
Citizen Journalists and Mass Self-Communication in Egypt

The Use of New Media as Counter Power During the Egyptian Revolution



Author MSc Thesis

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Abstract

During the first months of 2011 mass demonstrations in the Arab world was front page news. In January and February 2011 Egyptians demonstrated 18 days and ultimately Mubarak was forced to resign. Revolutions happened before, so there is really nothing new under the sun, but what was remarkable about the reporting on the demonstrations was the attention for new media, such as Facebook and Twitter, which was predominantly used by young people during the demonstrations. Some people even called it a Facebook revolution, which illustrates the importance of new media during the Egyptian revolution.

Since revolutions happened before Facebook was invented, this thesis explores the *role* of new media during the Egyptian revolution. This research aims to find out how people used it, what type of new media they used, when and how they felt about this. For this, the theory of mass self-communication by Castells forms the basis. The devices used to communicate –hardware-, the practices to communicate –software- and the organizational forms were analysed. Interviews and tweets were the main methods to obtain the data, as well as literature research.

The results of this research show that new media enables people to exchange experiences and facilitates local-global connections, connections between people on Tahrir square in Cairo and elsewhere in the (Arab) world. New media facilitates horizontal connectivity in social mobilization without geographical restrictions. Virtual networks, which exist on the internet and communicate via new media, lead to expressions in the streets in Egypt, but also to real and virtual support from other places around the world. New media provides an open space where (young) Egyptians could speak openly. New media were used in practical ways to organize protests and motivated people as well. It enabled citizen journalists to send their own messages, independent of other broadcast stations. Besides new media, traditional mass media such as TV played an important role in strengthening the loop of mass self-communication during the revolution in Egypt. Messages from citizen journalists were broadcasted and in that way reached the majority of the Egyptians.

Based on the findings, new media is a tool that can be used to facilitate social change, but ultimately the people who use the technology are the real drivers of change. The technology enables people to communicate independently, to connect and create networks. This is related to the development of political and social autonomy, which are important when promoting social change. New media has shown its potential, but socio-economic and political factors preceding the revolution in Egypt should be taken into account. During the Egyptian revolution traditional mass media, such as Al Jazeera strengthened the loop of mass self-communication. Mass self-communication has to be situated in relation to traditional mass media.

Key words: new media, mass media, citizen journalism, Egypt.

Preface and Acknowledgements

My interest for the Arab world was raised because of my interest in international affairs and continuing reports about the region in the media. The strategic importance of the region and geopolitical interests make the Middle East a key area in global politics. My journey through the Middle East during the summer of 2010, just before the first demonstrations in the area started, extended my interest in the region. During the revolution in Egypt I closely followed the news. A little while after that I was looking for a thesis subject and the Egyptian revolution and new media was something that I wanted to learn more about.

This thesis would not have been for what it is now without the help of a number of people. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors Otto Hospes and Rico Lie for their remarks and suggestions. This has helped me a lot during the process of this thesis.

I am also sincerely grateful for the assistance and cooperation I received from my interviewees, the Egyptians who participated in my interviews in Cairo, bought me tea and openly shared their stories. I appreciate the time and effort they spent providing me with useful information and new contacts. Also my friends from Cairo, with whom I was able to discuss my research and other Egyptian experiences as well. They helped me a great deal with their assistance in getting around, showing me places in Cairo and simply their friendship.

I would also like to mention my friends from the library who supported me with coffee and advice on the research process and writing a thesis.

For the reader, I hope you enjoy reading this ‘master piece’ which finalizes my student time at Wageningen University; A new chapter with new challenges and experiences will open up, but lessons learned in Wageningen won’t be forgotten.

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Introduction

Hosni Mubarak, Anwar Sadat, and Gamal Abdel Nasser are having tea in the afterlife. Mubarak asks Nasser, 'How did you get up here?' 'Poison,' Nasser answers. Mubarak turns to Sadat. 'What about you?' he asks. 'An assassin's bullet,' says Sadat. Sadat and Nasser turn to Mubarak, 'and what about you?' Mubarak replies: 'Facebook.'

