

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004–2011

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To deepen our understanding of the relationship between social media and political change during the Egyptian uprising of early 2011, events in Tahrir Square must be situated in a larger context of media use and recent history of online activism. For several years, the most successful social movements in Egypt, including Kefaya, the April 6th Youth, and We are all Khaled Said, were those using social media to expand networks of disaffected Egyptians, broker relations between activists, and globalize the resources and reach of opposition leaders. Social media afforded these opposition leaders the means to shape repertoires of contention, frame the issues, propagate unifying symbols, and transform online activism into offline protests.

doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01628.x

Hosni Mubarak, Anwar Sadat, and Gamal Abdel Nasser are having tea in the afterlife. Mubarak asks Nasser, “How did you end up here?” “Poison,” Nasser answers. Mubarak then turns to Sadat. “What about you?” he asks. “An assassin’s bullet,” Sadat says. Sadat and Nasser then turn to Mubarak, “And you?” To which Mubarak replies: “Facebook.”

This joke has been making the rounds in Egypt since the resignation of President Mubarak on 11 February 2011. While amusing, the joke epitomizes the prevalent perception about the role of social media, particularly Facebook, in the Arab uprisings. Some observers deem social media as the main force behind the popular movement against authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North African region (Cohen, 2011; Webster, 2011). Wael Ghonim, a marketing manager for Google and an online activist who created the Facebook page that helped organize

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the protest, called the Egypt uprising “Revolution 2.0” and said, “I want to meet Mark Zuckerberg one day and thank him . . . if you want to liberate a society just give them the Internet” (Cooper, 2011).

However, others dismiss the role of social media and argue that the revolution would have happened without the Internet and had little to do with Twitter and Facebook (Rich, 2011; York, 2011). These polarized opinions reflect ongoing debate over the impact of the Internet on politics and democracy. Techno-utopian scholars view the Internet’s expansion in access to information and exchanges of ideas as enhancing political participation, civil society, and democracy (Hague & Loader, 1999; Kamarck & Nye, 1999; Locke, 1998). In contrast, techno-dystopians see the Internet as posing a threat to democracy through the ways in which governments and corporations use it to manipulate users and legitimize their identities (Barber, 1996; Fox, 1994) and by demeaning political discourse (Gutstein, 1999; Moore, 1999; Wilhelm, 1998). In *The Net Delusion*, Morozov (2011), for instance, argues that the Internet easily lends itself to the repressive control and the abuse of power by authoritarian governments.

It is an oversimplification to frame the Egyptian revolt exclusively as either a “Facebook revolution” or a “people’s revolution.” People and social media are not detached from each other (Zhuo, Wellman, & Yu, 2011). To provide a context for understanding media use and recent history of online activism in Egypt, Figure 1 offers a timeline of the most important social movement actions, street protests, online mobilizations, policy successes, and strategic defeats for the Egyptian opposition. Informed by a wide range of scholarly sources, archival materials, and personal communications, this figure helps fill out the narrative of social media use and political change in Egypt. Most important, it illustrates that social media have been an integral part of political activism of the Egyptian for years, showing, for instance that 54 out of 70 recorded street protests from 2004 to 2011 substantially involved online activism. Hence, the power of networked individuals and groups who toppled Mubarak presidency cannot be separated from the power of social media that facilitated the formation and the expansion of the networks themselves.

To fully understand phenomena such as the Tahrir revolt, we need to look beyond the period of late January and early February 2011 and beyond Facebook and Twitter. Every moment has a history, including the Tahrir Square. The Arab uprisings were built on years of civil society movements in the region, online and offline. Although this article focuses specifically on Egypt, the Tunisian revolt did not happen instantaneously either. It also had deep historical roots in years in the hard work of Tunisian civil society and in the long established digital activism in the country, especially the vibrant activism of the online anticensorship movement (Randeree, 2011).

The genesis of online activism in Egypt can be traced to the rise of the Kefaya movement in 2004, followed by the emergence of oppositional activists in the Egyptian blogosphere. This was well before Facebook and Twitter became available in the country. By delving into the history of online activism in Egypt from 2004 to 2011 (Figure 1), my goal is to locate the actual role of social media in mobilizing populist

movements over a broad geography and longer space of time. I contend that the role of social media in the Egypt revolt was not merely technological but also sociopolitical. Social media represent *tools* and *spaces* in which various communication networks that make up social movement emerge, connect, collapse, and expand.

