AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE POLITICAL PROTESTS IN EGYPT (2011)

By
Thabo Ramphobole

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Media Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

January 2012

PROMOTER: Dr. Janina Wozniak

Co-PROMOTERS: Mrs. Bianca Wright
Ms. Adelina Mbinjama
DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3,

4.6.3. A treatise/dissertation/thesis must be accompanied by a written declaration on the part of the candidate to the effect that it is his/her own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification. However, material from publications by the candidate may be embodied in a treatise/dissertation/thesis.

I, Thabo Ramphobole with student number 206043604, hereby declare that the treatise for the Magister Artium in Media Studies is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

Signature: ______________________________________________

Date: _________________________________________________
Acknowledgements

I herewith wish to thank and acknowledge the support offered me during the research and writing process by a number of individuals.

I wish to express heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Janina Wozniak for her keen eye following my ‘3AM writing’ inclinations. I am also grateful for the dedication and counsel she provided me, which allowed me to expand my critical horizons. A special word of thanks my co-promoters, Mrs. Bianca Wright and Ms. Adelina Mbinjama for their advice and encouragement in the process of this study.

A sincere word of thanks must however be extended to my family; my grandmother, mother and aunt who continue to provide me with sustenance and strength in any endeavor I undertake.

In addition, to my friends for their understanding of the limited time we had due to the enormity of this task and for the conversations which generated much debate and ideas on this research. Ziyaad, I’m eternally indebted to you for your specialized assistance on this project.

Finally, I’m grateful to NMMU’s Research and Capacity Development for the additional funding provided for this research project.
Contents

Chapter One: Introduction to the Research .................................................................1

1.1. Introduction: Background to the Modern State of Egypt .................................1
1.2. Towards Democracy? Egypt: 1922 – 1952 .........................................................1
1.3. The Nasser Years: 1952 – 1970 .................................................................5
1.4. Nasser Policies .......................................................................................7
1.5. The Sadat Years: 1970 – 1981 .................................................................8
1.6. The Mubarak Years: 1981 – 2011 ............................................................11
   1.7. Egyptian Political Parties .................................................................14
      1.7.1 The National Democratic Party .......................................................15
      1.7.2 The Muslim Brotherhood ...............................................................15
      1.7.3. Hizb al-Ahrar (Liberal Party) .......................................................16
      1.7.4. Hizb al-Ghad (Tomorrow Party) ....................................................17
      1.7.5. The New Wafid Party .................................................................17
      1.7.6. Hizb at-Tajammu’ al-Watani at-Taqadumi al-Wahdawi’ (The National
             Progressive Unionist Party) .........................................................18

Chapter 2: Networks and Movements .................................................................20

2.1. Networks ......................................................................................................20
   2.1.1. Network Functionality ......................................................................21
2. 2. Mobilization of Citizens Towards a Revolution ..........................................25
2.3. Egyptian Internet Use ................................................................................28
2.4. The Impact of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube ...........................................32

Chapter 3: Social Media and the Changing Democratic Landscape ................36

3.1. Research Design and Methodology .................................................................41
3.2. Research Framework ..................................................................................41
   3.2.1. Research Question ...........................................................................41
3.2.2. Aims and Objectives of Study .............................................................41
      Aim .........................................................................................................41
Chapter 6: Conclusion ............................................................................................................67

6.1 Introduction...............................................................................................................67
6.2 Summary of Research ..............................................................................................67
6.3 Limitations Encountered During Study ...................................................................68
6.4 Implications for Further Research ...........................................................................68
6.5 Conclusion of Study .................................................................................................69

Addenda ..................................................................................................................................70

Addendum A: Sample Tweets from Topsy Search ........................................................71
Addendum B: Details of YouTube Videos Analyzed .....................................................73
Addendum C: YouTube Video Screengrabs .................................................................75
Addendum D: Egyptian Revolution on Twitter - A Network Model (See Attached Disc)

References and Reading List .................................................................................................85
Abstract

Social media’s role in fomenting protest action in Egypt has often been lauded by proponents of these web 2.0 technologies, to the extent that the collective protest actions that swept the Middle East and North Africa from December 2010 to the present have been referred to as ‘Twitter Revolutions’, in recognition of the pivotal played by Twitter in mobilizing citizens.

With an investigation into the integral composition of Twitter (www.twitter.com) and YouTube (www.youtube.com), this study will, theoretically, evaluate the rise of this new form of ‘networked’ communication in relation to the rise of ‘networked social movements’ with the resultant aim of exploring the potential democratizing abilities of social media in autocratic regimes.

Thus, this study focuses on the 2011 Egyptian protests, specifically the period between January 25th to February 11th 2011 where citizens participated in mass protests to express long held dissatisfaction with the (now defunct) Mubarak regime.

Based on the premise that social media can provide a forum for dialogue towards a democratic process, this treatise will embark on a critical analysis of the role of social media specifically Twitter and YouTube by examining the manner in which both of these social networking sites, through a symbiotic relationship, became spaces for the contention of authoritarianism in Egypt.

Keywords: Social media, Twitter, YouTube, Egypt, Arab spring
Chapter One: Introduction to the Research

1.1. Introduction: Background to the Modern State of Egypt

This study looks at the role of social media in the revolution in Egypt (2011). To arrive at a possible logical explanation to the eventual rise of dissent in Egypt at the beginning of 2011, it is important to understand the rise of Egypt as a modern state. This will be done by tracing the development of Egypt from its time as a British colony to the political, as well as economic policies of its three post-colonial leaders namely Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak.

Egypt's political landscape has been influenced by three prominent leaders, each with markedly different government policy as well as its implementation. This treatise will also trace the emergence of oppositional political voices such as the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the later part of Mubarak’s rule of Egypt, as far as this was reflected in the English coverage in the social media sample. Among factors to consider for the eventual dissent of January 2011 are (although not exclusive to), the emergency law, the upward rise in post-graduate employment as well as the lack of political freedom. This treatise details how some of these legal and socio-political factors contributed to a climate that was eventually conducive to a revolution.


Egypt's history is replete with revolutionary actions; first in 1919 to the overthrow of the young King Farouk in 1952.

Egypt gained partial independence from the British in 1922 (World Factbook: 2011). This resulted in the institution of a British backed monarchy. While the country was supposedly independent, British influence “continued to dominate Egypt's political life and fostered fiscal, administrative, and governmental reforms” (Ness, 2009) as the British encroached upon Egyptian independence primarily through a relationship with the king. This dominance was intrinsic so much that the monarch was regarded as “British puppets” (Richmond, 1977: 185). Egypt’s ‘unilateral’ independence from the British came with conditions however; Britain retained control over four ‘key’ areas, deemed ““vital to the British Empire”: the security of imperial communications, defense of Egypt against outside aggression, the protection of foreign interests and minority rights, and the Sudan” (Rogan 2009: 169).
At this chapter of Egyptian history, the consolidation of power was seen as between three axes; the Wafd as the ruling party, the king and the British, with the latter wielding considerable power, particularly at any time its interests were at stake (Metz, 1990). The power of the British lay in its army of occupation as well as British officials in the administration, police, and army. The king had been guaranteed certain power in the 1923 constitution and as such, “his power rested on the rights he could exercise in accordance with [this] constitution and partly on the permanence of his position” (Metz, 1990). According to Metz, the King’s rights also included selecting and appointing the prime minister, dismissing the cabinet, and dissolving Parliament while the Wafd's power on the other hand, was based on its popular support and its command of a vast majority in Parliament. It could be said in this sense that the Wafd constituted a form of democracy given its rise to power based on popular citizen support. While this ‘parliamentary democracy’ did give some power to the Wafd, it was a threat to both the British and the king. Metz elaborates on the perceived threat of each entity in the following way:

To the king, any democratic system was a threat to his autocratic rule. To the British, a democratic system meant that in any free election the Wafd would be voted into power. The British believed that the Wafd in power was a threat to their own power in the country. Thus, the British attempted to destroy the power of the Wafd and to use the king as a counter to the Wafd (Metz, 1990).

According to Rogan (2009), the slow progress to secure complete independence from Britain can be attributed to the constant need of all Egyptian power axes to subvert the other's authority with the British alternately work[ing] with the king to undermine the Wafd when they were in power, and with the Parliament to undermine the king when the Wafd was out of power (Rogan, 2009).

Given its already established position as a party popular with the Egyptian masses, the Wafd was able to secure enough seats to take control of the Egyptian parliament. Saad Zaghlul became prime minister and worked towards Egypt’s complete independence from Britain. Among the issues in contention by both Zaghlul and the British were the Sudan, Suez Canal and the continued use of Egypt as a British base as well as foreign privileges (capitulations). Rogan asserts that the issue
of the Sudan, more than the other three, provoked greatest tension between the Egyptians and the British (Rogan, 2009: 193). This statement thus becomes evident following the assassination of Lee Stack, governor-general of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Sudan had been first conquered by Egypt during the reign of Muhammad Ali in the 1820s; however, the Egyptian domination of Sudan had been ended by the Mahdi revolt of 1881 – 1885 (Rogan 2009: 192). Egypt then entered into a collaborative reconquest of Sudan with the British that would result in a condominium agreement; “joint rule of Sudan exercised by both Egypt and the British” (Metz, 1991). Due to a lack of clarity as to the “juridical relationship between [Egypt and Britain] in Sudan” (Metz, 1991), both countries contested power, each claiming the Sudan as its own.

The British used Stack’s death as an opportunity to humiliate the Wafd and destroy its credibility in Egypt (Metz, 1990) with Egypt's high commissioner, Lord Allenby, presenting Prime Minister Zaghlul with a punitive seven-point ultimatum, including changes to the status quo in Sudan (Rogan 2009: 193) as well as “withdraw[al of] all troops from Sudan, consent to an unlimited increase of irrigation in Sudan and end all opposition to the capitulations (Britain's demand of the right to protect foreign interests in the country)” (Metz, 1990). Zaghlul chose not to comply with these demands, choosing rather to resign. This led to King Fuad’s dissolution of the Egyptian parliament, effectively ending a threat to his monarchy as well as ‘sidelining the nationalists in the Wafd’ (Rogan 2009: 183).

In the 1930 election, the Wafd once again won majority seats in parliament, this time under Mustafa al-Nahhas’ leadership. His approach to his Prime Ministership was in line with Zaghlul’s i.e. the effort to gain independence from the British. The Sudan issue again caused a deadlock between the two parties with Britain insisting on “separating discussion of Egypt's independence and Sudan's future, and the Egyptians refusing independence exclusive of Sudan” (Rogan 2009: 183).

The Anglo-Egyptian deadlock would not be broken until King Fuad’s death in 1936. His son, Faruq, assumed power. Elections were held the same year, the Wafd once again receiving majority votes. A new Anglo-Egyptian treaty was signed. Rogan posits that the willingness by the British to negotiate at this time was due to a number of factors such as rise of fascism in Europe, and Mussolini's 1935 invasion
of Ethiopia. As such, these recent developments “gave new urgency to securing Egyptian consent to Britain’s position. German and Italian propaganda against British colonialism had begun to turn some heads in Egypt. Ultra nationalist new parties like Young Egypt espoused openly fascist Ideologies” (Rogan 2009).

In a 1936 treaty, a provision was made for an Anglo-Egyptian military and defense alliance that allowed Britain to maintain sizeable amount of men in the Suez Canal Zone. In addition, Britain was left in virtual control of Sudan, in contradiction with the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899 that made a provision for Sudan to be governed by Egypt and Britain jointly (Metz, 1990). As seen with previous Anglo-Egyptian agreements, the Treaty of Preferential Alliance while expanded Egypt’s sovereignty and independence (Rogan, 2009), it still afforded the British ‘real’ power. According to Metz (1990), “Egyptian army units had been withdrawn from Sudan in the aftermath of the Stack assassination, and the governor general was British. Nevertheless, Egyptian nationalists, and the Wafd particularly, continued to demand full Egyptian control of Sudan”.

Further ‘concessions’ in the treaty included the “provision for the end of the capitulations and the phasing out of the mixed courts. The British high commissioner was re-designated ambassador to Egypt, and when the British inspector general of the Egyptian army retired, an Egyptian officer was appointed to replace him” (Metz, 1991). Yet in spite of these, full independence still eluded the Egyptians. Given this situation, the Wafd, who had enjoyed a particularly favorable opinion of the Egyptian populace, suddenly had to deal with a wave of anti-Wafd sentiment that was also directed to the British. This dissatisfaction with the Wafd also extended to their policy implementation, particularly with regard to social and economic reform. Metz proposes that “the Wafd failed to offer meaningful domestic programs to deal with the problems of under- and unemployment, high living costs, lack of industrial development, and unequal distribution of land” (Metz, 1990). These issues led to the decline in clout that the Wafd once had as more radical movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt found an audience, mostly among “students and urban middle-class professionals and civil servants” (Metz, 1990). Both of these movements had religions undertones; the Brotherhood a firm believer in the return to early Islam as panacea for all the social problem in Egypt’s Islamic society while
Young Egypt believed in Egypt as a ‘superpower’ with potential to be Islamic leader of all Arab countries. Metz puts it thus; ‘both of these organizations presented clearly defined programs for political, economic, and social reform. Both also represented a new political movement whose ideology was not the liberal constitutionalism of the nationalist movement, which was regarded as having failed’ (Metz, 1990).

The Muslim Brotherhood would be instrumental in the increase in student and worker demonstrations in the later part of the 1940s as well as “Arab guerrilla operations against the Jews in Palestine” (Vatikiotis, 1978: 105). The Brotherhood grew particularly powerful as a result of events between 1949 and 1952 when the Wafd could not challenge the monarch (Vatikiotis, 1978: 105). As such, a number of army officers considered a political movement of their own, independent of all other organizations in the country (Vatikiotis, 1978: 105). The Free Officers became one such movement, demanding radical reform of state and society. The movement “[…] embarked on a clandestine promotion of “progressive and radical” national views, such as the linking of the regime in Egypt to Anglo-America imperialism” (Vatikiotis, 1978: 107).

1.3. The Nasser Years: 1952 – 1970

The 1952 revolution had been in process for years, though clandestinely. The Free officers wanted to change the status quo in Egypt, specifically the “monarchy, the power of the landlords, foreign influence and the corruption of political life” (Mansfield 1969: 43).

Following the revolution, Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers formed a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), a committee of military men to oversee the work of the revolution (Rogan 2009: 255) which dictated policy to the civilian cabinet, abolished all civil titles such as pasha and bey - which they believed had been conferred by “an abnormal King ... on people who did not deserve them” (Lynd, Bahour, and Lynd, 1994 in Rogan, 2009: 285), and ordered all political parties to purify their ranks and reconstitute their executive committees (Metz, 1990). Muhammad Naguib was elected by the RCC to become president, largely due to his popularity in the country and he was an officer trusted by the army; “it was extremely
important for the Free Officers to ensure the loyalty of the army if the coup were to succeed” (Metz, 1990).

Even with Naguib as the president of Egypt, Nasser was seen as the “real power behind the RCC” (Metz, 1990 and Rogan 2009: 285). This culminated in a power struggle for government control, eventually won by Nasser.

Nasser’s eventual ascendance to power came following an assassination attempt on him in 1954. This attempt gave him the opportunity to dispose of two entities that had blocked his path to power; the Muslim Brotherhood and Muhammad Naguib. Since his failed assassination had been instigated by a member of the Brotherhood, a number of its members were arrested, six of whom were ultimately hanged (Rogan 2009: 288). Nasser was able to leverage this situation into an opportunity to dismiss Naguib who had been implicated during the assassination trial (Rogan 2009: 288).