1.1 Background

This joke has been going around since Mubarak resigned. While amusing, this joke very much characterizes the perception of the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution.¹ Some see new media as the main driver behind the uprisings in the Arab world, others are sceptical about the role of new media, and point towards the increased possibilities for repressive regimes to guard and oppress their citizens.

The uprising in Egypt is not the first uprising which is labelled as what Morozov (2012) calls 'cyber utopianism': *'a naïve believe in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside'* (Morozov, 2012, p. xiii). The revolt in Iran, in 2009, was quickly labelled as 'Twitter Revolution', and celebrated as the victory of tweets over bullets. The outcome of the Iranian revolution is known, Iranian demonstrators were arrested and the backbone of the movement was broken by the Revolutionary Guard.

On the one hand the internet enables people to access information about abuse or repression and can be used as a tool by activists. On the other hand it also opens the *'gates of entertainment while globalization opened the gates of consumerism'* (Morozov, 2012, p. 72). It is slightly naïve to believe that open or better access to information via the internet goes hand in hand with an increase in political activism, Internet can also be used as a distraction from daily life instead of a means of social or political action: the more open the internet, the easier the search for entertainment as well. Perhaps the presence of internet and new media does not create a revolution, it only facilitates the work of activists?

One should be careful for drawing too hasty conclusions, and using euphoric terms as Facebook revolution (Naughton, 2011). However, it would be irrational to suggest that the different types of new media, such as social networking sites, blogs and content sharing sites (such as YouTube or Flickr) played no role in the 2011 revolutionary movements in Egypt. Quite the opposite, new types of media provide for ways of communication once unimaginable in for long isolated and oppressed societies. After the revolution the streets of Cairo were covered with banners and graffiti stating things like 'Thank you Facebook' and 'Facebook = January 25'. Online activists such as Wael Ghonim (2012) claimed that thanks to the internet 'the power of the people is greater than the people in

¹ The use of the term revolution in relation to the Egyptian uprising of 2011 is contested. There are reservations about the fact that many elements of the old regime are still in place. But one could note that the Egyptian demonstrators have succeeded in reaching their primary objectives, namely bringing down Mubarak and preventing his son from taking over.

power' (Ghonim, 2012). The question is where to place new media in this debate of extremes, what role does new media play for activists who use it to try to change society?

1.2 Problem Definition

Nowadays it is almost impossible to think of a world without new media, and in this thesis new media, citizen journalism and the Egyptian revolution are the discussed subjects. This thesis focuses on the role of (different types of) new media during the Egyptian revolution, and looks into citizen journalism and social change. Opinions about the use of social media during the Egyptian revolution differ, and there is a need for a deeper understanding of the potentials, obstacles and mechanisms of the use of new media in Egypt. Previous research on the use of new media during the Arab uprisings suggests that there is little doubt that new media played a role in the protests across the Middle East. The literature study below elaborates on different types of research about (new) media and the Egyptian revolution.

The Arab and specifically the Egyptian media landscape changed significantly in the years before the revolution. From 2003 onwards citizen journalism increasingly started to play a role in the region's media landscape, especially during peak political moments such as the Iraq war, the 2006 Lebanon crisis or the 2008/2009 Gaza crisis (Hamdy, 2010). The rise of grass-roots or citizen journalism contributed to the shaping of public opinion and attracted attention from government and audiences. Especially during the Gaza crisis, citizen journalism, or citizen generated content, became noticed as access to the conflict was limited for traditional journalists (Hamdy, 2010).