Grievances, movements, and social networks

Social media were not the singular cause of the Egypt uprising and Arab Spring in general. Longstanding grievances concerning corrupt and oppressive government, growing inequalities, looming unemployment, and the rising cost of living were the roots for contention in the region. With comparatively lower political rights and civil liberties ratings (Freedom House, 2011), widespread perception of corruption (Transparency International, 2010), a quarter of the youth unemployed (World Bank, 2010), and consumer price inflation running over 10% (International Monetary Fund, 2010), most Egyptians shared common grievances.

But neither did these grievances alone explain the particular evolution of events during those critical weeks in early 2011. Historically, social and economic factor grievances alone have not created social movements (Buechler, 2000). Individuals only participate in collective action when they recognize their membership in the relevant collective (Wright, 2001). The degree of group identification appears to be a strong predictor of collective action participation (Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007). Such identification can only grow out of communication between individuals. For angry, unemployed youth to participate in an oppositional movement against Mubarak, she or he first needed to recognize that many other individuals shared the same grievances, the same goals, and a common identity in opposition to Mubarak.

Tilly (2004) defined social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns by which ordinary people made collective claims on others. Social movements, especially protests, can also be understood as networks of people brought together by a common goal or interest. Social movements as social networks can also be read in terms of an initial core composed of densely known clusters of stronger ties that then mobilizes weakly linked individuals, thus spreading discontent into a mass movement (Granovetter, 1973; McAdam, 1986; Tarrow, 1998).

Social media may be viewed both as *technology* and *space* for expanding and sustaining the networks upon which social movements depend. The Arab revolts exemplify how online social networks facilitated by social media have become a key ingredient of contemporary populist movements. Social media are not simply neutral tools to be used or adopted by social movements, but rather influence how activists form and shape the social movements.

Youth, biographical availability, and social media

With a population of 81 million, Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East. Young people aged 15–29 make up one-third of the country's total population,

about 23 million. This age group grew significantly in size from 1988 to 2011 and now exerts huge pressures on the labor market. Unemployment among the youth soared, reaching 24% by December 2010 (World Bank, 2010). Unemployment was greatest among university graduates (World Bank, 2008). About 45% of the population of Egypt lives in urban areas, with over 7 million in Cairo proper and 19.6 million in Greater Cairo, making it the third largest urban area in the Islamic world after Jakarta and Greater Istanbul (City Population, 2011; Demographia, 2011). Nearly three-fifths of the Cairo population is under 30 years old and unemployment rate among the youth in this city is higher than the national rate.

Studies on social movements show that *biographical availability* is an important factor in explaining variation in the mobilization of individuals (McAdam, 1986; Tindall, 1994; Tindall & Bates, 1998). Biographical availability can be defined as “the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities” (McAdam, 1986, p. 70). Other studies suggest that younger people identify more highly with the movement and are more likely to participate in higher cost activities than older adults (Tindall & Bates, 1998). From this perspective, the majority of the Egyptian youth could be judged to have high biographical availability to participate in protests. But availability alone cannot fully account for participation. Mobilization depends on contact as well and this is where social media played their greatest role in the Egyptian uprising.

Social media usage among young urbanites in Egypt is high (Spot On, 2010). While the Internet penetration in Egypt is only 30%, in Cairo more than 64% of the household have Internet and 50% of Internet (dial-up) subscribers in Egypt are located in Cairo. With around 5 million Facebook users (Spot On, 2010), Egypt constitutes about 22% of total users in the Arab region and 78% of those aged 15 to 29 (Dubai School of Government, 2011). Facebook is the second most accessed Website in Egypt after Google and there are more Facebook users than newspaper readers (Spot On, 2010). YouTube is also very popular among the Egyptian youth. It ranks the fourth most visited Website. An estimated 150,000 to 200,000 videos were uploaded daily in 2008 (Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center, 2010). These data suggest that social media are the media of urban youth. For Egyptian youth with their already high level of biographic availability, especially in Cairo, social media provided connections within and between opposition movements and both increased the likelihood of participation and the size of the movement as their networks expanded.

Kefaya: Genesis of anti-Mubarak movement

Kefaya's first rally in 2004 was the first street protest organized solely to demand that President Mubarak step down. Between 500 and 1,000 activists gathered in front of the High Court building trying to dispel the fears prevent Egyptians from publicly demanding the Mubarak step down. Protesters with yellow sticker

emblazoned with “Kefaya” taped over their mouth remained largely silent. Literally meaning “enough,” Kefaya is an unofficial name of the Egyptian Movement for Change (*el-Haraka el-Masreyya men agl el-Taghyeer*) (El-Ghobashy, 2005). Kefaya was founded in November 2004 in anticipation of the 2005 presidential elections by 300 Egyptian intellectual from various ideological background (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [CEIP], 2010).

