop deeper connections. Through individuals becoming physically active within their communities a deeper connection can be formed used to foster intrinsic values and identity—how we identify ourselves on our own and in correlation to those around us.

There is a dichotomy that exists when using social media as it has the ability to empower us, as well as disempower us. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected as technological advances and the Internet allow for us to have a vast amount of information within the click of our computer mouse, the app on our smart phones, and the capability to watch news and footage at real time. While studying abroad, I had the opportunity to experience this first hand. Living in a different country was both terrifying and exhilarating as I both missed my friends and family, yet was anxious to form new relationships. Today's technology and access to the Internet gave me a plethora of

opportunities to communicate and stay caught up with my loved one's at home. This capability empowered me to wield information and technology and use it on my will. However, it also disempowered me for as I was communicating with those back home via Skype and Facebook, I severely limited myself to forming new relationships and immersing myself within a whole different culture.

From this experience I wanted to understand the dichotomy of social media and how it was impacting our relationships and our surrounding communities. I questioned what we owe to ourselves, to our relationships, and to our communities from our privilege of having access to technology and the Internet. As we have seen within the Egyptian Revolution, social media has the capability to empower millions of people by dissolving a psychological barrier of fear and creating a space for open conversation. Ultimately, social media creates a space that enables people to communicate with one another and share their experiences. Social media enhanced our ability to feel connected and connection is what gives us purpose and meaning to our lives.

Through the Egyptian Revolution, social media networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter allowed for the Egyptian people to connect after years of isolation fueled by the regime of Mubarak. Mubarak's regime instilled an aspect of hopelessness that made people feel that they were not good enough to belong, the Egyptian pride and nationality was completely stripped from the people. Social media networks then created a space for people to tell their stories and speak of their own experiences with the regime, ultimately creating a sense of belonging and worthiness. The Egyptian people began to believe that they were worthy and deserved more human rights that was not provided by

Mubarak's regime. This sense of belonging stirred the people to communicate and create virtual communities with one another.

Yet, social media was merely the tools to connect people and begin to form among them a collective identity. As the government shut down the Internet, what moved them onto the streets was not only curiosity as people wanted to know what was happening, but also a sense of courage. The barrier of fear was resolved and within the streets people were able to let go of who they were under Mubarak and truly connect with their surrounding community. Outside of the virtual communities, courage then becomes the ability for us to tell our story of who we are with our whole heart. Once in the street the citizen journalism enhanced by Twitter, became the way for Egypt to tell their story.

Although social media enhances our capacity to connect and hear in real-time the events that are unfolding around the world, it also inhibits our ability to fully embrace vulnerability that allows us to connect on a different level. The Internet encouraged a sense of nationalism and pride, as Egyptians reached out to one another asking for each other to go out into the streets. However, as we now realize most of those in the streets did not even know Facebook existed. So in order for one million people to have marched into the streets they all embraced their vulnerability of being excluded, re-finding their own human dignity in a corrupt State, and demanding their rights. Gathering into the streets and the willingness and courage to tell their story enabled for the Egyptians to truly connect. I believe that social media limits our ability to be deeply seen and to share our whole heart with others as it distracts us from our local surroundings. This connection can only happen as we are fully active within our surroundings and communities.

Furthermore, as we immerse ourselves deeply within our communities our story can unfold as we begin to truly feel a sense of belonging and find a purpose among one another.

As we enter into a world that enables us to connect globally from the push of a button on our phone, surf endless webpages to find like-minded virtual communities, and receive a vast amount of information it is important for us to realize the significance of civic engagement through the physical participation within our communities. The Egyptian Revolution has been commonly referred to as the Facebook or Twitter Revolution; however, what can be taken away from this movement is the willingness and determination of a vast amount of people acting collectively to form change. People who were willing to walk out into the streets and communicate on a face-to-face level in order to truly comprehend and develop empathy for the demands echoing across Egypt. This connection and perseverance by the people is what needs to be taken away as the Revolution became a unique opportunity for the world to witness history taking place, for the world to witness Egypt's story.

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