Online communities have been researched, in order to gain insight in the use of new media. Egypt has a large and active blogging scene, and within a short period members became known for their involvement in political activism (Hamdy, 2009). According to Hamdy (2012) bloggers can be seen as a social and political force. Blogs are used to criticise the regime and mobilize public opinion against it (Mohamed, 2012). Bloggers have impact on politics and media, and were able to expand networks and provide spaces for freedom of expression. They are seen as citizen journalists, since they produce their own flow of communication and are disrupting dominant media monopolies (Hamdy, 2009). During the revolution in Egypt the media landscape enabled cyber activism which ignited public mobilization, assisted civic engagement and stimulated citizen journalism (Khamis, 2011). Khamis and Vaughn (2011) state that the Egyptian media landscape included social media which provided instruments which could be used as tools to promote public commitment; social media could unleash a social force which has the potential to serve as an incentive for social change. Blogs and forums allowed free speech and networking opportunities for activists. This supported the capability of the protesters to plan, organize and execute protests. Social media enabled citizen journalism, ordinary citizen could document in their own words and images things that were going and enabled them to spread this and other information about activities to other Egyptians and regional and international media (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

Social media, and particularly Facebook, provided new sources of information and were crucial in the decision if people would join the protests in Egypt (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). The researchers asked how protesters learned about protests, and how they planned and documented their involvement. People learned about the protests through interpersonal communication, such as Facebook, phone

or face to face communication. According to this research protesters distributed materials/visuals of the demonstrations, and Facebook was the most important way to do this. The regime could not easily control these flows of information. The fact that protesters distributed materials points to the rise of citizen journalism, social media reduced the threshold for mass expression of the opposition during the protests in Tahrir in 2011 (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).

Although social media played a role during the Egyptian revolution it was not dominant in the demonstrations, but it may have played an important role in connecting and motivating protesters (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). Wilson and Dunn (2011) suggest a relation between the transnational discourse on Twitter and the grounded protest activities. Geographical dynamics and high rates of motivational content made a substantial contribution to the protesters determination (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). The digital call for change made by Egyptians was assisted by connections to global and diasporic publics (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012).

Research on the rhythms of news on Twitter via the #egypt hash tag has been done (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). Through a computational discourse analysis volume and content patterns, topics, and prominent frames in the Twitter posts were identified. It suggests that the stream of information on Twitter included news, opinion and emotion (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). Through Twitter stories were told, that affected how Egyptians and others viewed the event. News via Twitter reveals a difference between tweeting news and traditional journalism. Posts on Twitter are instantly but not necessarily compatible with fact checking. News tweets of the Egyptian revolution on Twitter offer action, drama, proximity and relevance. These stories are made through practices of repetition and layers of agency that are networked, complex and diffused, but do not always produce a coherent narrative (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). The #egypt hash tag was fuelled by key bloggers and activists, who use social networks because other forms of expression are censored or not accessible. The researchers introduce the term 'affective news streams', to describe how news is collaboratively constructed from individual experience, opinion and emotion in an ambient news environment (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). The affective aspect sustains involvement, connection and cohesion and underlines the hidden agency of the affective and the networked.

Besides content of new media messages, the mechanisms of social networking that facilitate political change and the Egyptian revolution are also studied and combined with brief insights into the political, economic, geographic and religious situation and the technological infrastructure of Egypt. In research on new media and the Egyptian revolution social networking, the 'use of specific types of websites focused on creation and growth of online social networks which allow users to interact' (Coyle and Vaugh, 2008, p. 13 in Attia, Aziz, Friedman, & Elhousseiny, 2011), is coupled to change and behaviour. Five variables from the social networking theory that affect people's behaviour are included. These are: trust, word of mouth, relationship, loyalty and value. Attia et al. (2011) state that perceptions of these variables are likely to affect individual use of social network tools, attitude formation towards political change, behavioural intention and ultimately actual behaviour. Attia, et al. (2011) argue that when people lose their trust in the government interpersonal communication becomes more important. Relationships with other users of social networks in Egypt developed during the struggle for change. The available social networking tools were used to understand what was going on and to support each other in their efforts to bring political change.

Social movements and their impact are also studied by exploring the use of social media during the revolution from a resource mobilization theoretical perspective. Resource mobilization theory is based on the idea that resources, such as time, money, skills and social or political opportunities, are critical to the success of social movements. Social media introduced speed and interactivity in social movements. During the revolution social media played an instrumental role, it helped activists to receive and send information and connect with other activists in Egypt and abroad. It encouraged them and sympathy was offered through social media technologies from Egyptians, and rest of the world (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). The relationship between social media and political change in Egypt is also studied from a historical narratives perspective, the revolution is investigated and situated in a larger context of media use and recent history of online activism (Lim, 2012). Social media provided a space and tool for the formation and growth of linkages that were not easy to control. Ultimately the Egyptian regime failed to respond to the communities of opposition that merged online before the uprising of 2011 (Lim, 2012).