Many Egyptian activists, however, had been brought together even earlier during the second Intifada (Azimi, 2005). The protest in Tahrir Square on the first day of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was as much about Mubarak’s acquiescence to the United States as it was about the invasion itself (Azimi, 2005). Kefaya activists were able to turn this sentiment to an oppositional movement calling for the political reforms and the end to President Mubarak’s rule.

The street protests in Cairo and Alexandria in 2005 and 2006 were organized to a significant degree online by Kefaya (Figure 1). The first anti-Mubarak movement in history, Kefaya was also the first oppositional nonpartisan coalitional movement that had neither physical headquarters nor permanent meeting place. It spread news, hosted online forums, and coordinated activities through its main Website, Haraka-Masria.org, and through MisrDigital.com, which hosted “Egyptian Awareness,” the country’s first independent digital newspaper. Wael Abbas, a human rights activist and one of the key figures of the 2011 Egypt revolt, began blogging about government repression, human rights abuses, and corruption, on MisrDigital.com in February 2005. The Kefaya movement also informed and inspired the emergence of youth activism online on Facebook and Twitter starting in 2008. In fact, the April 6th Youth Movement, one of the leading youth groups in the 2011 Tahrir revolt was partly comprised of Kefaya Youth for Change bloggers and activists.

Kefaya’s use of information and communication technology

With its simple message, “enough,” Kefaya was able to mobilize and embrace diverse groups including judges, lawyers, journalists, writers, workers, farmers, women, the youth, and even children (Oweidat et al., 2008). It united several political parties from various ideological backgrounds, including Islamist (such as the Muslim Brotherhood), communist, liberal, and secularist. Inspired by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (Al-Anani, 2005), the movement was also able to carry peaceful street demonstrations that contrasted to the extremism that previously dominated the face of Middle East politics.

The initial success of Kefaya also resulted from the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Oweidat et al., 2008). Mobile phones and the Internet enhance a movement’s capacity to coordinate activity, respond to challenges, and allow the movement to become less dependent to mainstream media in reaching the public (Lim, 2004; Van de Donk et al., 2004). This is particularly in countries with hostile, state-controlled media such as Indonesia under the Suharto regime (Lim, 2004, 2006) and Egypt under the Mubarak regime (Howard, 2010). Learning from the 2003 anti-Iraq War protests, Kefaya made use of e-mails and text

messages to mobilize its rallies. It circumvented government control by publicizing its campaigns, circulating materials, and airing grievances online (Oweidat et al., 2005). This in turn contributed to a shared sense of purpose, and possibility—a critical factor in mobilizing protest (Bogad, 2005).

This process was amplified by Youth for Change within Kefaya. This group was intentionally created to reach the younger generation via the Internet and popular culture and to connect with Egyptian society at large by routinely linking online activism with street activism (Oweidat et al., 2008).

Kefaya in the blogosphere

The birth of Kefaya coincided with the beginning of blogging era in Egypt. There were only about 40 bloggers in Egypt prior to 2005. While few in number, these bloggers made up a vibrant alternative political sphere that was committed to individual rights and national unity (Radsch, 2008). By 2005, the number of bloggers had increased to about 400 and by September 2006 they jumped to more than 1,800 (Radsch, 2008; Zuckerman, 2006).

The online forums that were popular among activists prior to 2005 were replaced by blogs which quickly matured to provide the Kefaya movement with new opportunities. These blogs enabled Kefaya to expand what Tilly (1986, p. 4) has referred to as the “repertoire of contention,” that is, the range of strategies, methods, tools, and tactics that group members use to make claims on other individuals or groups. Kefaya made use of its members’ and supporters’ blogs before, during, and after the protests. The Internet and blogging were used in particular to amplify and extend conventional modes of social action. Blogs were used to mobilize street protests, to provide reports from the streets countering state-controlled media interpretations of the protests that sought to capitalize on conflicts or incidents occurring within in the protests (MIT TechTV, 2011).

In addition to campaigning, advertising, announcing, and reporting the movement and the scheduled protests, the emerging blogosphere created a space in which the inner circle of blogger-activists could deliberate freely among themselves. This further defined and constructed the movement’s meaning for participants. The symbiosis between Kefaya and the blogosphere “had created a new form of public engagement that was both subversive to the state and empowering to the public” (Radsch, 2008, p. 8).