Gordon (2004) states that as a leader, Nasser “began a process whereby Egypt became a truly independent state formed under his ideas of Arab Nationalism and the Socialist ideal of government”. As such, Nasser eschewed any form of relationship with the US or “Western imperialism” (Gordon, 2004). Hopwood (1991) defines Arab socialism simply as “socialism adapted to the needs of Egypt” (1991: 99). Hopwood further mentions that “there is little that distinguishes it from socialism as practiced in other parts of the world” (1991: 99). Nasser believed that a “firmer ideology […] to the socialist path was necessary to enable Egypt to modernize itself” (1991: 99) and as such, the capitalist system was seen as exploitive to the country and by its association with imperialism (1991: 99).

In the implementation of this ‘Arab socialism’, Hopwood states that it had to “choose the most humanitarian path”, thus it was rooted in the “Islamic ideals of equality, social justice and brotherhood” (1991: 100). These however would “grow out of the masses as opposed to being imposed from above” (1991: 100).

One of the initial policies implemented by Nasser and the Free Officers was the banning of all political parties in Egypt in 1953 (Metz, 1990) and those that survived this ban went underground (Wickham, 2002). This initial ban excluded the Muslim Brotherhood although it would incur a similar fate two years later (Johnson, 1972).
Johnson (1972) asserts that “the justification given for the banning of political parties was that the task of national consolidation which the "revolution" had set for itself demanded the unity of the Egyptian people, and a mass of conflicting political forces could only divert the people from rallying around the revolutionary vanguard”. Johnson sees this as an attempt by the Free Officers (to whom he refers as the ‘vanguard’) “to stop any form of class struggle in the name of national unity imposed and controlled from the top” (Johnson, 1972).

The issue of Israel led to Nasser seeking US arms. This however proved impossible for him as he had refused to enter into an alliance with the US and Britain against the Soviet Union. Weapons would eventually come from Czechoslovakia in 1955, thus creating a relationship with the Soviet Union that would continue until Sadat’s presidency.

1.4. Nasser Policies

Nasser implemented what became known as ‘the social contract’, a policy of state redistribution in which the regime provided goods and services to the public in exchange for their tolerance of growing inequality (Metz, 1990) and political support (Wickham, 2002). Wickham however, contents that to call the policy as such (‘social contract’) is ‘misleading’ as the arrangement was never a bargain entered into voluntarily by equal partners but was a strategy of co-optation initiated by the regime for its own purposes. Moreover, the term presumes that economic distribution, rather than such factors as “charismatic leadership or indoctrination, was the basis of the regime’s popularity” (2002: 24). The social contract also extended to higher education, offering free higher education and in 1964, the promise of a government job. According to Wickham (2009: 24), free higher education and guaranteed state employment opened new avenues of social mobility to the children of lower- and middle-class Egyptian families and, in so doing, indebted them to the patron-state.

It was during Nasser’s administration that socialist policies were implemented, starting first with the nationalization of integral institutions such as banks and the Suez Canal Company (Ness, 2009). This led to a reduction in foreign investment and not only did this affect foreign investment, but also domestic, as evinced by
Esfahani’s believe that “almost all large industrial and financial establishments became state-owned and foreign trade was entirely monopolized by the government” (Esfahani, 1993). While this endeavor to bring key areas of the economy under state control was supposed to combine rapid development and industrialization with a new deal for the Egyptian masses, it became a redistribution programme; assets from the ‘exploiting classes’ – those who had enjoyed privileges under the monarchy – as well as foreign and domestic assets were forcibly diverted into productive investment driven by the newly created public sector (Hirst and Beeson 1981: 203). At its initial implementation, this nationalization program seemed poised for success, however due to the Israel war, Suez Canal closure as well as the loss of the Sinai oil fields (Hirst and Beeson 1981: 203), its weaknesses became evident as state-run industries produced overpriced goods of inferior quality with the soviet bloc as the only export market (Hirst and Beeson 1981: 203). The policy also created a new class in the form of those who administered this ‘Arab socialism’, thus becoming another form of the very issue it had been created to counter-act.

1.5. The Sadat Years: 1970 – 1981

Nasser’s death was seen as an “unfillable gap in Egyptian political life” (Hopwood 1991: 105) and the appointment of Sadat, who had been vice president under Nasser was a surprise to some as he was “generally assumed to be too weak to hold power for long” (Metz, 1990). Sadat’s policy would evince him as a leader in his own right, beginning with the “revolution of rectification” (1991: 105) in May 1971 which involved the removal of Nasser-era policies as well as those he believed shared his predecessor’s philosophy of nationalism and conservatism. Hassan (2010) asserts that Sadat tried to legitimize his rule using three slogans: The rule by law; government by institutions; and political freedom. While Nasser’s policies had been based on political and economic independence through nationalization (Mansfield, 1969), Sadat took a different approach however; creating an economy of foreign investment and creating an alliance with the United States, which he, according to Hopwood (1991: 106), “believed was the only country able to put pressure on Israel”. This believe stemmed from Nasser’s desire to remove the Israelis from the Sinai region.
Esfahani (1993) describes the early 1970s in the Egyptian economy as marked by *infitah*, a “process of economic liberalization, which led Egypt to undergo a change of economic model – a transition from a state-led to a market economy policy” (Zahid, 2010) which was “aimed at revitalizing Egypt’s economy through increased liberalization of the country’s extensive public sector and, more importantly, through an enhanced role for the private sector” (Esfahani, 1993). Sullivan (2003), states that the economic opening was “toward Western capital and technology” (Sullivan, 2003). Shorbagy (2009) believes that “the economic “open-door policy” was recklessly pushed forward at a pace inappropriate to the stage of agricultural and industrial development, thus undermining both”. As such, agricultural and industrial production was denied the sufficient support it required while economic focus shifted to the “service sector (commerce, tourism, and oil) [which] barely added to the employment rate” (Shorbagy, 2009). This was the “starting point for Egypt’s economic opening to the West and its shift toward a capitalist path of development” (Lofgren, 1993) thus moving away from the *etatist* system implemented under Nasser. Lofgren believes that these “legislative changes” were an alluring factor to foreign and domestic private companies given that they ‘opened foreign trade to private companies, eliminated most controls on worker emigration, and reduced government control over the agricultural and, to a lesser extent, industrial sectors (Lofgren, 1993). *Infitah* was seen as a ‘correction’ to Nasser’s Arab socialism of nationalism as it promised modernization in the form of “technological know-how, rapid industrialization, the promotion of exports and the raising of standards” (Hirst and Beeson 1981: 205).

An issue both Nasser and Sadat shared a similar view on was the expulsion of the Israelis from occupation of Sinai (Hopwood, 1991). However, as Nasser had aligned himself with the Soviet Union, Sadat needed US involvement in the strive to realize Israeli departure from the Sinai as “tensions between the [US and Soviet Union] diminished, regional disputes such as the Arab-Israeli conflict took on less urgency in Moscow and Washington” (Rogan 2009: 365) as both countries preferred to observe from a distance the eventual outcome while hoping for a move towards peace by both Egypt and Israel, however Sadat saw this ‘neutrality’ as favoring Israel (Rogan 2009: 366). To goad both these superpowers into action, Sadat needed to go to war (Rogan 2009: 366). He did this by expelling all Soviet military experts (figures vary
between 15,000 in Hopwood, 1991 and 21,000 in Rogan, 2009). Of this act, Rogan writes thus:

> It was a counterintuitive move, but one designed to force both the Americans and the Soviets to reengage with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Americans began to question Egypt’s ties to the Soviet Union and the possibility of diverting the most powerful Arab state to the pro-Western camp. It was precisely this threat that stirred the Soviets from their complacency toward their Egyptian client. Sadat had pressed the Soviet leadership to reequip Egypt’s devastated armed forces in the years after the Six Day War and the war of attrition (Rogan 2009: 366).

In relation to this, Hopwood (1991) adds that Sadat was “willing to enter into a peace agreement with Israel and also open the Suez Canal in return for a partial Israeli withdrawal and the re-crossing of Egyptian troops into Sinai” (1991: 107).

In starting a war with Israel, Sadat needed Saudi involvement; Saudi Arabia had become the foremost producer of crude, supplying as much as twenty-eight percent of US oil and 70-75 percent of European oil. An oil embargo would ensure that the Saudi-Egyptian alliance gained the upper hand if indeed war was to take place. Saudi involvement however depended on the length of war; they did not want to be part of a war that lasted only a few days as this stance could backfire. Rogan states that ‘the leaders of the Arab oil states were also buoyed by the knowledge that the industrial world was dependent on them. This meant that when the Arabs raised the price of their oil, they were able to inflict immediate punishment on those industrial countries that supported Israel” (Rogan 2009: 369). This ‘oil as leverage’ tactic began with an increase in the price of oil, followed by threats of further embargoes to those countries that supported the presence of Israel in ‘Arab lands’, countries that were seen by both Sadat and Saudi’s King Faisal as Western backers of Israel.

Sadat mobilized Egyptian forces for war on October 6th, 1973, successfully crossing the Suez Canal, thus catching Israel unawares, however, Israel’s counter-strike would change Egypt’s upper hand. There was no outright winner of the war. Buckwalter (2007) contends that both sides can make cases for winning the war: for Israel, its claims for victory are based on the number of men lost: “11,000 total casualties (2,800 killed) to the Arabs’ 28,000 casualties (8,500 killed)”, and for Egypt, the regaining of the Suez Canal. The result of the war, a peace treaty between
Egypt and Israel, led to an unprecedented recognition of Israel by an Arab country, which summarily led to the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League, of which Egypt was the leader.

The largest change made to government structure during Sadat’s tenure was the drafting of the 1971 Permanent Constitution, which laid out Egypt’s future. The constitution defined Egypt as a “democratic, socialist state based on the alliance of the working forces of the people,” it further called on Islamic Jurisprudence (shari’a) to be the principle source of legislation in the country, and the President was defined as the most powerful member of the government (Najjar, 2008; Sahgal, 2008).

Sadat also engineered political liberation by allowing “multiple parties based on three political platforms known as manabir: the right wing, the center (pro government) and the left” (Saghal, 2008), which resulted in the formation of the following as legitimate parties following Sadat’s victory in the 1976 elections; Liberal Party: Hizb al-Ahrah (right wing), National Unionist Progressive Party (NPUP); Hizb al-Tagammu (left), National Democratic Party (NDP), The New Wafd (liberal right) and Socialist Labor Party (Center Left) (Saghal, 2008).


Following the assassination of Sadat in 1981, Mubarak assumed power following an election. Mubarak, with a military background, had been appointed the vice-president six years before in 1975. On his assumption of power, Mubarak was ‘eager not to deviate too radically from Sadat’s policies (Hopwood 1991: 184).

From the beginning, Mubarak emphasized a policy geared towards economic upliftment of Egypt’s poor, mainly the implementation of Infitah - the ‘opening up of the economy’ (1991: 184). This was very much in the same vein as the policy implemented by Sadat in his assumption of power. However Mubarak’s Infitah would be different; emphasis would be placed on production rather than consumption, thus benefiting the larger Egyptian society, as opposed to the rich few (1991: 184). Additionally, food subsidies would remain, and imports of unnecessary luxury goods would be curtailed (Metz, 1990). From the outset, Mubarak aligned himself more with
Sadat’s policies, as opposed to those of Nasser and rather ‘sought a middle course between socialist rigidity and capitalist free for all (1991: 192).

Mubarak furthermore permitted a multiparty system, thus allowing opposition parties to operate in the country. In addition to the ruling National Democratic Party, of which he was the leader, Mubarak allowed five more parties to function (1991: 185). The peace treaty with Israel would further be observed. Metz (1990) characterizes Mubarak’s initial rule as seeking to “chart a middle course between the conflicting legacies of Nasser and Sadat”. However, Mubarak “maintained the state of emergency that Sadat had imposed in 1981 to prevent the Islamist groups from gaining power” (Metz, 1990).

Sadat’s death at the hands of Muslim extremists spurred the reintroduction of the Emergency law as a temporary resolution to curb ‘terrorist’ activity. This law would also become a point of contention in the 2011 revolution. The Emergency law, a law first enacted in 1958, would set a precedent for the conditions under which it would be imposed. The current form of law has been in effect since Sadat’s assassination 1981. According to Reza (2007), the current statute has been renewed roughly every three years by Mubarak with the most recent renewal taking place in April 2006, but was for only two years; it is therefore due to expire in April 2008. The law “sharply circumscribes any non-governmental political activity” (Wolfe, 2011) and additionally “permits indefinite detention without trial and hearings of civilians by military courts, prohibits gatherings of more than five people, and limits speech and association” (Williams, 2006) as well as maintaining a special security court.

In the thirty years of Mubarak’s rule, statistics point to an improvement in the social life of citizens, as well as the development of the country. At the time of Mubarak’s ascend to presidency, the Egyptian population was 45.5 million, or slightly more than half of what it is today – in 2007, the population was estimated at 80 million. In addition to this, Cook (2011) mentions further that Egypt’s gross domestic product was approximately $40 billion; it now tops $145 billion. There were only 430,000 telephone lines in the entire country; now there are approximately 11 million. The life expectancy of the average Egyptian was 57 years; it is now 70. The World Bank reports that in 1981 the literacy rate was less than 50 percent; now 66 percent of
Egyptians can read. By a host of measures, life in Egypt has changed radically and for the better over the course of the three decades (Cook, 2011).

The educational background of Egyptian citizenry is also important within the context of the January revolution since education was cited as one of the issues that contributed to disenfranchisement, as well as the extent to which the lack of education or the over-education of past-generations had contributed to the mood among the current generation’s levels of dissatisfaction.

Post-independence, education was seen as important, however for the most part, education was only accessible to the elite, to the extent that at the time of the 1952 revolution, less than fifty percent of elementary school age children attended school (Metz, 1990). Education dispensation was also distributed along gender lines with the majority of those enrolled as boys rather than girls. This disparity also occurred within the population in those over the age of ten; seventy-five percent illiteracy rate, ninety percent of which were women (Metz, 1990). Egyptian education was steered along religious lines, mostly towards Islam, “fulfilling the task of instilling into the student the principles of Islam and maintaining them in Egyptian society” (Hopwood, 1991). Nasser’s socialist agenda was also extended to education, including the indoctrination of elementary school children in the “principles of socialism, Arabism and national consciousness” (Hopwood, 1991).

Also during Mubarak’s tenure, it became necessary to implement agricultural incentives, also known as the “Mubarak Project” (Adriensen, 2009) “to solve the unemployment problem for young graduates” (Bradshaw, 2010) as a result of the free education and guaranteed government job policies under Nasser. These Nasser-era policies had resulted in more graduates than employment opportunities. The Mubarak project started in 1987, offering graduates reclaimed desert lands as farm lands. This was one of the options available to graduates. Other options included buying a car or obtaining a government loan to start a business (Bradshaw, 2010). Any graduate could apply, however preference was given to those with an agricultural degree and males (Adriensen, 2009). Even with the success of this project – as much as “a million acres of land” have been reclaimed, the government terminated the project for those graduates who do not possess an agriculture
degree, reason being that those with a lack of agricultural degrees or background are not successful in the project (Bradshaw, 2010)

Among the issues that contributed to the rise of dissent are Mubarak’s neoliberal economic policies that led to the privatizations of industries which led to a widening gap between the poor, as this type of economic reform was tipped in favor of the ‘elite’, resulting in the unavailability of jobs for the youth (Lynch, 2011).

Corruption also played a fateful role, particularly the request by Mubarak for a constitutional amendment that many believed was a way for him to have his son, Gamal, succeed him in what resembled a monarch succession. This is further evinced by Mubarak’s reluctance to appoint a vice-president. Additionally, the NDP’s success in the 2005 constitutional elections brought with it skepticism about this result, eventually leading to numerous protests due to results opposition parties considered ‘rigged’, even though the ballot had been touted as democratic. More recently, the 2010 parliamentary ballot was dogged by similar accusations of rigging and corruption (The Economist Online, 2010).