Several researchers studied the revolution from a mass media perspective (Fornaciari, 2012; Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012; Wilkins, 2012). The research elaborates on the changes in the Egyptian media landscape and the social and political contexts which contributed to the revolution in 2011, but predominantly go into discourses that were used by large broadcasting stations when reporting about the revolution.

The US media narrative or the 'Hollywood narrative', it simplifies a story in a tale of hero's , villains and victims, and frames the revolution as a Facebook revolution (Wilkins, 2012). The research focused on American channels and newspapers such as MSNBC, Fox news, CNN, New York Times and the way they reported the events. In their reports US media missed important groups such as labour unions, and the variation in the communication landscape more broadly, political resistance depends on human collective engagement instead of digital media (Wilkins, 2012).

Besides framing of the Egyptian revolution by US media, Fornaciari (2012) uses content analysis to investigate how Al Jazeera English and BBC framed the Egyptian revolution. The research shows that the broadcasters reported slightly different on the event. The main concerns raised were related to power differentials and the necessity to stop fights. Al Jazeera English tended to emphasize that the problem required urgent action, whereas the BBC was more likely to suggest solutions to the problem (Fornaciari, 2012).

Content of different types of Egyptian media are also used to analyse the framing of revolution. From Egypt's state-run, independent and social media a dataset of Arabic language is assembled, newspapers articles and social media posts published during the protests were collected. State run newspapers speak of a conspiracy against the state, warn for economic consequences and attribute blame and responsibility on others. On social media the events were described as 'a revolution of freedom and social justice' (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012). Independent newspapers used a combination of these perspectives. News on social media, posted by activists, was often more truthful than other media options, in spite of the presence of rumours, and it gained significant credibility during the revolution (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012).

In spite of the changes in the media landscape and the presence of social media Joya (2011) makes argument that the revolution has to be understood in the context of the neo-liberal economic direction that the Egyptian regime pursued in the past decades (Joya, 2011). The policies were carried out by a state which used repression and security forces against its citizens. Ultimately the economic, political and social policies lead to polarisation in the Egyptian society and triggered the breakdown of the regime (Joya, 2011; Lesch, 2011). These conditions became drivers for change and Boukhars frames the revolution as a call for dignity by people who were deprived of their freedom and self-respect (Boukhars, 2011).

Different theoretical as well as methodological approaches have been used in previous research. Where some researchers focused on changes in the media landscape, socio-economic circumstances or opposition movements, others looked into the content of blogs, Egyptian newspapers or the amount of tweets that were sent and from which place they were sent, but the theory of mass self-communication from Castells (2009) has not yet been used to look at the Egyptian revolution.

This research uses the theory of mass self-communication, the ability to reach a global audience with self-generated content, from Castells (2009) and studies the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution. It is important to note that this research does not assume that new media is the sole driver of the revolution in Egypt, the use of new media during the Egyptian revolution is assessed critically and in context. In this research mass self-communication and the creation or growth of networks are coupled to possibilities for societal change. This research follows the idea of amongst others Hamdy (2012) and assumes that citizen journalists are able to produce their own flow of communication and in that way possess agency. Communication networks and large broadcasters are researched in relation to the Egyptian revolution as well as new media, but the theory of Castells has yet to be applied. This research also pays attention to the interrelatedness between the revolution and other developments in the Egyptian society; it is placed in broader developments. Although interviews have only been conducted in Cairo, the focus of this thesis is more wide-ranging, the national context of Egypt is put into a regional or sometimes even international perspective.

As for the selected event, the Egyptian revolution is by far the most commented upon of all revolutionary movements and uprisings of the 'Arab spring'. Egypt is the biggest Arab state with the largest population, and a cradle of history, (popular) culture, music and media in the Middle East and politically one of the most influential countries in the Arab region (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012). The developments in 2011 form an inspiration to activists and revolutionaries all over the (Arab) world.