Before Kefaya, oppositional movements in Egypt were polarized along political and religious orientations. The Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood party represented a right-wing Islamist perspective, while the Wafd and Al-Ghad (Tomorrow) parties reflected liberal secular ideals, and the Egyptian Communist Party was left-wing secularist. These groups were generally disconnected from each other. Blogging, however, brought together otherwise unconnected individuals with different ideologies and backgrounds and thus contributed to the expansion of the oppositional network. By linking to each other’s blogs and by referencing or commenting on one another’s posts, they created a *brokerage* (McAdam, Tarrow,

& Tilly, 2001) that functioned allowed people to organize and assimilate their experiences as well as to deliberate in public ways that went beyond existing ideological boundaries (Lim, 2009).

The decline of Kefaya

Kefaya provided the important model of dissent, but ultimately failed to reach beyond a rather small group of intellectuals based largely in Cairo (Azimi, 2005; Shehab, 2005). While successfully labeling its movement with a simple message “enough,” Kefaya’s narrative was elusive and abstract. It was dominated by discourse on human rights and democracy—focusing on judicial independence, labor issues, religious violence, discrimination, and women’s rights. It was too far removed from the problems Egyptians faced on daily basis. Predictably, Kefaya struggled with fragmentation and conflicts from within its ranks and, according to online press accounts, was unable to find a middle ground between liberals and Islamists (El-Sayed, 2006).

There were also disputes over tactics between the generation of Kefaya members and the Youth for Change, especially over the use of “vigilante street tactics” (Azimi, 2005). Khaled Abdel-Hamid, one of the architects of these tactics, argued that going to the streets regularly and connecting with the ordinary Egyptians was the best way to reach young people. He stated, “Our job is to link young people’s daily problems to the government, to explain to people that they have certain rights and someone has responsibility to listen to their demands. The linkages are not intuitive to them. Our job is to uncover those links, to get the idea of reform on the table” (Azimi, 2005). Older members of Kefaya, moreover, were criticized for having been co-opted by intellectual discourse that failed to translate into a more inclusive and understandable movement for regular Egyptians.

In spite of a significant increase in the number of blogger-activists between 2005 and 2007, conversations and ideas continued to be circulated only within an inner circle of activists and sympathizers. One reason, of course, was that the Internet still reached only about 10% of the Egyptian population. With such limited network, Kefaya found it difficult to survive the government’s intimidation and overt attacks. These attacks included arresting bloggers. During the judicial reform protest in 2006, about 200 Kefaya activists were arrested (MIT TechTV, 2011). Activism in the streets, common during Kefaya’s first year, became less frequent and by the end of 2006 Kefaya has largely disappeared from the streets, shifting instead to closed rooms and satellite channels (El-Sayed, 2006). Although Kefaya had taken advantage of regional/global media such as AlJazeera, its use of the limited Internet was not enough to fight against the state-controlled mainstream media. By 2007, the movement was in decline (Figure 1).

Post-Kefaya online activism

Even though Kefaya itself became inactive, its bloggers continued to communicate, deliberate, and spread information online. As observed by Radsch (2008, p. 8), “While Kefaya may have nurtured the growth of the blogosphere during the activist

phase, its decline as a political force did not coincide with the decline of blogging.” The number of bloggers continued to grow as street protests were deemed illegal and police brutality became widespread.

But by late 2007, the crackdown on Kefaya and Muslim Brotherhood was extended to the blogosphere (Lynch, 2007). Bloggers were now arrested not for their street activism, but rather for content of their blogs. The arrest of 24-year-old Kareem Amer in November 2006 marked the beginning of what has been termed as Egyptian state’s “War on Bloggers” (Younis, 2007). This war further ignited the resistance and helped shift the discussions in the blogosphere from the intellectual discourse on democracy and human rights of Kefaya to a more tangible issue, the torture and abuse of Egyptian citizens. Bloggers started publicizing stories on Egyptian police brutality by posting videos and photos of torture on their blogs. Wael Abbas’ Misr Digital blog quickly became the main repository of such materials. By 2009 Egyptian bloggers constituted the largest single structural cluster in the Arabic blogosphere (Etling, Kelly, Faris, & Palfrey, 2010).

The April 6th Youth Movement: Joining labor and reaching apolitical youth

The April 6th Youth, named for its call for a general strike on April 6, 2008, represented young Egyptians of varying political orientations and was the first opposition group to make use of Facebook (April 6th Youth, 2011). The group itself was formed in 2007 in response to the resurgence in the Egyptian labor movement (MIT TechTV, 2011; Wright, 2011). Organized labor had once been an important force but had been repressed during the Sadat and Murbarak regimes. However, massive labor protests came back on stage in 2004, arguably triggered by the emergence of Kefaya movement in the same year (CEIP, 2010). On December 7, 2006, a wildcat strike of 24,000 workers broke at Misr Spinning in El-Mahallah El-Kubra. The strike triggered a wave of labor protests across Egypt, making it the biggest protest movement since the 1950s (Bassiouny & Said, 2008; Geiser, 2010; Lynch, 2011). These protests were important not only for their size and inclusiveness, but also because other anti-Mubarak street protests had been suppressed following the decline of Kefaya, the renewal of the Emergency Law, and the escalation of police brutality.