1.7. Egyptian Political Parties

This section outlines only those parties that continue to have an active role in Egypt’s political landscape and excludes those that were formed following the advent of the Egyptian revolution.

With regard to Egypt’s political parties, there has been recognition of parties formed under leader personalities as opposed to political ideology. Indeed, this ‘cult of personality’ is what Sahgal (2008) attributes to the organizational weaknesses of opposition parties, along with “lack of internal democracy, and petty rivalries”. Fahmy, cited in Sahgal (2008) argues that, “Political parties in Egypt are “parties of persons” that is, they revolve around the prominent personalities of their leaders rather than around a specific ideology or the embodiment of the demands and interests of various groups in the society, which also accounts for their weakness in their legislative capacity”.
1.7.1 The National Democratic Party

The NDP is an offshoot of the Nasser-era Arab Socialist following the latter’s dissolution by Sadat in 1978 as a means to preserve his presidency, and according to Najjaar (2008), the party “has dominated Egyptian political, social, and cultural life to this day”. Metz (1990) says “by the 1980s, it incorporated the ruling alliance of senior bureaucrats, top police and army officers, business people, and large landowners who dominated the governorates. Most of these elites had a foot in both state and society, combining public office and private assets”.

1.7.2. The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim brotherhood is a social movement founded in 1928 by Hassan Al-Banna in reaction to Western influences that he believed were “undermining Islamic values in Egypt” (Rogan, 2009). According to Fernandez-Armesto (1983), the Brotherhood was formed to combat secularism and Westernization by awakening the Islamic inner man within every Egyptian Muslim, with a programme of devotional and moral regeneration. The Brotherhood is thus important in understanding Egyptian militant politics as this movement, according to Munson (2001) has “spawned many of the militant Islamic groups that exist today […] such as Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and Gamaat Islamiya”.

Munson (2001) writes that the Brotherhood “was an explicitly apolitical religious reform and mutual aid society during [its] early years. It devoted its energy to membership recruitment, private discussions of religion and moral reform, and building a social service organization”. This changed however in the late 1930s as the Brotherhood developed a more political outlook, in reaction to socio-economic crisis and the continual spread of secularism (Zahid, 2010). Rogan writes further that Muslim Brotherhood, which “began as a movement for the renewal of faith within Egyptian society evolved into a powerful political force that had, by the late 1940s, come to rival in power the established parties, even the Wafd” (Rogan 2009: 271).

The structural composition of the Muslim Brotherhood was based on the preservation of Muslim ideals from the encroachment of British influence which they saw as eroding these very same ideals. As such, it existed to counter this perceived Western influence by advocating a move towards conservative Islam which it saw as
“essentially democratizing” (Muson, 2001) and therefore a panacea for problems afflicting the modern Arab world such as secularism and Westernization.

According to Munson, the Brotherhood’s political ideology was based on the Hanbali school of Islamic thought which was ‘the most conservative’ given that it insisted on a “literal reading of the Quran and other texts” (Munson, 2001). The Brotherhood would play a role in support of the coup by the Free Officers that led to the ouster of Farouk. The Brotherhood’s Islamic essence worked against the ‘concept of a secular state’ that the Free Officers were developing. The Brotherhood saw the Free Officers’ secular state as “[leading] to immorality, poverty and domination” (Munson, 2001), and as a result, the two groups were in competition for the Egyptian masses (Hopwood, 1991). The exclusion of the Brotherhood from the formation of the new government also led to the movement “placing itself in opposition to the new Egyptian leadership” (Al Ahram, 2002 in Zahid, 2010).

The banning of all opposition parties did not initially affect the Brotherhood as Al-Banna had decided not to formally register it as a political party to avoid such classification (Munson, 2010). However, it would similarly be banned two years later. By 1954, the Brotherhood had effectively stopped its overt activities in Egypt and lost its power as the central leadership of the movement in the Middle East (Zahid, 2010).

Government reaction to the Brotherhood has most often been its suppression, beginning with its banning in 1948, including the freezing of its assets and the arrest of its leaders (Rogan, 2009). Sadat’s approach to the Muslim Brotherhood was different to that of Nasser’s, such as the release of detained Brotherhood members as well as allowing exiled members to return to Egypt. Sadat also “developed a policy of accommodating the Brotherhood in society” (Zahid, 2010) as he realized the importance of the Brotherhood in boosting the state’s Islamic image and in acting as a counterweight to the leftist opposition (Kodmani, 2005 cited in Zahid, 2010).

1.7.3. Hizb al-Ahrar (Liberal Party)

Sahgal (2008) attributes the creation of Hizb al-Ahrar to Sadat’s 1976 reforms. The al-Ahrar tried to merge the ideologies of religion and capitalism, however, it failed to
garner any support perhaps due to the “odd combination of ideologies” (Sahgal, 2008).
Al-Ahrar took a more religious stance, although an anti-Christian one, during Mubarak’s tenure and formed an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood but still did not produce tangible election performance, winning only a single seat.

1.7.4. Hizb al-Ghad (Tomorrow Party)
The party attained political party status in 2005 and endeavors to function as a ‘liberal, democratic [party that] aim[s] to represent the youth’ (Ottoman, 2005 in Sahgal, 2008). The manifesto of Al-Ghad was based on ‘free speech and press, free elections, enhancing the private sector, independence of the judiciary, and educational development (Connected in Cairo, 2011).

1.7.5. The New Wafd Party
The precursor to the New Wafd Party, the Wafd Party was started in 1919 but was dissolved following the 1952 revolution, an end to Egyptian liberalism (Ofir, 2011). Ness (2009), believes that in 1919, “nationalist movements had grown stronger, British authority had weakened, and the economic situation had deteriorated in an already fragile system”, thus all these conditions encouraged the formation of the Wafd party. The Wafd party agitated for full Egyptian emancipation from British rule. At one point, the Wafd was described as Egypt’s “most popular and powerful party” (Ness, 2009) and was regarded as a threat to Egypt’s stability by the British so much that its leadership was exiled to the island of Malta (Ness, 2009), this event eventually sparking the 1919 revolt. The New Wafd Party, in essence, followed the same canons as its predecessor, mainly as a nationalist liberalist party, and according to Sahgal (2008), has “historically been strongly supported among the upper classes” and as a result, its urban support base is limited. The New Wafd Party was the “first freely constituted party to gain recognition” (Fernando-Armesto, 1982: 91) since the 1952 revolution. At its emergence, the party differed little from the prevailing government policy, apart from advocating a move to agricultural development as opposed to the industrialization being driven by the state
1.7.6. Hizb at-Tajammu' al-Watani at-Taqadummi al-Wahdawi' (The National Progressive Unionist Party)

Also a product of Sadat's 1971 constitutional amendment, it is an amalgamation of "factions such as Arab Nationalists, Nasserites, Social Democrats and liberals" (Sahgal, 2008).

Egypt’s political parties, those that existed as oppositional to the government have failed to show any tangible or real opposition due to a number of issues such as their conflicting ideologies or a lack of political ideology, period. Moreover, they lacked internal democratic structures (Albrecht, 2005). Furthermore, Albrecht (2005) believes that “power struggles, often between an ageing leadership and a younger generation of activists, brought internal fragmentation and paralysis in the parties”. Elaasar (2009) sums up the Egyptian political opposition thus:

After decades of democratic drought, opposition parties are ineffective and have little organization capacity. When they do organize, they face a lack of resources and oppressive government tactics. Mubarak's government owns the media, and so even the best organized opposition receives little public exposure (Elaasar, 2009).

This chapter has provided background information that is crucial to the theoretical application of its effects on the Egyptian anti-governmental protests as it provides context and understanding. From the above, we are able to recognize the change in policies and government from all three Egyptian rulers as well as the different ideologies of these leaders and the political parties in existence from the end of Egypt's colonialism to the Arab spring. All three are important in relation to each other and their disparate ideologies and are thus of consideration in forming an option as to what it was that contributed to the rise of Egyptian citizenry that ultimately contributed to Mubarak’s ouster as president of Egypt in 2011.

In December 2010, the self-immolation of a Tunisian street vendor after a humiliating encounter with a police officer precipitated a chain of events in the Middle East and North Africa that would later become known as the Arab spring. At present, while this paper is in process, Tunisia and Egypt are not the only Arab countries affected by anti-government dissent; they are however the only countries (out of the eleven involved in protests) where authoritarian governments have been ousted, and a resolution toward self-determination of the people being somewhat worked towards.
With a view to explore a more nuanced understanding of the role of social media in Egypt's 2012 revolution, Chapter two will examine the nature of networks, as well as social movements, by invoking the ideas of Van Dijk’s *The Network Society* (2006) and Castells’ *The Rise of the Network Society* (2000). With this theoretical background, this chapter aims to explore technological networks as blueprints on which twenty-first century movements base their structure. This argument is further developed with reference to Hardt and Negri’s account of “post-Fordist” movements, characteristic of networks, to whom they refer to as the *Multitude* (2005). Following this, an attempt to understand the social media landscape in Egypt prior to the revolution will be done by tracing the rise of the social media phenomena, as well as linking these to the political context in which they were used.

Chapter three then examines the democratizing potential of new media technologies. This chapter further highlights the gradual move towards internet mediated platforms as the internet encompasses all the capabilities of old media on one platform. This discussion focuses specifically on the use of the internet for political engagement. In addition to this, this chapter explores the emergence of dissent in Arab states with reference to the aborted ‘green revolution’ in Iran (2009) to the first instance of the Arab spring in Tunisia, then finally Egypt, with a consideration of all factors – political and social – that contributed to the fall of the Mubarak regime in 2011.

Chapter four presents the study’s findings and contextualizes these findings with theory, with a view to examine the nature of content disseminated through the social networking sites, *Twitter* and *YouTube*.

Chapter five discusses the study’s findings in relation to theory. In addition to this, this chapter considers whether the use of social media in Egypt to engender democracy could in itself be interpreted as a new form of democracy. In doing so, Evgeny Morozov’s *The Net Delusion* (2009) and Clay Shirky’s *The Political Power of Social Media* (2011) will be discussed in relation to such precedent use of social media.

Conclusively, Chapter six sums up this research treatise and explores, among others, the study’s limitations. Furthermore, given that social media and politics is a nascent study area, particularly within the Arab scope, this chapter also offers research suggestions for additional study areas.
Chapter 2: Networks and Movements

An abundance of literature exists on the subject of new media and its effects. As such, this treatise will draw from these texts to position the role of internet based technology in the Egyptian revolution in an attempt to provide an overview the effects of “democratic potential” (Bentivegna 2002: 54) of the internet on authoritarian regimes.

Since the advent of the internet, various studies have attempted to analyze its impact on democracy and the organization of social movements. The focus of this study is on the role of social media in the January – February 2011 Egyptian revolution and accordingly, the following chapter will outline the key concepts associated with such a study, specifically a review of literature on network theory, information society as well as the evolution of social software and the culture that surrounds it, within the context of the internet. This chapter draws upon new media theory to position the role of the internet as a network within the context of use by networked social movements, such as those of the protestors who participated in the Egyptian revolution.

2.1. Networks

In analyzing the role of new media alongside contemporary politics, one has to trace its development from the inception of the internet as a ‘networked’ communication structure to the arrival of web 2.0, a further development on the network structure that emphasized usability and interactivity on the internet, ultimately culminating in what we know today as social media.

Various theorists point to the importance of understanding networks in the study of social media. Van Dijk (2006: 2) analogized networks as “the nervous system of our society” and asserts their importance as transcendent, and more important on social lives than say the construction of roads (Van Dijk 2006: 2). Castells (2004) defines a network as “a set of interconnected nodes”. These nodes function as the “point where the curve intersects itself” (2004: 3). He elaborates further by stating that “networks have no center, just nodes, which may be of varying relevance to the network” (2009: 19). While nodes may be of varying importance to the network, not all nodes are equal as some assume greater importance in their network than others.
(Faris, 2010). This increased importance for their particular network is achieved by the absorption of more relevant information and processing this information more efficiently (Castells, 2009: 20). For Castells, (Cited in Flew 2008: 31) networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies to the point where the network society is the social structure characteristic of the information age (Castells 2000a; 5, Flew 2008: 31).

Van Dijk (2006: 20) defines this network society as a “social formation with an infrastructure of social and media networks enabling its prime mode of organization at all levels (individual, group/organizational and societal)”. He further adds that “increasingly, these networks link all units or parts of this formation (individuals, groups and organizations)” (2006: 20). Indeed, Castells (cited in Flew 2008: 87) sees the late 20th and early 21st century as giving a rise to what he call the “network society”. He sees this network society as “both cause and consequence of the shift from an industrial to an informational mode of development”. While the industrial mode of production emphasized the “introduction of new energy sources in productivity, and also the ability to decentralize the use of energy through the production and circulation processes”, in the new informational mode of development, “the source of productivity lies in the technology of knowledge generation, information processing and symbol communication” (Castells in Flew, 2008). As such, it can be concluded that the network society is a result of the use of information and communication technology which also gives a rise to it.

2.1.1. Network Functionality

The key driver of internet development is the continual decline in costs associated with its access and use, as seen in the production of services that, especially in the development of ICTs, place cosumer/user needs over cost. Benkler (2006 cited in Flew 2008: 92) sees this as a “removal of the physical constraints on effective information production [which] has made human creativity and the economics of information [as] core structuring facts in the new networked information economy” (Benkler 2006: 4 in Flew 2008: 92).

The internet, as a technological form, is fundamentally grounded in networks. As such, it permeates all aspects of society in terms of the form as well as content of social relations (Flew 2008: 80). Due to its nature as a horizontal form of networked
interactive communication, it does not function similarly to mass media where there exists a hierarchy in terms of information flow, rather, the internet and to a large extent networks in general, thrives on information dissemination to contribute to and expand a burgeoning information economy. Neumeyer and Raffl (2008) refer to the “flat governance hierarchies and distributed power” (Rheingold 2002: 163) and elaborate further by stating that “networks are essential for political activism since they make grassroots activities possible and give civil society the opportunity to engage in political participation without the guidance of institutions or organizations” (Neumayer and Raffl, 2008).

As much as the internet is a horizontal platform, its horizontality does not extend to user equality with regard to participation. The issue also goes further than the digital divide; “differential access to and use of the internet” (Rice 2002: 106 cited in Flew 2008: 26), but rather includes the vast socio-economic factors such as gender, education or income, along with the ICT tools users have access to determines their level of individual participation. An example of the ‘hierarchy’ that could exist within the new media is the exaltation of certain blogs over others. Faris (2010) observes that “most of the blog traffic in the world is directed to a relatively small number of sites, whereas most blogs, like most websites get zero to a handful of hits per day” (Faris, 2010). Mayfield (cited in Flew 2008: 32) puts forth the power law of participation to explain this phenomenon of certain blogs and bloggers accruing more popularity and web traffic than others, which states that the “model of collective action associated with web 2.0 is not necessarily at the high end of potential user engagement with different forms of online media” (Flew 2008: 32). This could, to a certain extent, explain why “certain events and stories receive coverage and others do not” (Faris, 2010). This further evinces that such neglect of coverage of events is not so much due to its lack of ‘news worthiness’, but rather reflects who deems it news worthy or not.

With regard to their organizational abilities, Castells (2009) recognizes three major features of networks “which benefited from the new technological environment” (2009: 23). He lists:
1. Flexibility – the ability to reconfigure according to changing environments and retain their goals while changing their components, sometimes bypassing blocking points of communication channels to find new connections.

2. Scalability – the ability to expand or shrink in size with little disruption.

3. Survivability – of network, since networks lack a single center and can operate a wide variety of configurations, survivability refers to their ability to withstand attacks to their nodes and codes because the codes are contained in multiple nodes that can reproduce the instructions and find new ways to perform; thus, the material ability to destroy the connecting points can eliminate the network (Castells 2009: 23).