Being the first Arab state to topple its dictator, Tunisia could have been another interesting case. But Tunisia is an outlier in the Arab world for various reasons, namely: a small size of its territory and population, relatively high GDP, and secular orientation (even the Islamists call for the legality of drinking) and strong ties with former colonizer France.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of this research is twofold. On the one hand this research aims to use emerging theories on new media, in order to provide insight on the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution. On the other hand this research aims to reflect upon the emerging theories and discuss, revise, add or

modify the theory. Both the use of theories and the reflection on the theories aim to contribute to the scientific and political debate on the role of new media as a facilitator of change and are based on this diagnostic study of the Egyptian revolution.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the research objectives, the following main research question can be formulated:

What has been the role of mass self-communication practised by citizen journalists, as part of the Egyptian revolution?

Chapter 5 will address the various aspects of mass self-communication and related concepts, chapter 6 will elaborate on the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution.

1.5 Thesis Outline

This research on the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution starts in chapter 2 with the theoretical framework. The various concepts are elaborated and the conceptual framework is defined. The revolution happened all over Egypt, but due to time constraints interviews were only held in Cairo. The tweets used in this thesis are English tweets, which were downloaded and processed in this thesis. This is elaborated in chapter 3 as well as the methods of the various research strategies, the retrieved data and processing. In chapter 4 background information on the economic, social, military and political situation just before the revolution is given as well as a brief overview of the Egyptian media landscape. On top of that the Egyptian oppositional movements from the past decade are elaborated, the Tunisian revolution is shortly discussed and the course of the 18 day revolution of January/February 2011 is described. Chapter 5 and 6 show the analysis of the data collection. Chapter 7 presents the conclusion, discusses the results and limitations and finalizes with suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework the main concepts and theories that are used in the research are introduced. Firstly the concepts mass media and new media are clarified, after which the consequences of new media are explained. Besides this, the network theory of Castells will shortly be discussed, which is the adopted view in this research. This is followed by the explanation of the concept 'mass self-communication' and the phenomenon citizen journalists. Because the aim of this research is to investigate the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution, a process of social change, firstly the perspective of power in the global network society is elaborated after which the mechanism, the so called programmers and switchers, are explained. This indicates that global social networks that make use of global digital communication networks are a source of power and counter power in contemporary society. In other words; According to Castells the struggle between on the one hand corporate mainstream power and on the other hand emerging counter power reflects the current socio-political struggle and potential socio-political structural reconfigurations (social change) within the network society. This chapter finalizes with the conceptual framework.

2.1 Mass Media

Mass media refers to a number of media that are now long-established, such as newspapers/print, film, radio, audio and television. Mass media describes 'means of communication that operate on a large scale and involve and reach almost everyone in society to a greater or lesser degree' (McQuail, 2000, p. 4). Although some forms of interactivity were possible, mass communication used to be predominantly one directional. Despite the rapid and continuous growth of new media, there is little evidence that mass media are actually declining. Rather they are being supplemented and challenged to adapt by new media.

Castells defines several trends which are currently influencing the settings for communication. He emphasizes the technological development based on the digitalization of communication, with a leading role for the internet. Another trend is the creation of a few global multimedia networks through liberalization and privatization since the 1980s. This has consequences for the institutional structure and leads to commercialization of the media. There is also a cultural dimension, namely the contradictory development of a global culture as well as the rise of individualism (Castells, 2009). New media, and above all the internet, have become everyday technologies, which are embedded in society. As said, new media has not replaced older media, rather people's information and communication environments have become increasingly individualized, thereby integrating text, audio, images, video, broadcasting and other modes of communication and information sharing (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006).