Ahmed Maher, the founder of the April 6th Youth movement, became a labor activist in 2007. His goal was to expand the labor protest into a broader popular movement, spreading the strikes and transforming them into general prodemocracy movement (MIT Tech TV, 2011). However, when labor strikes were quashed, Maher then turned to the Internet as an alternative vehicle for mobilizing dissent (Wright, 2011). In March 2008, Maher and friends created the April 6th Youth Movement’s Facebook group to support the workers in El-Mahalla El-Kubra (Kirk, 2011), an industrial town who were planning to strike on 6 April 2008. The group was later transformed to become the most dynamic anti-Mubarak movement.

While it differed in strategy, this youth movement was very much rooted in the earlier Kefaya movement. Several leaders of this youth movement had been part of

Kefaya. Ahmad Maher, the founder and a leading organizer of the April 6th Youth, began his political engagement in 2005 by joining Kefaya as one of the Youth for Change organizers. Waleed Rashed, another founder of the movement, also had been involved in the earliest wave of Kefaya protests. Meanwhile, Mohamad Adel, the movement's spokesman, was arrested during the Kefaya protest in Tahrir Square on 15 March 2007 (Nicoducuire, 2007).

Embracing Facebook and introducing Twitter

The April 6th Movement carried on the strategy of Kefaya Youth for Change with its effective use of blogs, Flickr, YouTube, e-mails, and text messages. The two important tools it added were Facebook and Twitter, making April 6th Youth Movement one of the very first Egyptian groups strategically employing Facebook for social movement. The group started with only 300 Facebook users who were invited through e-mails, but within 3 days the number grew to 3,000 (MIT TechTV, 2011). Many of the April 6th Movement's early protests did not draw massive participations (see Figure 1: April 6th General Strike, A Day of Anger, Police Day protest, Against Emergency Law). Its first strike on 6 April 2008 brought a harsh response from the police. Nonetheless, the strike was arguably responsible for shutting down daily activity in parts of Egypt and was clearly successful in drawing national and international attention (Faris, 2009).

The Movement's Facebook group had grown to 70,000 members by early 2009, a remarkable figure given that the total number of Facebook users in Egypt at that moment was less than 900,000. Most of these members had not been politically active before. Ironically, it was the arrest of the movement's cofounder, Esraa Abdel Fatah, that catapulted membership to new heights. The detainment drew the attention of some in the mainstream Egyptian media and helped popularize the movement. Some youth joined the group for its political message, but most, clicked "join" because it was trendy to be in the group led by "Esraa the Facebook girl" (MIT TechTV, 2011). She was a symbol of political resistance, but, more importantly, she had become a digital celebrity for urban youth. It was this ability to draw media attention that incited the crackdown and subsequent strikes were not as successful, as evidenced by a failed strike in April 2009 (Faris, 2009).

Through Facebook, the April 6th Movement had transformed the oppositional movement to be more inclusive and to embrace participatory culture. Many young Egyptians joined the group, not because they were political to begin with, but because they were curious or because friends asked them to join. Some joined simply because clicking is easy. This large online presence, however, did not translate into offline political action. Some observers argued that the movement's message did not resonate with a sufficient number of Egyptians and that not enough on-the-ground organizing had been done (Faris, 2009). In other words, the April 6th Movement failed to offer a unifying political narrative. It also failed to reach more audiences beyond its Facebook page. Elsewhere I argue that *intermodality*, the overlapping of

networks of various media is necessary for a social movement to move beyond its online following to a larger audience (Lim, 2005).

April 6th Youth Movement had also reportedly learned about Twitter from protestors in the Iranian revolt and became the first opposition group to employ in Egypt. In September 2010, they utilized the “#orabi2010” hashtag to recruit and mobilize the Orabi (“No to succession”) demonstrations to protest President Mubarak’s plan to hand power to his son Gamal. Although the Twitter effort was able to circumvent tracking by police, it was not successful in generating a wave of mass protest. Nonetheless, it did successfully introduce a new tactic into the landscape of activism in Egypt and thus contributed immensely to the future of digital activism, particularly in the 2011 revolt that was now only months away.