From this, we are able to recognize that for networks to function effectually, they need to be fluid as well as adaptable to variable environments but mostly, they depend on their ability to survive without a single center.

Network centrality and networking to new media needs to be understood at three levels: the internet as a technical network where all senders and receivers are interconnected through a sub-network, social networks, which refer to the interdependent and rational nature of links between people and institution and finally, the socio-technical network, where networked forms of organization are seen as being central drivers of processes of globalization at the economic, geopolitical and cultural levels (Thompson 2003: 54-6 and Castells 2000a: 5 in Flew 2008: 31).

While all three levels are important in the understanding of the nature of networks, the second level, that of the social networks, takes precedence for this study; and the manner in which, when enhanced by other tools of web 2.0, social networks are profoundly transforming the nature of communities, sociality and interpersonal relations (Wellman, 2001 in Juris 2004: 347 ed. Castells).

The definition of social media takes note of the web 2.0 phenomenon which gave way to their rise. According to O’Reilly (2006), web 2.0 is the “business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as a platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them”, therefore Web 2.0 is effectual because it has rooted within it,
tenets which have been ‘central’ to the functioning of the web as a “communications infrastructure” (Flew 2008: 17). Flew cites participation, interactivity, collaborative learning and social networking as such tenets, where the “quality of participation increases as the numbers participating increase” (2008: 17). Social media, as part of what Jenkins (2006) calls “participatory culture” give users the ability to “construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system” (boyd and Ellison, 2007) and therefore affords users the ability to connect with other users with whom they share common interests; and essentially, these platforms offer “interfaces that allow people to follow the lives of friends, acquaintances and families” (Huberman, Romero and Wu, 2008). Such connections are not just limited to people within the user’s immediate personal network, but also to those who exist outside of it.

The move to web 2.0 has changed the structure of the web by increasing communication as well as cooperation on different mediums. These two features are central and account for the amount of users on a particular medium at any given time, creating a web that is social in nature. Fusch (2008) holds the view that Web 2.0, due to its ability of supporting many-to-many-communication, has a potential to act as a tool that helps establish a more participatory democracy in which decisions are discussed and taken by those affected by them. It can also strengthen the voices of civil society and hence help create alternative public spheres that are critical of dominant societal structures and communicate protest. Hence, Web 2.0 can act as a tool supporting cyber protest (Fusch, 2008). However, even though Fusch holds such a progressive view of Web 2.0, he is also mindful of the fact that “[it] is not automatically progressive; it can be used for advancing democracy just as it can for advancing fundamentalism, right-wing extremism, and terrorism. The impact of Web 2.0 on the political system depends on the societal embeddedness of technology” (Fusch, 2008).

With this theoretical background taken into consideration, this treatise aims to examine the role played by the social networking sites Twitter and YouTube, in the organization and mobilization of protest action in Egypt (2011). In investigating the use of both sites by participants in the public’s political actions during the particular period and in the geo-political setting of Egypt in January-February 2011, the study explores the potential of both Twitter and YouTube as protest tools and furthermore,
identifies the manner in which social media facilitated the proliferation of anti-governmental discourses in Egypt (2011). Additionally, the question of how such social media encourage democratic participation, in that they are, in their essence, democratic tools themselves, will be explored.

The following section of chapter two explores the role of Web 2.0 technologies in the mobilization of protest actions, along with an overview of the social media landscape within Egypt prior to the January 2011 revolution. This will allow an understanding of the background role of social media in Egypt prior to the advent of the revolution, and in relation to this, a consideration of the manner in which networked technological mediums enhance networked social movements.

### 2. 2. Mobilization of Citizens Towards a Revolution

The existence of social networks and the internet medium as a network are not mutually exclusive, as such, the latter is not the cause for the former, it is rather a space where offline issues become “virtually mediated” (Fusch, 2008), thus as Fusch (2008) puts it, “protest networks make use of networked technologies in order to advance their networked form of organization”. However, the use of the internet’s network structure is not limited to its use as an organizing tool in times of protest; the same network structure is adopted as a “model for new social movements for their own organizational structures” (Hardt and Negri, 2005: 82).

In *Social Movements: Between the Balcony and the Barricade* (1979), Kloss and Roberts state that “social movements need communications, especially mass media communications to recruit and socialize their membership”. One can argue that within the context of the Egyptian revolution, social media have taken over the role Kloss and Roberts believe is played solely by mass media and in this case, social media have indeed become mass media in a participatory sense.

The media have always been necessary for a democratic state to prevail. Certainly the media in their earliest forms, both the press and broadcasting, were assessed on their ability to bring about a democratic process. However, do the newer media possess the same democratic capabilities? One of the earliest claims about new
media related to the capacity of these new media to enable greater participation in politics and political communication (Flew 2008: 107). New media, in the form of the internet and, lately social media, have the potential to aid the democratic process given their lack of a filter; they lack the gate-keeping ethos that is prevalent in conglomerate media such as newspapers and television. Given that such is their nature, they have been hailed for their potential “way of escape from the oppressive ‘top-down’ politics of mass democracies in which tightly organized political parties make policy unilaterally and mobilize support behind them with minimal negotiation and grass-roots input” (McQuail 2000: 135). In essence, social media have become a platform for the dissemination of opposing views with greater access to information while conversely creating more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action (Shirky 2009). Along with the factors identified by McQuail (2000) and Shirky (2009), Tsagarousianou et al. (1998); Hague and Loader (1999); Clift (2000); Blumler & Coleman (2001) (all quoted in Flew (2008) further identify:

1. The scope for horizontal or peer-to-peer communication, as distinct from vertical or top-down communication
2. The capacity for users to access, share, and verify information from a wide range of global sources
3. The lack of government controls over the internet as a global communications medium, as compared to more territorially based media
4. The ability to form virtual communities, or online communities of interest, that are unconstrained by geography
5. The capacity to disseminate, debate, and deliberate on current issues, and to challenge professional and official positions
6. The potential for political disintermediation or communication that is not filtered by political organizations, ‘spin doctors’, or the established news media.

These six factors constitute the manner in which the internet functions better at advancing “greater democratic participation, and fostering new, more egalitarian and participatory form of citizenship and political engagement” (Flew 2008: 107).
Participation within social media is influenced by the reduction of participation costs, the promotion of a collective identity, and the creation of community (Garrett, 2006). Hardt and Negri (2005) refer to “new global cycle of struggles” (2005: 218) in reference to social movements that began to take shape towards the latter half of the twenty-first century. Of these new global cycles of struggle, Hardt and Negri write that they are, “a mobilization of the common that takes the form of an open, distributed network, in which no center exerts control and all nodes express themselves freely” (2005: 218). Juris (2004), commenting on the hierarchical nature of earlier protest movements, notes how the new global struggles, facilitated by greater speed, adaptability and flexibility as a result of new information technologies and decentralized network structures are able to function better as a result of the lack of those hierarchies (2004: 341). From Hardt and Negri as well as Juris’ observations, one is able to recognize the trend of a new social movement that is characterized by online organization and offline activism but also in relation to this, a bottom-up movement that seeks to challenge the status quo in socio-cultural/economic issues. The ‘battle for Seattle’ protest in Seattle 1999 is often notably cited as a turning point in terms of protest organization and mobilization due in large part to its use of the internet for organization (Eagleton-Pierce, 2001). The change conspicuous here was the lack of leaders as protestors were largely groups of citizens with disparate ideologies such as environmentalists, anti-globalization and development activists who united against anti-capitalist dogma perpetrated by the IMF and WTO and the fact that it was largely organized online, which led to its transnational aspect.

Network organization, by its very nature, is built in such a way that to move towards a “centralized and unified command structure is impossible […] [given that it] is based on the continuing plurality of its elements and its networks of communication [and thus has] no center, only irreducible plurality of nodes in communication with each other” (Hardt and Negri, 2005: 82).

Within the context of the Egyptian revolution, the same leaderless and diffused form of protest is visible; this new form of networked social movements eschews all norms of hierarchy that are visible in non-network movements or movements that occurred before the advent of the twenty-first century.
2.3. Egyptian Internet Use

The recognition of the internet as a tool necessary for the advancement of Egyptian technological development is a process that began in 1985. This started with the “establishment of hundreds of informatics projects and centers in different government, public and private sector organizations as well as the development and improvement of all the building blocks of the information infrastructure such as people, technology (hardware and software), networks, information and knowledge management aspects” (Kamel, 1999 in Kamel and Hussein, 2002). However, the internet in Egypt has been subject to high levels of surveillance and monitoring by Egyptian authorities.

According to Reporters without Borders (2010), “[the] internet was not censored in Egypt under […] Mubarak, but his regime kept a sharp eye on the most critical bloggers and regularly arrested them” while a miniscule number of politically sensitive websites have been blocked in the past (OpenInitiative, 2009). Often, these critical bloggers were arrested under the country’s broad Emergency Law, and criminally charged depending on the infraction. Another form of surveillance is the requirement of all users of public internet cafés to provide identification as well as contact details prior to internet use (OpenInitiative, 2009).

The advent of the internet in Egypt has, not least as a result of this latent need for communication, contributed to the creation of a sphere that includes a recruiting tool for oppositional voices and a forum for free expression. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood has made adequate use of the internet as a recruiting tool, as well as a platform to publicize their manifestoes and ideologies by introducing young people to the Brotherhood’s history and its key ideas (Morozov 2010: 246). Additionally, the internet has contributed to a shift in attitudes towards matters considered taboo such as sexuality and changing gender roles by offering a space for the discussion of such issues that later entered public consciousness through the discussion of these very same topics by the Egyptian mainstream media.

The rise of internet dissent in Egypt can be traced back to the advent of blogging in 2004, particularly with the advent of Kifaya (‘enough’), a grassroots movement that
sought to work in opposition to the Mubarak regime. Kifaya is more of a political movement than a party, hence its omission from the overview of Egyptian political parties in the preceding chapter. Kifaya lacks a formal organizational structure and its membership comprises of “Liberals, Socialists, Nationalists, Secularists and Islamists, […] [and thus] encapsulate[s] various ideological affiliations” (sala7, 2011) who “called for an end to Emergency Law, release of political prisoners, end to torture, and end to Hosni Mubarak’s presidency” (Bayat, 2011). The emergence of new media political dissidence in Egypt has to be positioned within the context of a nascent use of blogs. Blogs can be defined as, interactive, networked forms of user-generated websites in informal journal style with entries displayed in reverse chronological order (This definition is formed using Flew’s definition of “web logs”; see Flew, 2008: 96). Blogs are an important feature of modern internet communication, especially in authoritarian regimes where they are seen as an alternative to state-run, often restricted media. At their emergence in Egypt in 2004, blogs arrived at a time when the country was faced with a dying press, mostly in the form of local print press, and the government-operated daily newspapers whose coverage was often flattering of the presidency (Faris, 2010). Unlike most autocratic regimes, Egypt allowed a modicum of political opposition (Khamis and Vaughn, 2011) as seen in the Mubarak regime’s amendment of the constitution in 1981 to allow multiparty candidacy, and as a result of this, opposition parties had their own publications. However, these publications were not necessarily embraced by the public as a credible source of news, given their “affiliation with the state in the form of acquiescence to its rules” (Faris, 2010).

The rise of blogging in Egypt happened following the American-led invasion of Iraq as a majority of Egyptian youth were opposed to this invasion, as evinced by a number of anti-war protests in Cairo (Radsch, 2008). Given the lack of ‘objective’ voices coming out at this time as mainstream coverage of the war consisted of American and British media, blogs became an outlet for a different viewpoint. Certain blogs received attention from the mainstream media than others, the Salam Pax blog (‘Bagdad blogger’) particularly receiving international attention (McCarthy, 2003).

Egyptian blogs developed as an alternative voice to pro-Mubarak propaganda prevalent in the national media and these blogs often found themselves covering
news that the state-run media refused or were unwilling to cover. These blogs evolved into more than mere news sources as “[they] represent[ed] an alternative public space and act[ed] as a bridge between events on the streets and Internet” (Fahmi, 2009). The lack of a free press also led to insufficient coverage of newsworthy occurrences in the country. Blogs thus filled this vacuum, often supplementing or altogether providing news coverage to the extent that Drenzer & Farrell (2008) state that “if a critical number of elite blogs raise a particular story, it can pique the interest of mainstream media outlets”. The phenomenon of ‘elite blogs’ highlights the inequality visible within blogs as a result of power laws; more prominent blogs are able to amass a following much larger than that of new entrants, thus preventing everyone’s voice from being heard online and offline.

Lynch (2007) and Etling, Kelly, Faris and Palfrey (2010) argue that Egypt has the most proficient bloggers of all Arab countries. Blogger activism is not limited to the online space as these bloggers are not only active online, but are also “actively engaged in political movements” (Lynch, 2007). Prior to the advent of Twitter and Facebook as tools utilized in political movements, the Egyptian blogosphere provided a space for the proliferation of alternative political views, however, Egyptian blogging was particularly linked to Kifaya (‘enough’), defined by Al Malky (2007) as “a loose grassroots, all-encompassing movement that has been agitating for human and civil rights and political reform since December 2004”. According to Al Malky (2007), “the crucial point is that Kifaya and political blogging developed symbiotically in Egypt—Kifaya providing a purpose for bloggers to write and bloggers giving Kifaya an outlet to take root”. Blogging thus served as Kifaya’s primary means of mobilization through the propagation of the “movement’s ideas of political reform and augmenting its efforts to document human rights abuses by posting uncensored audiovisual and photographic material online” (Abdallah, 2011). This suggests that there is active user communication with a high need to communicate pressing political content to each other and the broader online community.

Initial use of Egyptian blogs consisted mostly of ‘venting’ – decrying the prevailing government or political system and also simultaneously served as news aggregators by discussing news in the mainstream media. Others sought to create an Arabic knowledge system through the use of the language on the internet (Isherwood,
According to research by OpenNet Initiative, “more than three fourths of Egyptian bloggers write in Arabic only, 20 percent write in both Arabic and English, and nearly 10 percent write in English only [while] more than 30 percent of Arabic language blogs are Egyptian” (OpenNet Initiative, 2009). While there exists a number of blogs in the Arabic language, a larger number of Egyptian blogs make use of the English language (Etling, Kelly, Faris and Palfrey, 2010). The language issue in Egyptian blogs has often been a point of interest, often questioning the motive for the choice of English over Arabic. Most bloggers are youths and young adults who have been exposed to the English language by tertiary education and often idolize the life they have been exposed to as a result of satellite television and the internet, or feel that they articulate themselves better in English (El Hariri, Caravan, 2011). This consideration is further supplemented by the transnational appeal of English language blogs in an Arab world, particularly during times of strife in these countries. Furthermore, this adoption of a foreign language is not puzzling given the Anglicization of Egyptian education, particularly tertiary education as a result of the liberal policies initiated by Sadat (Williams, 2009), later facilitating such English use in the Egyptian blogosphere. Stadlbuer (2010) states that, “English in Egypt is strategically used by the government and the media to achieve economic progress and to strengthen political and economic ties with the West” thus it a symbol of prestige and affluence, resulting in its promotion as necessary for increased opportunities in the market (Cupp and Al-Sulaiti, 2009). Additionally, English as a language within Egyptian blogs is further evidence of the pervasive nature of the Western influence within this society, and how constant exposure to Western ideals would contribute to a shift in youth attitudes towards the ideas of democracy and liberalism, as opposed to the conservative authoritarianism that the population had been subjected to for generations (Sullivan, 2003).