We are all Khaled Said: Iconic figure, shared emotion, and shared identity defining

The launch of Arabic Facebook in 2009 had catapulted the Facebook users in Egypt from approximately 900,000 in January 2009 to nearly 5 million in late 2010. (The Telegraph, 2009; Wright, 2011) The Facebook group “We are all Khaled Said” emerged in the midst of this growth in June 2010. This group was created to bring the death of Khaled Said—a handsome, educated, middle-class young Egyptian—into public attention. On 6 June 2010, a 28-year-old Said was seized by the Egyptian police at an Internet café in Alexandria and beaten to death in the street (Wright, 2011). The police had initially claimed that Said was involved in drug dealing and that his death was drug-related. Online sources suggested a different story. Said was reportedly targeted because he was in possession of video footage showing police officer sharing the spoils of a drug bust (Chick, 2010). Graphic images of his facial injuries were circulated on blogs, Facebook, and Youtube to support this story.

We are all Khaled Said quickly became the most popular dissident Facebook group in Egypt. Its administrator called on followers to go to the streets of Alexandria and Cairo to protest Said’s brutal murder. And so they did. Large numbers took to the streets carrying posters juxtaposing pictures of a smiling Khaled Said in a gray sweatshirt with a hood and of his battered corpse (Wright, 2011). From June to August 2010, the group held five silent protests involving thousands of Egyptians, including the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mohamed ElBaradei (Figure 1).

“We are all Khaled Said” was not the first group to organize resistance to the Mubarak regime. As we have seen, previous movements that had already created a basis for a mass political action. Indeed the story of Khaled Said can also be read as a culmination of the longstanding online campaign against torture waged on blogs such as Wael Abbas’s *Egyptian Awareness*, Nael Atef’s *Torture in Egypt*, and *Bloggers Against Torture*. However, the critical new important element introduced by the “We are all Khaled Said” movement was a strong symbolic representation, an iconic figure to fight against the authorities. The story and images of the torture of Khaled Said

personified the injustice and brutalities of the Mubarak regime and thus intensified the emotion of the oppositional movement. The chilling “juxtaposition of pictures of Said alive and dead” put a face on what living under Mubarak’s Emergency Law one’s entire life might mean (Eltahawy, 2010, para. 14).

Social networks are crucial for mobilization, but injustices that provoke shared resentment and anger are often necessary to overcome barriers of fear and trigger actual participation in collective action and social movements (Yang, 2007). The death of Khaled Said as a martyr was just such a trigger. The group was able to unify its followers by providing a solid “schemata of interpretation” that enabled individuals “to locate, perceive, identify and label” what had happened (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). By propagating the message that “We” are all Khaled Said, the group was successful in identifying who the “we” was who could make change.

This collective identity was characterized by a sense of shared victimization as well. The group endorsed “frame amplification” that fortified the negative identity of their target, Mubarak (Gamson, 1992, p. 135). Through Facebook, the group effectively overcame the political resistance to disaffected youth and engaged those who did not care much about politics, such as the soccer fans who were among the most organized participants in the 2011 demonstrations (Dorsey, 2011). In other words, Facebook facilitated the expansion of the oppositional movement beyond strong network ties to include individuals with weaker ties to the movement and to each other. This is consistent with previous findings illustrating how digital technologies help maintain strong and weak network ties for political mobilization in Islamic countries (Howard, 2010).

Tunis, Twitter, cabs, and coffee shops

Tahrir Square had been the site of protests before 25 January and indeed protests had occurred previously on that day. National Police Day, which falls on January 25, had been the occasion for annual protests. For example, the April 6th Youth Movement organized a “Day of Mourning” through Facebook to protest torture and police brutality on 25 January 2010. These protests, though, were never explicitly focused on overthrowing the regime. The Tunisian revolt refocused the Egyptian oppositional movement on the goal of overthrowing Mubarak and fueled hopes that such a goal was possible. Ahmad Maher of the April 6th Youth Movement said “After the revolution in Tunisia, we are able to market the idea of change in Egypt. People now want to seize something” (Fleishman, 2011).

The April 6th Youth Movement made the first call for participation in the 25 January protests on various social media and cooperated closely with We are all Khaled Said Facebook group. Online posters, banners, and viral videos were disseminated on Facebook, e-mails, and blogs. The hashtag #Jan25th was used to mobilize protesters on Twitter. When Wael Ghonim invited We are all Khaled Said’s followers to protest on January 25, more than 50,000 clicked “yes” (Wright, 2011, p. 33).