Radsch (2008) believes the implementation of “unpopular policies” and the “cracking down on citizens who attempted to demonstrate against such policies” by the government is largely responsible for “spurring the development of bloggers into activists”. Such a claim is not far-fetched as, Hardt and Negri (2005) state that “antagonism results from every relationship of exploitation, [...] hierarchical division of the global system and every effort to control and command the common” (2005: 212).
2.4. The Impact of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

The newer forms of social media have changed the Egyptian blogosphere. Facebook and Twitter, with their availability on mobile phones, have contributed to this shift. With an estimated 3.4 million users on Facebook, Egypt is the leading user of the social network in the Arab world (Eltahaway, 2010). Egyptians’ use of Facebook is similar to that of users anywhere else in the world; posting of pictures or reuniting with old friends or family. However, this does not necessarily imply that Facebook’s usage is limited to the expansion of immediate personal networks as evinced by its first-time use in protest organization in the April 6th, 2008 strike (Faris, 2008).

The use of Facebook as an organizational medium in Egypt is often attributed to Esraa Abdel Fattah, a blue-collar sympathizer who started a group on the social network titled, ‘A Collective Protest for Egyptians’ in solidarity with textile workers’ strike over low wages and rising food prices (Faris, 2008) and also against the high inflation rates and the government corruption in Egypt that has increasingly been taking place (Mustafa, Marwan, Hussein, Mohamed, Mahitab, Ahmed, 2008). The group’s aim was to observe a day of protest, with participants urged to stay away from work on April 6th, 2008. This group garnered 60 000 members within two weeks of formation (Faris, 2008). This was quite a feat considering that (at the time) only 790,140 of Egyptians had a Facebook account (Faris, 2008). The group called for “free speech, economic welfare, and the elimination of corruption” (Bayat, 2011).

Offline, the protests rapidly developed into a nationwide strike, with the Facebook group garnering further attention, leading to the formation of the political movement, the April 6 Youth Movement, which became “an outlet for a new generation of young people who use the online space to debate issues, plan events and mobilize the group members to participate in specific demonstrations” (Abdallah, 2010).

Facebook again played a noticeable role in the publicization of a photo of the battered face of an Egyptian youth, Khaled Said, assaulted and killed by plainclothes Egyptian policemen. A Facebook group, ‘We Are All Khaled Said’ posted a picture of Said’s mangled face; dislocated jaw, broken nose and a bleeding head injury. With the caption suggesting that every Egyptian could potentially suffer the same fate as Said, the online advocacy of this group culminated in offline participation in a protest
movement of as many as 8000 citizens dressed in black (Eltahawy, 2010 in Goodman, 2011). These two instances outline the different issues around which citizens united online and acted against them offline, and are evidence of precedent use of social media for organizational and mobilization purposes before their eventual use in a larger-scale movement that eventually led to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. The formation of such groups and the resultant protest movement was a result of escalating food prices as well as inflation and a rise in unemployment, trends also noticeable around the world as a result of the economic recession. Furthermore, this was a result of state dissatisfaction, with not just a failing economic policy, but also the repressive tactics with regard to oppositional political organization.

Commenting on the use of Twitter in the 2009 Iran protests, Hirji (2009) believes that features such as “the level of simplicity, the portability of the platform, the public forum, and the agility of the network in the face of censorship” can account for its choice as a protest tool by protest participants. The same can be applied to its usage in Egypt as it was used for “citizen journalism and mobilization during the revolution” (Khamis and Vaughn, 2011) and to “announce new initiatives and to boost their collective morale with reports of other developments around the country” (Idle and Nunns 2011: 20 in Khamis and Vaughn, 2011). Idle and Nunns further state that “planning discussions also took place on Twitter, using the hashtag #Jan25 to enable anyone to join the conversation, and activists talked to each other directly using the @ reply function” (Idle and Nunns 2011: 20 in Khamis and Vaughn, 2011). The shift from Facebook to Twitter is reflective of the blog-like services it offers, albeit in a somewhat terse manner. Due to the often volatile nature of protests, activists are not often afforded the time to relay messages to blogs or Facebook, and Twitter with its brevity, allows for the diffusion of such information instantaneously.

At this point, it is interesting to include the role of YouTube in the analysis as it was also a tool used for the dissemination of protest content. Hirji (2009) argues that “YouTube offers a venue for uploading video content of varying qualities whether they be captured on a professional camcorder or a cell phone camera”. Viewers can search for videos and then watch these videos on their computer or a mobile device (Zink, Suh, Gu, and Kurose, NY). YouTube is the fourth-most used website in Egypt
and the country accounts for one-percent of the network’s worldwide users. Harsch (2011) expresses the opinion that activists in Egypt were able to use their access to new social media tools to publicize demands, call demonstrations and win support from broader sectors of the population. Much like Facebook and Twitter, YouTube is a tool that emphasizes collaboration and in the Egyptian context, shared awareness that leads to collective action and, ultimately, increased world visibility. YouTube “connects with surrounding social and cultural networks, and users embedded within these networks move their content and identities back and forth between multiple sites” (Burgess and Green, 2009). The relationship between all these social media, i.e., how they augment each other’s capabilities, is of importance here.

Social media have enabled users to participate and interact on issues they feel strongly about by reducing what Shirky (2008) calls “transactional costs” as these new technologies eliminate the restraints of time and space, they facilitate and speed up information access and publishing opportunities (Van Laer, 2007), also vastly reducing the restrictive effects of distance. Reflecting on their role in the 2009 Moldova protests, Van der Zee (2009) believes that social networking sites are useful for the crucial task of “getting people out”, in other words, they mobilize users into activists, not just “clicktivists” (Jones, 2011). Social media have additionally changed the concept of space and time by eliminating the concepts of local and global as they render what was once local, global and vice-versa. They furthermore increase collaboration through shared awareness (Goodman, 2011). Shared awareness emboldens potential activists and increases the collective strength of the crowd (Goodman, 2011). The swift movement of dissent from Tunisia to Egypt and other parts of North Africa and the Middle East up to the present is an example of the implications of shared awareness and collective strength. Social media can therefore also serve as channels for expressing collective consciousness and national solidarity (Khamis and Vaughn, 2011).

From the discussion above, one is able to recognize that the networked nature of the internet, seen in this instance through social media, “facilitates geographically dispersed face-to-face networks, significantly reinforcing existing social ties […]” (Van Laer, 2007). This is a feature seen as essential as social networks - formal movement as well as personal, are assumed as “the most important and effective
recruitment channels for protest participation” (Van Laer, 2007). Thus, we are able to identify what social media does differently from precedent technologies – they offer capabilities that can potentially be used to augment an individual’s ability to integrate and retain new political information, thereby facilitating increased participation (Bennett, 2003).

This chapter has provided evidence of the latent potential of social media within Egyptian anti-government movements and to contextualize the use of social media for communication of dissent, organization and mobilization with in Egypt as a lingering feature, not merely a tool of convenience that became available on January 25, 2011.
Chapter 3: Social Media and the Changing Democratic Landscape

It is notable how, with the introduction of new technologies, their democratizing potential is often discussed. From the printing press to the radio, television and finally the internet, the discourse surrounding the ‘democratic potential’ of these platforms often dogged their introduction. Much like the internet before them, social media have been seen as possibly capable of changing the democratic process. The belief in social media’s ability to foster democracy is rooted in the conviction that these new media are, in their nature, inherently scale-free and uncensored. As such, the case has been argued for their democratizing potential.

The internet is seen as something akin to a virtual public sphere and those who hold this view (Shirky, 2011) believe that the internet can be utilized in encouraging more political engagement in citizenry. Tambini (1999) writes that “as new media are interactive, they institutionalize citizens’ right to reply, select information and to communicate directly with one another or their representatives without the gatekeeping influence of editors [given that they] can seek information that interests them and serves their interests”. Neumayer and Raffl (2008) point out to the role of “participation, discussion, the active role of the user as well as organizational and social benefits by using the global infrastructure for creating networks are important parts – if not the basis – of political participation and activism”. Yet the question still remains as to how exactly do these new forms of media engender democracy?

Firstly, social media’s ability to be efficient lies in its ability to access information almost instantaneously. This applies not just to the retrieval of information but also to its storage and thusly, in terms of democratic communication production, encourages participation by removing obstacles often encountered in old/traditional media, those of cost and of space. Additionally, social media’s ability to be representative of democracy is visible within their ability to afford each user, equality. This sameness implies that each person is equally represented in the expression of their views and that no one view is exalted over others. Of course this idea would bring into discussion the issue of a digital divide as well as power laws, as seen with blogs. First of all, the digital divide discourse, while a relevant topic, does not inform this discussion. This study’s primary focus is towards those who do have access to the internet and social media within the context of the Egyptian revolution as this
treatise, is after all, a discussion on the role social media played in the Egyptian revolution. Thus, with regard to discourses on inequalities of access to social media means that it looks at the results of the action of those who had access; those without access is another study altogether. With regard to the power laws of blogs (Shirky, 2008), the idea is that certain blogs tend to garner more attention or prominence over others, which means an inequality in representation for those who do not attain sufficient exposure or attention and thus it becomes a cliquey affair that makes it near impossible for new entrants to attain the same level of representation within the blogosphere. Social media such as Twitter function differently in that there exists no hierarchy in user relationships; it is rather a simultaneous conversation of multiple users, with emphasis placed on a collaborative information production and sharing.

The shift to an internet-mediated existence has not only been applicable to the social sphere as the same apparatus can be applied to politics since the canons of practice have also moved towards the web. Indeed, Morris (2001) states that as “the political process itself moves away from television and towards the Internet, our very system of governance will also evolve toward a more direct form of democracy, reflecting the growing importance of the Internet”. As such, (Morris, 2001) believes that “politicians will follow their voters in shifting their focus from on-air to online […] [as] political campaigns will have no choice but to transfer the bulk of their attention to the Internet”. A case in point of Morris’ assertion was explicitly seen in the 2008 American Presidential Election, particularly with Barack Obama’s election where internet campaigning played a crucial role in the mobilization of potential voters (Jones, 2011). While Obama was not the first presidential candidate to make use of the internet and its technologies in an election campaign, his ability to weave technology and the internet into the fabric of his campaign, thus ensuring his online donors were not just donors, but also voters and turning online fervor into effective ground support (Endelman, 2009) is notable. Additionally, the Obama’s campaign was “the first campaign in which the political uses of the internet played a decisive role” (Castells, 2009: 364).

Following Iran’s suppressed ‘green revolution’ (Beydoun, 2011) the discussion once more centered on the democratizing potential of social media, particularly Twitter, following its central role in the dissemination of information in light of Iran’s post-
election protests (2009). Grossman (2009) believes that what made Twitter the “medium of the moment” was the lack of cost incurred in its use, its high mobility and its personal and quick nature. Furthermore, the fact that unlike Facebook, Twitter is public, makes it “ideal for a mass protest movement” (Grossman, 2009).

In both Iran’s green revolution and the start of what would become collectively known as the Arab Spring in Tunisia at the end of 2010, it is important to note the role played by the youth. Such an act is indicative of a new generation of users and citizens who want multiple freedoms, contrary to the then-prevailing status quo. This can be attributed, in a small measure, to the ideas fostered by globalization; the ideas of one-world with social and personal liberties guaranteed. Technology again in this instance has played a role in providing a frame of reference to the type of life each citizen could aspire to, particularly the diffusion of satellite communication and broadcast programs which Kavanaugh, Yang, Sheetz, Li and Fox (2010) believe have “arguably laid a foundation for rising expectations among citizens and local organizations, including the private sector [with their] news, talk shows and political discussion”. This argument is also in line with the natural predisposition for youth to challenge established authority, seen here more with this particular generation than any other previous generation as enabled by their exposure to tools such as the internet and satellite television especially Al Jazeera, given its tendency to question accepted Arab government systems (Kavanaugh et al., 2010). This contact with ICTs has furthermore led to exposure to disparate political ideas and systems and engenders a frame of reference with regard to the political system they are currently under. The need for unrestraint personal liberties is also a compelling motivation to change the status quo in an authoritarian regime such as Egypt, with Western entities such as music and films providing a frame of reference given the liberal and pervasive nature of these foreign items.

With regard to the rise of dissent in North Africa and the Middle East, there have been past movements that have set a precedent for political activism and as such, the protests in Egypt and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa did not arise as a complete surprise. Knickmeyer (2011) speaks of a “youth bulge”, a rise in youth population in some countries and further mentions that “80 percent of the world’s conflicts between 1970 and 1999 started in countries where 60 percent of the
population was under 30” (Knickmeyer, 2011). This youth bulge also means the
presence of a generation that becomes larger in number than their parents’
(Knickmeyer, 2011). Goldstone (2002) writes that “the rapid growth of youth can
undermine existing political coalitions, creating instability [as] large youth cohorts are
often drawn to new ideas and heterodox religions, challenging older forms of
authority”. In addition, because most “young people have fewer responsibilities for
families and careers, they are relatively easily mobilized for social or political
conflicts” (Goldstone, 2002). Indeed, the proclivity of such groups to the
advancements of socio-economic developments is notable. However, so is their
ability to engage in movements that aspire to change the social order, especially in
instances where they observe a marginalization of their rights, or instances where
such marginalization hinders them from achieving their full potential. The lack of
post-graduate job opportunities has been seen as a major factor in the development
of dissent in the Arab Spring (Wambugu, 2011 cited in Goodman, 2011). This can be
attributed to the fact that employment plays a big role in the development of human
needs, especially self-actualization. As a result, young adults with university degrees
experience menial labor as humiliating and require very little to motivate them to fight
their perceived disenfranchisement, given that, according to Bayat, (2011), “they
graduate with new status, information, and expectations”.

By comparison, pre-revolution Tunisia was rather a country with a “deep history of
unbalanced economic growth, repression of all critics, and a mafia-style corruption
that enriche[d] members of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali’s family” (Alexander,
2011). As such, it functioned against human and social development, particularly for
youth who found themselves disenfranchised due to a lack of opportunities, even
with education. However, the growth of social media networks, the majority of which
were based outside the borders of the country, enabled citizens to acquire, with
ease, knowledge of acts of repression and corruptive practices involving government
official or members of Ben Ali’s inner circle (Alexander, 2011). The global political
climate at the time of Tunisia’s revolution was also ripe for this type insurrection,
particularly the wave of revelations by the organization Wikileaks, which sought to
‘open governments’ by publicizing a number of diplomatic cables, which described
Ben Ali as “aging, out of touch, and surrounded by corruption” (Alexander, 2011).
Indeed, Alexander (2011) believes that “given Ben Ali’s reputation as a stalwart U.S.
ally, it mattered greatly to many Tunisians—particularly to politically engaged Tunisians who are plugged into social media—that American officials are saying the same things about Ben Ali that they themselves say about him” and as a result, “these revelations contributed to an environment that was ripe for a wave of protest that gathered broad support” (Alexander, 2011).

This section has provided an insight into the capabilities of the internet and its tools to foster democracy by assessing a number of ways the internet has actively engendered instances of democratic practice, and at the same, has considered the variables that potentially led to the act of revolution that took place in the Middle East and North Africa.

The following section describes in further detail the research methodology and design that was used to establish the role of Twitter and YouTube in the Egyptian revolution.
3.1. Research Design and Methodology
The following chapter outlines the research design and methods utilized in this study in an attempt to deduce the actual role played by social media, particularly Twitter, the micro-blogging site and YouTube, the user-generated video sharing site. The research conducted was interpretive in nature, with the aim of arriving at a possible answer to the research question and as such, employed a content analysis of both Twitter messages as well as YouTube content pertaining to the Egyptian revolution.

3.2. Research Framework
This section introduces the research framework of this study and the research question, aims and objectives of the study as well as the selection of the data analyzed.

3.2.1. Research Question
The study aimed to provide perspectives that could answer the following research question:

“How did social media, specifically Twitter and YouTube, serve as a platform to communicate anti-governmental discourses in Egypt (January 2011)?”

3.2.2. Aims and Objectives of Study
The research aims and objectives of the study were as follows:

Aim

The aim of this study is to determine the roles played by social media toward the eventual outcome of the public uprisings in Egypt in January-February 2011, for the particular social media segment of Anglophone messages.

Objectives

1. To identify the various ways in which social media messaging in English was used in Egypt (January 2011) to communicate messages prior to the actual ‘revolutionary’ or protest events.
2. To identify the discourse within social media during times of protests in Egypt.
3. To examine the role social media played following the censorship of media in Egypt.

3.3. Research Sample

3.3.1. Timeframe

The dataset for this study includes tweets and user-generated videos made available to Twitter and YouTube between January 25th and February 11th, 2011. This particular period was chosen as it marked the time of revolution, from the first day of protest (January 25th, day of revolt), Friday of Anger, to the day of Mubarak’s resignation (February 11th).

3.3.2. Social Media Samples

Twitter

A sample of tweets for the duration of the revolution was chosen and analyzed. Tweets chosen for the sample were limited to those in English containing the keywords, ‘#Jan25’, ‘#Egypt’, ‘#Tahrir’. ‘Retweets’, meaning tweets that were sent by one user, and then subsequently ‘forwarded’ by another user to their followers, were not considered. Since Twitter is a dedicated social media platform, it contains a large amount of texts and information at all times and as such, it became necessary to employ a sampling method to discard any messages that are irrelevant to the study, as well as to create a manageable, representative study sample.

YouTube

In order to determine the nature of content uploaded onto YouTube during the Egyptian revolution, the search capabilities of YouTube (www.youtube.com/search) were used. For the purposes of the treatise study, the search parameters were January 25th to February 11th 2011, an 18-day period. The key words ‘#Jan25’, ‘#Egypt’, ‘#Tahrir’ were used to quantify the occurrence of the search parameters within YouTube. For the purposes of this paper, ten videos were covered from YouTube. Content under analysis is limited to only videos produced by activists and ordinary citizens therefore user-created content, and thus allowed for the identification of certain themes as well as messages, furthermore providing an idea
of how they used the *YouTube* platform as civilians active in the assertion of their own freedoms.

### 3.4. Methodology

To determine the use of social media by protestors and citizens during the Egyptian revolution, a content analysis was conducted on *Twitter* messages. Berelson (1954) defines a content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1954: 489) while Stone, Dunphy, Smith, and Ogilvie (1966: 5) offer the following view of a content analysis as “any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text”. Leininger (1985: 60) cited in (Aronson, 1994) suggests that themes are identified by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often appear meaningless when viewed alone. Furthermore, through content analysis, “[…] valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use [can be made]” (Krippendorff 2004: 18).

A content analysis is appropriate in this instance, given the fact that it offers the ability to study broad phenomena in content as it is a “directive method” (Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdoch 2007: 119), giving answers to the questions posed by the researcher. Furthermore, the use of a content analysis to study social media content is indicative of awareness in the researcher of the plethora of purposes of such content through the use of symbols in text, video or images, and the possible meaning of each within the context of their use.

The sample was drawn from Topsy search (www.topsysearch.com) a website that utilizes the *Twitter* Search API to obtain publicly available *Twitter* messages or ‘tweets’ according to a criterion determined by the researcher. For this study, the criterion was tweets sent out during the Egyptian revolution. Using Topsy search’s filtering tools, the search parameters were narrowed to tweets sent out in English as well as containing the hashtags, #Egypt, #Jan25 and #Tahrir, with the date limited to the duration of the revolution: January 25\textsuperscript{th} to February 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2011.
Topsy search does not archive all of Twitter’s content, only those tweets that were retweeted considerably, or those “that came from people whom Topsy deems influential because they are often retweeted or cited in other people’s tweets” (Boutin, 2011). Additionally, “that same influence algorithm lets you sort search results by relevance rather than in chronological order” (Boutin, 2011). While this could arguably be considered incomplete, the resulting sample does allow an analysis with a number of representative characteristics relating to the importance of English in the region, as well as the international media coverage of Egypt’s political changes, as will be shown.

With regard to YouTube content, a thematic content analysis was conducted. While a thematic content analysis is often applied to text based content, it was applied within the study of user-generated YouTube videos in this instance given a number of prevailing themes identified by the researcher in the initial analysis of such content. Beadsworth (1980: 375 cited in Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdoch 2007: 120) states that “a thematic analysis relies upon the coder to recognize certain themes or ideas in the text […]”. As such, an initial analysis of all relevant video material sampled for the study revealed a number of recurring themes (presented in the ‘Findings’ chapter of this treatise) in all videos. The same date criterion was applied to the sample videos from YouTube, and videos marked with the hashtags; #Egypt, #Jan25 and #Tahrir.

3.5. Delimitations of the Study

This study focused on the manner in which Twitter and YouTube possibly enabled the public to mobilize and organize, mediated the discourses surrounding, and indeed aided the Egyptian revolution. The study therefore relied on data available on online archives. The bulk of such content is in Arabic and, as such, will be excluded from this analysis, given the researcher’s lack of familiarity with the language.

The study is relevant in assessing specifically online content by civilians fluent in English due to the fact that all protest participants, whether they voiced their rhetoric in their native language or in English, communicated for the same ultimate goal and
as such, their sentiments will be echoed by those protestors who were able to post their content in English and therefore it will still be possible to draw conclusions.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study uses publically available content on archive sites and as such, does not require any consent from webmasters/webmistresses to proceed with the analysis.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reports on the research findings of this study in an attempt to provide insight into the role played by Twitter and YouTube during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

As outlined in the preceding chapter, this research relied on a content and thematic analysis to arrive at its findings. A total of 902 Twitter messages or ‘tweets’ were analyzed, as were ten YouTube videos. As such, the findings in this chapter serve as an interpretation of the data collected through content analyses outlined in the third chapter of this treatise.

The content analysis offers insight into the type of messages communicated by citizens during the eighteen day period of uncertainty in Egypt, while the thematic analysis identified themes and trends within each unit of analysis. From these, conclusive results could be drawn about the nature of messages and content disseminated during what became known as Egypt’s revolution.

Initially, the search parameters utilized in the data collection through the Twitter search site, Topsy, returned 902 relevant tweets, however, not all tweets returned by the search were usable for the analysis and as such, it became necessary to employ a filtering mechanism to keep only those tweets that were relevant to the study. Tweets that were retweeted were excluded. A retweeted tweet refers to a tweet that was sent by a user to their timeline, and was then ‘forwarded’ by another user to his/her timeline. These ‘forwarded tweets’ were 436 in total, a forty-eight percentage (48%) of the overall sample returned by the initial search. The identification of tweets in English and Arabic necessitated a further filtering of the data, resulting in a more streamlined and relevant study sample. Due to a lack of familiarity of the researcher with the Arabic language, tweets in the language were initially excluded using Topsy’s language filtering mechanisms, however, it became necessary to further excise from the study tweets that were a combination of both the English and Arabic languages. Only two tweets contained this unfiltered use of English and Arabic. Finally, the search returned duplicate tweets; the same tweet encountered in more
than one instance of which there were 146. These were also discarded and constituted sixteen percent (16%) of the study sample. The decision to discard certain tweets is in line with Topsy’s structural composition as an archive for influential tweets. The ‘rejected’ tweets imply a level of influence in that certain tweets were more influential than others and as such, indicative of user hierarchy. This is indicative of the hierarchy that also exists within internet platforms where certain users are more influential than other based on a variety of reasons.

4.2. Content Analysis of Twitter Messages

Following the outbreak of dissent at the beginning of 2011 in Egypt, Twitter emerged as a way to follow and document what was happening in Egypt in real time. Indeed, to the point where Twitter has become a trusted medium in the dissemination of breaking news due to its use as an ‘on the ground’ platform.

As such, the messages discussed in this paper reflects sentiment on Twitter, and to an extent, in the country at the time, and also serves as a way to document several discourses circulated during the eighteen day period of uncertainty (January 25th to February 11th 2011).

The notable use of tools such as the photocopier, cell phones and emails in past instances of revolutions and protests suggest that the unrestricted flow of information is the most important facet to any act of revolution. Within the context of the Egyptian revolution, it is no different and this emerged as one of the most important functions of Twitter and as such, leads to exploration of the type of messages that were communicated through the medium for the duration of the revolution, as outlined below.

4.2.1 Emergency Information Dissemination

Since 2009, Twitter has emerged as one of the most accurate ways of aggregating information, particularly in times of emergencies and especially in instances where there is not sufficient mass media coverage of that particular event. Twitter’s role as an information source received notable attention following the emergency landing of a passenger jet plane on New York’s Hudson River following a collision with birds (Wald, 2009). This event was followed by the Moldovan protest following the
contestation of the country’s parliamentary elections where activist used Twitter to organize their protests. In Iran, Twitter became a platform for the provision of information to mass media, mostly Western media following the repression of the country’s media during the post-election protest that afflicted the country due to a similar kind of election results contestation as had been the case in Moldova. In 2010, Twitter became important following the Haiti earthquake in that it became a way to provide critical information to rescue worker in the relief effort, and also, a way to provide an ‘on the ground’ account of the real effects of the disaster by citizens who had access to it and were affected.

Twitter, due to its form as a microblogging network is intrinsically and structurally tailored to be a tool used in emergencies. Microblogging tools such as twitter “fulfill a need for an even faster mode of communication” (Java, Song, Finin and Tseng, 2007). “Firstly, due to inherent text length constraints microblogs take less time and cognitive effort to compose, and, secondly, users upload micro-blogs with a greater frequency” (Java et al. 2007; Bajpai, 2011).

The structural components of Twitter such as its public accessibility and its non-requital relationship between users enable it to serve the functions of information dissemination or group organization. Furthermore, the ability to index search keywords through the use of hashtags means the ease of collating topics and the ability for people in the same topic pool to join the conversation given that they “allow users to annotate tweets with metadata specifying the topic or intended audience of a communication” (Conover, Ratkiewicz, Francisco, Gonçalves, Flammini, Menczer, 2011). Hashtags in themselves have the ability to trend in a list of topics known as ‘trending topics’, implying the most discussed topics within the Twitter environment. Thus, if a hashtag trends, it has the ability to garner transnational attention and as such, “provide a larger exposure to protest activities than was possible as individuals [such as] collective action co-opting a medium designed for individuals for its own collective purposes” (Bajpai, 2011). Ems (2009) asserts that Twitter is able to function differently to other social networks in two ways,

First, Twitter quickly, dynamically and succinctly enables the communication of protesters with one another and, at the same time, it broadcasts these communications to anyone who will listen. Second, Twitter acts as an information sieve for news media outlets; Twitter provides links to the most relevant information in
other media, thus amplifying the distribution of important facts from a variety of sources (Ems, 2009).

Given these features, Twitter is thus able to mediate the politics of dissent by eliminating the barriers to the production of emergency information and ensuring that such information reaches its intended audience, or any user willing to be privy to such information.

The brevity of the medium has been mentioned in preceding chapters without further engagement as to how, in practicality, this functions. Tweets such as the following demonstrate how the mechanisms of Twitter enable the flow of a short-burst of messages given the volatile nature of a protest situation.

“March to the palaces people! Its time” (@arabevolution 02/11/2011)

“http://twitpic.com/3yilgbl Faces of the Revolution” (@Uncucumbered 02/10/2011)

“No more lie… Take the power back!!! Watch Egypt Unrest: http://vimeo.com/19485323” (@2TuffDC 02/03/2011)

Additionally, the limit placed on the amount of text one can send through the medium (140 characters) also plays a role in the kind of message that is eventually disseminated through Twitter. The use of shortened links that form part of certain tweets can be attributed to this same character limit (Bajpai, 2011).

4.2.2 Sustenance Information Dissemination

The longevity of a social movement depends on the amount of information available on it, as it does also on the amount of attention paid to it by different stakeholders; the government whose desire is to curb the flow of information as opposed to activists and citizens who desire a free-flow of information to advance their cause, as well as express their views. This presupposition is evident in the following tweets, the aims of which were to add to the flow of information to potentially aid in the penetration of the revolution as a topic for possible coverage in mass media’s news cycles. Tweets recognized from the study sample as belonging to this criterion constituted nine percent (9%) of the study sample.
“r they clearing town from Media & NGO?????? ..... world listen & watch .... don’t leave us without Media coverage” (@ElSult 01/26/2011)

“EGYPTIAN ARMY DEFEND YOUR PEOPLE ! PLEASE RT RT RT” (@o_lucky_me 02/03/2011)

The preceding tweets display awareness of the user to the attention that can be afforded to the movement if certain people are audience to it. In this instance, the intended audience is the Western media.

The act of tagging tweets with the hashtags #Egypt, #Jan25, and #Tahrir is in itself an act with the intentions of making information easier to find and to also have it clustered into one search group for easy indexing. Furthermore, tweets with content pertaining to the desire for increased longevity of the struggle tended to have external links to videos and images that aimed to emphasize the content of the tweet, as evinced by the following:

“to Bypass government firewall, download Tor http://www.torproject.org/” (@ya7ya 01/25/2011)

“Blogger Wael Abbas Arrested, Posted Police Torture and Rape Videos on Web: http://abcn.ws/gvAGeg” (@BrianRoss 02/04/2011)

These are indicative of an identified need to keep information within public consciousness and as such, to keep the revolution active. Furthermore, the intention of informing citizens, with the resultant aim of mobilizing publics is crucial given that it is not enough to passively provide information, it is important to turn your publics into activists, appealing to the idea of mobilizing ‘clicktivism’ into activism.

The continuance of a revolution relies also on the amount of public and media attention paid to it. The same mentality seems to have informed the constant appeal of some protestors to Twitter users outside of Egypt to keep circulating information about the protest situation to accrue sympathy from global democratic nations.
The messages in *Twitter* also have to be considered in line with what was the current prevailing situation in Egypt. This refers to the coordination and organizational tactics as well as state reaction to the situation. The messages communicated through *Twitter*, are largely in line with what is to be expected following the media clamp down by the Mubarak regime as part of a campaign to shut down communication, in an effort to hold on to power. Protestors on the other hand, put emphasis on generating information for dissemination. For example, the suggestion to bypass government internet blockage, thus serving the same role the traditional media would ideally play in different circumstances.

### 4.2.3. Protest Report

In addition to the content of tweets discussed in previous sections, yet another identifiable feature of the content of tweets sampled for the analysis was the use of *Twitter* to report on the existing state of affairs during the public actions against the regime, whether it is the abuse of protestors by the army, or the release of protestors/bloggers from police custody. This particular content of the tweets under analysis constituted fourteen percent (14%) of the study sample.

In this regard, *Twitter* serves as a medium for citizen journalism in light of the censor on Egyptian mainstream media, providing a first person, on the scene narrative. This also developed along a number of repertoires depending on the occurrences of the particular day or period during the revolution. In the early days of protest, the messages related to messages of security for those in the street:

“The live ammunition is reportedly being used in the protests” (@25/01/11).

“Promubarak thugs rode into the ppl be (sic) eg museum on camels and horses with whips and battons!!” (@02/02/11).

“anti govt protests with 1million ppl, it was peaceful. Today regime sent in plain-clothes all turned violent” (@02/02/2011).

Within the tweets identified as akin to a report on the protest situation, the messages communicated served as a provision of, among others, hyperlinks to external
sources of information that in some way or other provided an idea as to the reasons for the ongoing protest movement, or aimed to provide a constant flow of information. The idea of Egyptian politics, particularly US involvement (or the lack thereof) in reaching a concession with the Mubarak regime towards his resignation from the presidency emerged as a topic of discussion in a number of tweets, with users expressing enmity towards the US’ perceived double standards. Such discourse around the US/Egypt political relationship is of importance considering the history of Egypt as a US ally, particularly during Mubarak’s tenure.

Twitter functions on the continued flow of information, as do most tools of web 2.0. In fact, it can be argued that Twitter thrives and functions with more effect with a constant flow of information streaming through it. This characteristic is indeed suggested by the type of information that flowed through Twitter during Egypt’s transitional period under study here.