In days leading to 25 January, mobilization efforts were geared toward reaching regular Egyptians through text messages and offline means such as flyers, pamphlets, and words of mouth. The April 6th Movement disseminated 20,000 flyers before the protest. Taxi drivers were as important as Facebook in spreading the word to potential demonstrators. Waleed Rashed, the co-founder of the April 6th Youth Movement, said that he started “informing” taxi drivers about the #Jan25th protest as early as 15 January:

Every time I was in a cab, I would call Ahmed on my cell phone and talk loudly about planning a big protest in Tahrir Square for January 25th, because I knew that they couldn't stop themselves talking about what they'd overheard. Eventually, on January 23rd, a cabbie asked if I'd heard about this big demonstration that was happening in two days. (MIT TVTech, 2011)

Similar stories were told during the overthrow of Suharto in Indonesia in 1998. Cabs and food vendors functioned as hubs through which information flowed to and from the Indonesian student movement, (Lim, 2006). In Egypt, the cabs and coffee shops of Cairo played a significant role disseminating information about the Tahrir protests. Along mosques and soccer fields, these network nodes reached many people both at the center and the fringes of urban areas. The political resistance developed by a small group of young activists, the social media elites, was thus disseminated to a wider urban society through informal networks (Zhuo et al., 2011).

By 25 January 2011, the oppositional network was large enough, the unifying repertoire of contention was identified, the metanarrative of the movement was strong, and the connection between online activism and the streets of Cairo was established. The first day drew a crowd of 80,000. Subsequent protests grew continually larger and larger. After the successful first day, activists had to sustain the movement and survive the crackdown and physical attacks from the authorities. Groups such as Muslim Brotherhood's Youth Wing and other political activists and parties are key in mobilizing, online and offline. The Muslim Brotherhood had refused to join officially, but members participated as individuals. Their experience in surviving the Mubarak regime and in providing social services to Egypt's poor was essential in holding the revolution's infrastructure together (Kirk, 2011). In addition, the role of Cairo militant soccer supporters was also important. Their experience in regular battles with security forces and rival fan groups had given them a resilience from which benefitted other protesters at Tahrir square (Dorsey, 2011).

Mobile phones and the more traditional media were extensively used to communicate and coordinate protests. Activist leaders and average participants used Twitter, Al Jazeera's social media feeds, and the interactive Websites of CNN and the BBC to reach beyond Tahrir square to a global audience. They globalized the movement and won international support to protect and sustain the uprising. Social media, especially Twitter, and global media allowed a worldwide audience to listen

to the voice of the Egyptian opposition rather than to the state's point of view. When the government temporarily shut down the Internet, the effect was to ignite even more resistance, domestically and internationally.

Conclusion

The role of social media in the Egypt revolt can be understood through its relation to social networks and mobilization mechanisms. In Egypt's oppositional movements, social media provided space and tool for the formation and the expansion of networks that the authoritarian government could not easily control. It did so by sustaining both longstanding networks of labor opposition, by facilitating new connections among middle-class youth opposed to the regime, and by supporting the circulation of stories about regime repression and police brutality. Social media functioned to broker connections between previously disconnected groups, to spread shared grievances beyond the small community of activist leaders, and to globalize the reach and appeal of the domestic movement for democratic change.

In achieving these goals, the activities had to overcome limitations of particular technologies, identifying right issues, and craft the shared repertoires of contention. They also had to frame the issues by transforming abstract, complex concerns into a simpler, more tangible narrative that resonated with everyday experience. This entailed focusing the oppositional narrative around victimization and injustice by identifying a few key symbols and iconic figures that would have currency across multiple social networks. A complex sociotechnical system was created not only between social media and the more traditional media, but also between mediated and face-to-face networks.

Social media helped a popular movement for political change to expand the sphere of participation, especially by reaching the country's unemployed and disaffected urban youth who had, in McAdam's (1986) terms, high biographical availability. These media were not the only or even the principal source of information of political mobilization that led to the downfall of Mubarak, but they fit served well and fit with other information networks that were somewhat beyond the regime's control. Although social media helped create fertile context for revolution and were essential during the heady days of Tahrir Square protests in early 2001, their ultimate role continues to play out in the unfolding future of the Egyptian revolution.