4.2.4. Information Request

The tweets in this category comprise of information seeking that is not limited to legitimate bits of information, but in instances, sought to rather verify unsubstantiated rumors, or in some cases, information related to then prevailing state of affairs.

The contents of these tweets constituted a mere 0.6% of the entire sample.

“MISSING PERSON: Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Emam, Tahrir Sq. Last spoke to him 1/28. Pls tweet with any info” (@CairoCeli 02/03/2011)

This particular tweet, while it does fall within this category, could also serve the purpose of a report. This is evidence of Twitter performing the function normally expected of mass media, while the following provides an idea of the importance of being in the know in turbulent times such as the Egyptian revolution.

“What is happening in #Suez ? news are not focusing there anymore?” (@ 02/05/2011)
This particular post emphasizes the importance of the availability of information during a period such as the Egyptian revolution. This category further highlights the important role played by the availability of information during periods of political activism. Users in this category make use of the “social search” (Morris, Teevan and Panovich, 2010) phenomena; the act of posing a question or the request for information through a social network. This information seeking strategy relies on one’s personal network to find a variety of information, in this instance, information regarding the current revolution. However since the question was tagged with the hashtags, this meant that anybody following the conversation could simply reply to it, or retweet it, opening it up to a wider audience as opposed to just their immediate network of social connections.

4.2.5. Miscellaneous Messages

Within this category fall all tweets comprised of messages that could not be classified under any of the other categories been discussed above. They comprised thirteen percent (13%) of the study sample. These messages could not fall under those categories given the fact that they did not contribute to any form of legitimate report or information request. Rather, they served as a form of expression of personal or public opinion. Tweets identified as part of this category included opinions and humor or a pop culture reference. This category is in line with ‘noise’ often encountered on the internet and social networks such as Twitter, and serves to prove that while there are those users who actively contribute and engage in discussions, others become part of the discussions not to offer anything of substance, rather to merely indicate their presence.

Furthermore, in this category, a parody account, that of newly appointed vice-president Omar Suleiman had been created on Twitter and included tweets such as:

“5 facts about me: 1. I make a career out of Coercion, Subversion, Torture and Killing” (@[redacted] 02/10/2011)

Parody accounts are not unique to this particular event; a similar account was created in the name of the multinational corporation, BP following the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, while others exist on pop culture personalities or corporations. The
similarity in this instance is the unapologetic stance regarding the protest event that ‘Suleiman’ takes. The use of humor and petty anecdotes is pervasive in parts of this category. Similarly, there is no particular relevance to the messages communicated, and is another case of the ‘noise’ of cyberspace.

“I’m having my first post-Mubarak beer” (@sharifkouddous 02/11/2011)

“Uninstalling dictator COMPLETE – installing now: egypt 2.0”

Both of these were sent to Twitter following the resignation of Mubarak on February 11th and indicate a state of ‘post-Mubarak’ euphoria. Other messages contained the quotation of a certain person of relevance who had made a comment that a tweeter found apt such as:

“when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace” (@Nevinezaki).

“I gotta feeling that tonight is gonna be a good night ;) #Ghonim” (@heba_emad 02/07/2011)

This particular quote was attributed to Jimi Hendrix and the latter is a reference to the Black Eyed Peas song, ‘I Gotta Feeling’. Both messages form part of the pop culture reference aspect of this category.

In some instances, messages were not exclusive to one particular category and could fit in any of the categories, for example;

“Pro- #Mubarak Protestors creating fake accounts & trying to influence Pro-democracy protestors” (@CineversityTV 02/04/2011)

“#Dubai Authorities caught Hussein Salem (#Mubarak’s kinsman) with $1.5 B in cash upon arrival to DXB” (@port_sa3eedy 02/02/2011)

Both these tweets could form part of a report or provide information important in the flow of information that passed through Twitter during the revolution.
4.3. YouTube Videos – A Thematic Analysis

The study identified the following themes consistent in all content under analysis:

1. A call to action
2. Strengthening group identity
3. Status update/report

4.3.1. Strengthening Group Identity

The strengthening of group identity is often a recurring theme in social movement texts. The idea is to invoke certain emotions with which activists with a determined goal can collectively unite on and further advance the movement. In ‘#Jan25 Egypt - Omar Offendum, The Narcicyst, Freeway, Ayah, Amir Sulaiman (Prod. by Sami Matar)’, a music video for a rap song composed about the revolution is posted. The first verse says, “I heard ‘em say the revolution won’t be televised, Al Jazeera proved ‘em wrong, Twitter has ‘em paralyzed”. This is an emotive statement for its intended audience, in this case the youth, seen as drivers of the Egyptian revolution. Furthermore, the use of the rap genre strongly enforces the idea of a product with which the youth can identify and thus also serves as a call to action. The same theme is again identifiable in the video, ‘Egyptian protests grassroots remix #jan25 #egypt’ as emphasis is on carving an identity with which like-minded individuals can identify. Music plays an important role in young people’s lives, and in this video. This time, the video makes use of British rock band Thirteen Senses’ ‘Into the Fire’. The video has been edited in such a way that at certain parts, the song’s rhythm goes into a crescendo during fiery moments, building up tension.

The idea of a collective identity proposes that there is a ‘commonality’ with regard to an identified opponent against whom activists band together. Hardt and Negri (2005: 86) state that this commonality is the basis for movements such as those active in the Egyptian protests. The identification of activists as a unit not under central leadership is in line with facets that have been identified in chapter 2 as characteristic of movements that began to take form towards the latter part of the twentieth century.
4.3.2. A Call to Action

This theme similarly works on emotion. The main aim is to goad would-be activists to take a lot more action than simply retweeting a tweet or commenting/liking a Facebook status. There is no outright ‘call to action’, it is rather implied in the video ‘Egypt Protest Demonstration 25/01/11’, as is the case in most videos that fall under this particular theme. The video alludes to the longevity of the struggle and simultaneously implies that more-like minded citizens are required with the statement ‘This is the beginning of the end’ as the struggle is far from won. Towards the end of this particular video, it segues into the use of still photographs that ultimately end with the tearing down of a poster showing the face of Mubarak. The message is clear: the enemy has been identified, the person to whom all this anger is aimed but the public’s battle is far from being won as more reinforcements are required from other members of the populace.

In ‘Egyptian protests grassroots remix #jan24 #egypt’ however, the call to action is explicitly made with the following statement, ‘we will not be silenced, whether you’re a Christian, Muslim whether you’re an atheist, you will demand you’re goddamn rights and we’ll have our rights, one way or the other, we will not be silenced’. This particular form of appeal is effective because of the target audience’s familiarity with all the problem issues seen in the videos, and serves to draw them into the streets to take action. It is thus for Egyptian, by Egyptians, even though in instances of speaking, the language used is English. This could be interpreted as also geared towards a Western audience.

Furthermore, these videos work given their construction of an ‘every-man’ persona in that there no one man is presented as a spokesperson for all the activism, rather, each person presented outlines their grievances and reasons for their activism, and at the same, highlights these issues not just as his own, but as having an impact on every Egyptian, thus appealing to a sense of patriotism, and hopefully, a sense of political activism.
4.3.3. Status update or report

This theme served as a type of diary entry, documenting the status of the revolution at different geographical locations and points in time. It also served as an avenue for citizen journalism; activists with the necessary tools, in this instance a camera or video phone who happened to be at a certain location at the right time, had the opportunity to document, uncensored, some of the most atrocious moments of the revolution, seen particularly in ‘Brave man got shot #Egypt’ and ‘The diplomatic car that ran over 20 people in cairo (28th-Jan-2011)’ wherein instances of the death of protestors were documented. In ‘Brave man got shot #Egypt’, the video presents the death of who the viewer assumes is a protestor. The video is filmed by a mother and daughter from their high-rise building balcony who consistently yell for the Special Forces not to shoot the lone protestor. He is eventually shot at close range, and the viewer assumes he’s dead given his lack of movement and the screams from the mother and daughter until the video fades to black. The second video, ‘The diplomatic car that ran over 20 people in cairo (28th-Jan-2011)’ documents the death and injury of multiple protestors following the charge of a ‘diplomatic car’ through a crowd of protestors on a city street. The act happens at night and light from the video relies on street lights, however, the composition of the video still allows for a vivid show of the horror of the act. The footage of these is quite raw, of which the audience is warned when clicking on the link to watch the video in YouTube, by a disclaimer warning to the graphic content.

In some instances, the footage is quite shaky, almost giving the idea that it was clandestinely shot, and therefore alludes to the difficult conditions that could have prevailed in the production of such visuals. The majority of the videos in this category work on emotions by providing an often uncensored reality of the conditions of the revolution.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research findings as well as the primary conclusions that can be drawn from the inaugural analysis.

Based on the analysis of YouTube content relevant to the Egyptian revolution, a number of recurring themes were identified. The identification of relevant themes made visible specific aspects that were integral to the aims and objectives of this study, namely to determine the role played by social media through the dissemination of Anglophone messages in the Egyptian revolution. Similarly, the study of Twitter content revealed that the medium was used in a plethora of ways so as to communicate mood, feelings and the primary need to provide information in light of the prevailing situation in Egypt, during the January – February 2011 period of uncertainty.

5.2. YouTube Analysis

A call to action, strengthening of collective (group) identity and status update were prevailing occurrences in the videos analyzed, due to the psychologically traumatic nature of the subject covered in the videos, i.e. a social movement for regime change in Egypt. The amount of coverage the subject received, both from the activists themselves and the international mainstream media, meant that a number of the videos under analysis would contain the same visuals, although appropriated for use in different ways; and slanted differently to further the aims for their respective forms of activism.

The theme of a call to action, which aims to foster greater solidarity as well as further advance the protest movement, was clearly identified in the analysis. This was a recurring theme, recognized in no less than five of the ten videos identified for the study sample. Recruiting participants for a grassroots movement such as the revolutionary action that took place in Egypt (2011), means that those doing such recruiting have to appeal to a lot of predispositions to attract potential activists. In this regard, most attention was focused on appealing to potential activists’ sense of patriotism and, to an extent, nationalism. In other words, the call to action was posited as a national duty.
The theme of strengthening collective identity indicates recognition of the role social connections play in the mobilization of protest movements. Garrett (2006) proposes that tools such as social media can help create “a perception among individuals that they are members of a larger community by virtue of the grievances they share”, as seen within the videos identified in this theme. Broad participation in a protest movement does not, in itself, guarantee the success of such a movement. Indeed, the same reasoning can be applied to the Egyptian revolution, in so far as there is no guarantee that the revolution would end the way it did. However, this still does not account for the motives for participation. This treatise has situated the Egyptian revolution as a networked movement, it proposed further that by use of the networked structure of social media, the movement relied on the viral expansion of already existing personal networks in the form of Twitter and Facebook interactions. This is not to say that participation is limited to a pre-existing personal network, as evinced by the disparate ideologies that make up network collectives such as those of the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle. Recognizable in the Egyptian revolution was the similar ‘sameness in difference’ dynamic, this time of disparate religious ideologies between Christians and Muslims, for example. This reinforces the idea that protest participation is both an expression and a representation of “a people to come” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 16 - 18).

A trend of this particular theme was to use music from a variety of genres imposed over visuals of police brutality, confrontation and scenes which display the magnitude of the protest action. The use of music, often music identified as ‘Western’ - from artists such as Kanye West, Coldplay and Omar Offadom - reinforces the idea of a shared identity and, to an extent, presents the protest action as an act of solidarity. This is of particular interest since this music is of a culture that the youth, seen as drivers of this particular revolution, identify with. As such the use of pop-culture products “transcends the boundaries of the self and binds the individual to a collective consciousness” (Eyerman & Jamison 1998: 163). For example, hip-hop has, in this instance, become the language of young, present-day activists and by default, expanded mobilization beyond Egypt’s borders, to the Diaspora (Dotson-Renta, 2011). The creation of a collective identity is vital to the successful mobilization of a collective action (Johnston et al. 1994; Castells 1997 in Pickerill 2001: 148) and the use of YouTube in this instance supports the creation of
such an identity and eventually, the mobilization of publics based on their shared similarities.

Finally, with the status update, such videos served as an overview of the situation at hand and took on the characteristic one would associate with a ‘citizen report’ on the revolution. These types of videos were often accompanied by voiceover narration, from the perspectives of the respective producers. Unlike in the themes of a call to action and strengthening of group identity, the videos of this theme utilize their diegetics – sound emanating from a source within the video itself and not added in post-production – an aspect that further reinforces their sense of authenticity.

The *YouTube* videos are indicative of the emergence of an alternative platform for expression and communication in light of the media censorship following the outbreak of protest action in Egypt (2011). Thus, *YouTube* served to communicate protestors’ ideas and to further their motives regarding regime change. The appropriation of mass cultural products for own use by protestors in the advancement of social goals is a form of redaction, in the sense that both news and music are repurposed and used as tools for the advancement of their protest agenda and quite possibly, as an influence in the psychology of those who are yet to take part in the collective action.

### 5.3. Twitter Analysis

Similarly, the content analyzed in the study of *Twitter* messages also revealed significant use of the medium to facilitate information dissemination and information requisition within the scope of the protest movement. Undoubtedly, the organizing and framing of protest action in Egypt formed a sizeable portion of the tweets analyzed and this evinces the manner in which members of every social movement use tools at their disposal to advance their goals. The function played by *Twitter* and *YouTube* is not an altogether new tactic, only the technology is new. The study of the content of *Twitter* also brings with it the question of its choice of use by protesters, and the manner in which it was used.

*Twitter* content also revealed the emergence of a community of users who traded information based on location and the amount of information each individual user
had access to. Also recognizable within the *Twitter* content was its use to strengthen existing ties between users. Such ‘virtual extensions’ of existing social ties, Van Aelst and Walgrave (2007) content that, “[increase] the potential pool of protest participants” as ties between users are strengthened through political participation.

Information seeking and production formed a sizeable part in all the categories recognized in a study of the content of *Twitter* messages communicated for the duration of the Egyptian revolution. This serves to reinforce the idea that information is a necessary commodity for the advancement of a revolution. As anticipated, the range of *Twitter* information flow varied from information about the protest situation to a channel for the re-production of information from mainstream media and amateur information producers. The availability of protest information on *Twitter* meant that users who sought such information relied less on mass media news cycles and were thus free to construct their own news sets, limiting the role of news editors (Castells and Sey 2004: 369).

A noticeable trend within the *Twitter* content under analysis is the cascades of information following a major event that is in some way linked to the protest event. In the beginning stages of the revolution (January 25th), the tweets analyzed are indicative of a state of intense feelings towards the greater mobilization of citizenry, followed by feelings of incredulity and surprise that such an event was actually happening within Egypt. Such sentiment was followed by a strong need and appeal to keep information flow to a maximum, so as to facilitate the revolution and prolong the dynamics of the movement.

Similarly, following days of state inaction and response to the protestors’ demands, and the use of police and armed forces to undermine the protest demonstration (January 26th – January 27th 2011), January 28th, 2011 (‘Friday of Anger’) was advanced as the time for greater mobilization, resulting in an escalated information flow through *Twitter* in anticipation of that date. Knowledge of the use of repressive tactics by the institutional security forces, the contents of *Twitter* messages contained advice concerning preparation of any such tactics including descriptions of methods of self-defense, or showing ways in which to create weapons and protection gear from material available in and around Tahrir Square.
The final day of protest, following the announcement of Mubarak’s resignation, reflects a growth in information flow (see Addendum D). This emphasizes networked users’ ability to become mobilized through the use of Twitter as electronic word of mouth (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdury, 2009); thus users are able to trust information from Twitter more readily than information from state apparatuses, particularly at times of greater mobilization where the environment, and the bonding over shared goals results in the active seeking of an alternative information source. Addendum D visualizes the spread of Egyptian revolution tweets on Twitter in real time with the #Jan25 hashtag. The graphic is rooted in network theory with nodes and linkages. The users are the nodes, and the tweets are edges. Linkages appear between each node as a tweet is sent or retweeted between users. The graphic starts with an overview of tweet circulation on the Twitter network before the announcement of Mubarak’s resignation. Each dot represents a single user, and the link between users shows the re-tweeting of that tweet by other users (Panisson, 2011). At the beginning, linkages are sparse in time however following the announcement of resignation, a great number of tweets suddenly flood the network, until the information being exchanged grows beyond each user’s personal network, thus not limited to users of the same geo-location, but to a global audience who in turn continue to circulate and retweet this information. Furthermore, this feature shows the interconnectedness of Twitter users that could account for their mobilization through shared motives and solidarity, intensified by protest participation.

Additionally, the existence of links to either external sources of knowledge, images and videos enhance Twitter’s structural capabilities, as it does the unrestricted flow of crucial information, in line with the collaborative aspect of Twitter, and other tools of web 2.0. This aspect dictates the symbiotic relationship that existed between mediums. By offering links to external sources such as news websites and videos etc, activists ensured that there remained a flow of crucial information within Twitter, information that was available not just to those within Egypt’s borders, but also those outside, thus opening it up to a wider audience. Furthermore, this information is in line with the topics identified in this study as underlying ideas for information and content creation under the revolution, thus providing a correlation with both Twitter and YouTube content.
The existence of both Twitter and YouTube in the revolution has resulted in increased collaboration against a system protesters perceived as working in opposition to their needs. Thus through systematic information and knowledge production created in the use of social media, such use of both Twitter and YouTube have allowed for the emergence of a collective identity, rooted in the shared goal of agitating for freedom and civil liberties, something the Egyptian citizenry had not previously known. The collaborative power of social media ensured the possibility of such working together by turning everyday citizens into activists. Apart from the collaborative aspect recognized in both the Twitter and YouTube content, Leizerov (2000), believes that the use of social media tools is crucial to the advancement of grassroots protest movements given their structural abilities which reduce barriers to political participation given the relatively low costs associated with “publishing and accessing movement information” (cited in Garret, 2006).

5.4. A New Democracy?

It is apt at this juncture to question whether these developments within the Egyptian landscape have been entirely positive. This allows one to question whether the roles of social media, as discussed in the previous sections, have, in actuality, contributed to a shift towards a state of affairs that may, to some extent, be considered democratic. In relation to the delimitations of this study, this question can however only be addressed in terms of the two online facilities under study, as the behavior of the users may be of democratic nature, but the governing authorities may not yet act in this manner.

In the globalized world, authoritarianism as a form of government seems outdated and lacks the mechanisms that enable its citizens to acquire their full potential and as such, citizens are likely to agitate for a more democratic statehood since they are aware of the existence of such systems elsewhere through mainstream and online media exposure. This study highlights that the internet, as a networked technological medium, facilitates or even engenders the collaborative creation and dissemination of a systematic knowledge acquisition process and, as such, “allows the emergence and permanent reproduction of social systems of global protest that have collective values, practices, goals and identities” (Fusch, 2008).
Egypt had, until January 2011, been a country governed by a regime that was kept in power through centralized control of media and information. Social media changes this by offering tools that facilitate alternative thoughts and ideas among those who desire change, and these tools have emboldened these very groups to coalesce their agendas in response to their perceived lack of civil privileges. This is not to say that Twitter and YouTube are, in themselves, a cause for the wave of political action that saw the departure of Hosni Mubarak from the Egyptian presidency. The causes for this are a lot more nuanced than simply the presence of a technological platform within that very same movement. Dissatisfaction with the Egyptian regime had been present over many years, however, Mubarak’s autocracy, coupled with regular renewal of the Emergency Law under the guise of combating terrorism increased public anger towards the state (Bhuiyan, 2011). In addition, Bhuiyan (2011) states that “in 2010, people’s grievances grew exponentially as multiple problems with security, terrorism, and the economy worsened”. Consequently, social media; Twitter, YouTube and others are not the cause of such change, rather, they facilitated the already existing strong drive for change.

Morozov (2009), equates the idea of ‘internet activism’ with “slacktivism”, which he defines as a “feel good online activism that has zero political or social impact. It gives those who participate in ‘slackivist’ campaigns an illusion of having a meaningful impact on the world without demanding anything more than joining a Facebook group” (Morozov, 2009 cited in Jones, 2011). Morozov’s dubious feelings towards the propensity of social media to engender change do not just end with the perceived passivity offered by the medium. Instead, he considers phenomena such as Twitter activism as a threat to users of the medium. This is because of the adeptness with which authoritarian regimes use the very same tools to track down dissenters by employing the publicly available information to trail the linkages users have on these sites, or shut down the internet - as was the case in Iran (2009) and in Egypt (2011) in a bid to hold on to power. Morozov instead states that “a Twitter revolution is only possible in a regime where the state apparatus is completely ignorant of the internet and has no virtual presence of its own” (2009).

Moreover, while the internet, especially social media may provide a platform for meaningful and relevant discussion, they are also quite possibly a forum for
polemics. Discourses around social media providing a platform for inane daily activities have become characteristic of discussions of whether users of these technologies, or the technologies themselves, can provide a space for the dissemination of ideas that pertain to more effective action. Or if they are merely spaces for exercise in narcissism and irrelevant chatter on what one had for lunch.

Shirky (2011) adopts an oppositional view to that of Morozov, believing instead that social media are capable of effecting change in their users. Shirky believes that “the potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public sphere” (Shirky, 2011) and that this allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views. Shirky’s view is based on the belief that social media provide spaces where users can participate and interact with each other and contribute to a burgeoning knowledge system.

Given that the Egyptian revolution was mediated by social media, it becomes increasingly pertinent to consider whether social media in this context, came to function as a public sphere. Habermas defines a public sphere as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas 1974: 49). He elaborates on this by stating that “a portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body” (Habermas 1974: 49). Mehana (2010) attributes the failure of the Egyptian public sphere to the Emergency Law, and believes that the Egyptian public sphere is in a state of stagnation. Mehana, however, considers the real public sphere as the “new e-sphere” which he sees as “more active and productive” than previous forms. Indeed, the internet as well as social media became the only place in Egypt during this period where citizens could hold discussions without fear of censorship or reprisal. From the findings, it is apparent and discernible that the Twitter medium served as a public sphere, for those who had access to it, by offering a space in which Egyptians could discuss issues not previously permitted, given the repressive nature of the government prior to the revolution.

The findings from the analysis confirm the ideas proffered by theory. As stated by Shirky (1999), tools such as Twitter work very well in providing information due to their lack of a center, while the same lack of center extends to the formation of movements such as the one that was seen during the Egyptian revolution. The
results of Egypt's revolution raise questions as to whether this change has indeed been positive or whether optimistic observers are too quick to adopt a utopian view of social media.

Social media have thus played their part in a political event, becoming a forum for democratic practice by providing a space where Egyptians could communicate their frustrations, manifestos and ideals. Additionally, the recruitment of other citizens into taking part in the movement for political change. Furthermore, social media fulfilled the most important task of all, namely that of getting people out into the streets. After all, mobilizing the public is the most important part of any protest movement.

The political question of whether post-Mubarak Egypt has achieved a state of democracy or whether the country has simply changed hands to a somewhat liberal military state remains unanswered to date. The politics of Egypt continue to remain in a state of instability as evinced by the stalemate in the elections of November 2011, with citizens accusing the military of being unwilling to give up power given the military's reluctance to announce dates for elections (BBC News, 2011). As such, citizens called for further protests and planned elections, in an effort to have the interim military government replaced.

This instability has in no way been unmitigated by further protests, yet regardless, what seems to be inexorable, social media will continue to play a role in the future of a new Egypt.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this research project, provides a summary of the research and further explores the limitations encountered during the research process. This study also recognizes that the research is only reflective of a small portion of the potential study area and will therefore offer suggestions to additional study areas.

6.2 Summary of Research

This study sought to comprehend the role played by Anglophone items on Twitter and YouTube during the 2011 Egyptian revolution and as such, it focused on the Anglophone content of both mediums to arrive at a conclusive analysis.

Guided by a set of objectives, the study sought to identify the various ways social media messaging in English was used, and to identify discourses within social media during Egypt’s period of uncertainty, as well as to examine the role social media played following media censorship in Egypt.

Grounded in theory to establish the foundations of social networks and social movements as well as their variable structures, this study arrived at its findings through a descriptive content analysis of more than nine hundred Twitter messages, in addition to a thematic content analysis of ten YouTube videos.

Such content was identified through the use of the keywords ‘#Egypt, #Jan25 and #Tahrir’, the very same keywords used by activists in the Egyptian revolution to index their content and contribution to the communicative aspect on the revolution on both the Twitter and YouTube mediums.
6.3 Limitations Encountered During Study

Limitations encountered in the study did not adversely affect the outcome of the study however the study could have been improved had the following been taken into consideration:

- The study relied on the search facilities offered by Topsy Search (www.topsy.com) and as such, was limited to the results it offered for analysis.

- Content under analysis was limited to content that was only in the English language due to the researcher’s unfamiliarity with the Arabic language.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

The study provided an evaluation of the role played by social media in the 2011 Egyptian revolution. This was achieved by an in-depth analysis of the content of both Twitter and YouTube in the mobilization of citizenry.

This study concedes that while the research provides a useful perspective on the functioning of these social media tools within the Egyptian revolution context, further research in the field is required. This may include, but is not limited to:

- A similar study that looks at the manner in which messages in Arabic contributed to the organization and mobilization of Egyptians.

- An explorative study that could further interrogate what potential role social media could play as Egypt makes a slow pace towards democratic governance.

- An investigation into the evolving use of social media by youth in protest movements, taking into consideration the 2011 London riots that also incorporated the use of BlackBerry messaging.

Twitter as a medium is still new as is scholarly research surrounding it. It is hoped, in some small measure that this treatise contributes to a burgeoning body of knowledge
on the medium as it continues to evolve both in structure and the manner in which it is used.

6.5 Conclusion of Study

This study investigated the role played by Twitter and YouTube in the Egyptian revolution (2011) and based on the analysis of the content of both mediums in chapter four, the study revealed the communicative, informational and organizational role played by both mediums. As such, both Twitter and YouTube mediated pre-existing dissent during the eighteen day period of uncertainty in Egypt.

To an extent, both Twitter and YouTube became spaces for democratic practice in their ability to mediate a plethora of discussions pertinent to the protest effort. Thus, this study confirms social media as spaces where anti-governmental discourses were communicated, not as instigators of the revolution. The research makes it apparent that, much like past instances of revolution where tools such as the photocopier and text messages were used to facilitate the communication of dissent, there has been an evolution and broad public acceptance of such tools and social media have become en mode as protest tools in this epoch.
Addenda

Addendum A: Sample Tweets from Topsy Search
Addendum B: Details of YouTube video analyzed
Addendum C: YouTube Video Screengrabs
Addendum D: Egypt Revolution on Twitter – A Network Model
Addendum A:

Sample Tweets from Topsy Search

RT arabrevolution: BREAKING: Protesters in front of the TV building are blocking anybody from entering or exiting. via Al Jazeera #Egypt#Tahrir #jan25
02/11/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 24

Danish PM becomes the first EU leader to call for Mubarak to step down. via Al Jazeera English #Egypt #Tahrir #jan25
02/11/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 73

RT arabrevolution: Egyptian National TV confirming live: Tahrir is over 1 Million. #Egypt #Tahrir #jan25
02/04/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 64

RT arabrevolution: #BREAKING President Obama: Attacks on reporters are unacceptable... Attacks on peaceful protesters are unacceptable. #Egypt #Tahrir #Jan25
02/04/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 42

RT arabrevolution: #BREAKING Egyptian Army Commander responds to defiant crowd: I will not speak amid such chants. #Egypt#Tahrir #Jan25
02/05/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 27

RT arabrevolution: "when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace" - Jimi Hendrix #Egypt #Tahrir#Jan25
02/06/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 56
RT [username]: If you can watch this without your heart pounding then you're not human: http://bit.ly/h4ZiIL #Egypt #Tahrir #Jan25
02/10/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 43

RT [username]: [BREAKING NEWS] Egyptian President Hosni #Mubarak steps down http://f24.my/qrqSOK #egypt #tahrir #jan25
02/11/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 27

RT [username]: Tahrir just might live up its name #egypt #tahrir #jan25
02/10/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 21

RT [username]: RT [username] Amnesty staff in Sweden stand in solidarity with the people of #Egypt #tahrir #Jan25#feb12global http://flic.kr/p/9hjB7K
02/11/2011 Reply Retweet Favorite 10
Addendum B:

Details of YouTube video analyzed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date Posted</th>
<th>Uploaded by</th>
<th>Tags</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brave man got shot #Egypt</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2011</td>
<td>Hadi15</td>
<td>#Egypt #Jan25</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDZXAIUp790&amp;skipconinter=1">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDZXAIUp790&amp;skipconinter=1</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian protests grassroots remix #jan24 #egypt</td>
<td>Jan 28, 2011</td>
<td>Visionontv</td>
<td>#Jan25 #Egypt</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi5dF1XZ5o8">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi5dF1XZ5o8</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt Protest Demonstration 25/01/11</td>
<td>Jan 26, 2011</td>
<td>egypTaz</td>
<td>#Egypt #Tahrir</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wti8Ws8V8A8&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wti8Ws8V8A8&amp;feature=related</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Username/Tag</td>
<td>Hashtag</td>
<td>YouTube Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diplomatic car that ran over 20 people in Cairo (28th-Jan-2011)</td>
<td>Feb 3, 2011</td>
<td>mosolini12</td>
<td>#Jan25</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=</a> cWOK0Lf7w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt's day of anger The Egyptians' revolution one of the best scenes</td>
<td>Jan 25, 2011</td>
<td>TheMahita p</td>
<td>#Egypt</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsal_EKmXDM&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsal_EKmXDM&amp;feature=related</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestors in Tahrir Square Break into Song</td>
<td>Feb 4, 2011</td>
<td>scarceClips</td>
<td>#egypt #Jan25 #Tahrir</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahCwBndIVY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahCwBndIVY</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahrir Square Cairo Egypt Recent dramatic scenes VERY MOVING</td>
<td>Feb 6, 2011</td>
<td>LLWProductions</td>
<td>#Egypt #Tahrir</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghHk6LNnRjxM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghHk6LNnRjxM</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addendum C:

YouTube Video Screengrabs

1. #Jan25 Egypt - Omar Offendum, The Narcicys, Freeway, Ayah, Amir Sulaiman (Prod. by Sami Matar)
3. Brave man got shot #Egypt
4. Egyptian protests grassroots remix #jan24 #egypt
5. Egypt Protest Demonstration 25/01/11
6. The diplomatic car that ran over 20 people in Cairo (28th-Jan-2011)
7. Egyptian Protests - 30 January 2011 - Tahrir Square
8. Egypt's day of anger The Egyptians' revolution one of the best scenes
9. Protestors in Tahrir Square Break into Song
10. Tahrir Square Cairo Egypt Recent dramatic scenes VERY MOVING
References and Reading List


Dotson-Renta, L. N. (2011) Hip Hop & Diaspora: Connecting the Arab Spring


Esfahani, H. S. (1993) The Experience of Foreign Investment in Egypt under Infitah. Department of Economics College of Commerce and Business Administration University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign


Johnson, P. (1972) *Egypt Under Nasser* MERIP Reports, No. 10 pp. 3-14


Sahgal (2008) Divided We Stand, But United We Oppose? Oppositional Alliances in Egypt and Pakistan. Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park,


http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/30/AR2006043001039.html