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网络点击、出租车和咖啡馆：埃及 2004 年至 2011 年的社交媒体和抗议活动

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【摘要：】

如果将 Tahrir 广场事件放在媒体使用与近期兴起的网上激进主义这个大背景下，我们对 2011 年初埃及暴乱中社交媒体和政治变革之间关系则有更深的认识。几年来，埃及最成功的社会运动，包括 Kefaya 事件，四六青年事件和“我们都是萨伊德”事件，都是利用社交媒体来扩大心怀不满的埃及人的网络，来调解激进分子之间的关系，来使资源全球化，以及笼络反对派领导人。社交媒体使得这些反对派领导人拥有手段来塑造争夺的剧目、来框架问题 和宣扬统一的符号，将网络激进主义转化成网络之外的抗议。

Clics, taxis et cafés : les médias sociaux et les mouvements d'opposition en Égypte de 2004 à

2011

Merlyna Lim

Pour approfondir notre compréhension de l'association entre les médias sociaux et le changement politique lors du soulèvement égyptien du début de 2011, les événements de la place Tahrir doivent être replacés dans un plus large contexte d'utilisation des médias et dans l'histoire récente de l'activisme en ligne. Pendant plusieurs années, les mouvements sociaux les plus efficaces en Égypte, incluant Kifaya, le Mouvement de la Jeunesse du 6-Avril et « Nous sommes tous Khaled Saïd », ont été ceux qui ont utilisé les médias sociaux pour élargir les réseaux d'Égyptiens mécontents, négocier les relations entre les activistes et globaliser les ressources et la portée des leaders de l'opposition. Les médias sociaux offraient à ces leaders de l'opposition les moyens de créer des répertoires de controverse, de cadrer les enjeux, de propager des symboles unificateurs et de transformer l'activisme en ligne en manifestations hors ligne

Mots clés : Égypte, activisme, mouvement social, médias sociaux, Facebook, Twitter, blogues, printemps arabe

Klicks, Taxis und Kaffeehäuser: Soziale Medien und die Oppositionsbewegung in Ägypten zwischen 2004 und 2011

Um unser Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen sozialen Medien und politischem Wandel während des Aufstandes in Ägypten Anfang 2011 zu vertiefen, müssen die Ereignisse auf dem Tahrir Platz in einen Kontext der Mediennutzung und der jüngeren Geschichte des Online-Aktivismus neu eingeordnet werden. Über viele Jahre hinweg zeichneten sich die erfolgreichsten sozialen Bewegungen in Ägypten, wie Kefaya, die Jugend des 6. April und Wir sind alle Khaled Said, dadurch aus, dass sie soziale Medien nutzten, um die Netzwerke entfremdeter Ägypter zu erweitern, Kontakte zwischen Aktivisten zu vermitteln, Ressourcen zu globalisieren und Oppositionsführer zu erreichen. Soziale Medien versorgten die Oppositionsführer mit den Mitteln, ihre Repertoires der Auseinandersetzungen auszugestalten, das Thema zu framen, verbindende Symbole zu propagieren und Online-Aktivismus in Offline-Proteste zu überführen.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Ägypten, Aktivismus, soziale Bewegung, soziale Medien, Facebook, Twitter, Blogging, Arabischer Frühling

클릭. 택시들, 그리고 커피 숍들: 소셜미디어와 이집트에서의 반대 운동, 2004-2011

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요약

2011년 초반에 이집트의 대중봉기 기간동안의 소셜미디어와 정치적 변화에 관한 관계에 대한 이해를 높이기 위하여, Tahrir 광장에서의 이벤트들은 보다 큰 미디어 사용과 최근의 온라인 행동주의의 문맥에서 논의되어 져야 한다. 여러해동안, 이집트에서 가장 성공적인 사회운동들, 예들들어 Kefaya, the April 6th Youth, 그리고 We are all Khaled Said 들은 모두 소셜미디어를 사용하여 네트워크를 확대하였다. 소셜미디어는 특히 야권지도자들로 하여금 반내주장을 공유하고, 이슈들을 프레임하고, 단일화된 상징들을 전파하고, 온라인 행동주의를 오프라인 항쟁으로 이끌 수 있는 수단을 제공하였다.

Los Clics, los Taxis y las Casas de Café: Los Medios Sociales y los Movimientos de Oposición en Egipto, 2004-2011

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Resumen

Para profundizar nuestro entendimiento de la relación entre los medios sociales y el cambio político durante la revuelta Egipcia de comienzos del 2011, los eventos en la plaza de Tahrir deben ser situados en el contexto general del uso de los medios y la historia reciente del activismo online. Por varios años, los movimientos sociales exitosos en Egipto, incluyendo Kefaya, la Juventud del 6 de Abril, y Somos Todos Khaled Said, fueron los que usaron los medios sociales para expandir las redes de descontento de los Egipcios, agentes de las relaciones entre los activistas, y globalizar los recursos y el alcance de los líderes de la oposición. Los medios sociales solventaron a estos líderes de la oposición los recursos para dar forma a los repertorios de contención, los encuadres de los asuntos, la propagación de símbolos unificadores, y la transformación del activismo online hacia las protestas offline.