2.2 New Media

There are different terms which point towards new media, and interactivity plays an important role. Definitions of new media extend beyond technical features, channels or content. A term that is being used is the term computer mediated communication, which McQuail defines as any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more computers (McQuail, 2005). This includes e-

mail, social networking as well as blogs and forums. Web 2.0 is another term, whereby the interactivity of the internet is emphasized. Sharing and collaboration via the internet are central aspects, and text, images, audio and video can all be used (Lachapelle, 2011). Lievrouw and Livingstone include technological as well as social, political and economic factors and define new media as 'information and communication technologies and their associated social contexts' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 2). This term consists of three components: 'the *artefacts or devices* used to communicate or convey information; *the activities and practices* in which people engage to communicate or share information; and the *social arrangements or organizational forms* that develop around those devices and practices' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 2).

Traditionally media research was dominated by three concepts, namely production, text and audience. New media requires rethinking the dependence within media research on theories of mass society. Instead of production, text and audience, *artefacts*, *practices* and *social arrangements* point towards the more socialized and culturally-embedded-in-society sides of new media (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). Note that there is no definitive relationship between these three components. Mass communication has struggled with the linear relationship between production, text and audience (production makes text, which have effects or impacts on audiences; in line with the sender-message-receiver model of communication). The term *ensemble* is sometimes used as well. This points specifically to the dynamic links and interdependencies between the three components; artefacts, practices and social arrangements. These dynamic interrelations are not infinitely flexible, and the use of the term infrastructure suggests that devices, practices and organizational forms and the relation among them can become routinized or institutionalized. They become embedded and taken for granted in everyday life (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006).

New media studies have been influenced by theories of post-industrial or post-modern society. The emphasis is on, as Golding states, 'the emergence of a new economic order characterised by the central importance of information and theoretical knowledge, and by a shift from a goods-producing to a service society' (Golding, 2000, p. 169). This shift can be seen in the diversity of message and content forms and interconnected social and technical networks. The relative orderly landscape of mass society has been transformed into a new and emerging environment of networks, relations and dynamics.

This is not to say that technology leads society (technological determinism). On the contrary, nowadays new media researchers are rather united in rejecting accounts in which technological innovation is the cause and society is the effect. They have adopted the counter-view that 'the technological, instead of being a sphere separate from social life, is part of what makes society possible, in other words, it is constitutive of society' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). This social determinist vision migrated to communication research in the 1980s. By the early 1990s it replaced the technologically deterministic 'new society' discourse which was common in communication research previously. The social determinist view has become the dominant perspective in new media studies, whereby the emphasis is on a synergy between technological development and social practices (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006).

For this research, the three components (artefacts, practices and organizational forms) of Lievrouw and Livingstone are selected because they are the most inclusive regarding all aspects of new media;

they take into account technological as well as social, political and economic factors namely the context in which they are used. The term computer mediated communication and web 2.0 do not include influences from the surrounding society.

The view of network society will be an important theory, because this view allows focusing on flows, relations, dynamics and the interactivity of the actors involved. However the agency of the communication technology itself must also be recognised, which is included in the network theory. But, ultimately it is the people with their culture and ways of expressing behind the technology that give the technology its meaning. The network theory enables interactivity for the actors, this creates virtual times and places and allows these actors to act, perceive and think simultaneously in global and local terms. For this, firstly the consequences of new media will be elaborated, these are related to the network theory.

2.3 Consequences of New Media & the Network Theory

The consequences of new media technologies differ from mass media systems. There are two particular effects that will be discussed, namely *ubiquity* and *interactivity*. The first effect is ubiquity, which is the sense that new media technologies affect everyone in the societies where they are used, even when not everyone in those societies is using them (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). In traditional workplace or household settings which were dominated by mass media, technologies were physically fixed and usually shared. Mobile technologies today are designed as personal tools that provide access to a variety of individualised content and communication options, wherever users are. The second effect is the inevitable sense of interactivity, which is a central element of new media. The selectivity and reach of media technologies enables users to choose information sources and interactions with other people (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). The possibility of interaction via new media constitutes a qualitatively and substantively different experience than what was possible via mass media. This has consequences for the attitude of the audience. Castells emphasizes the autonomy of the receiver, who has to interpret the messages he/she receives from various communication channels by engaging her/his own interaction with the message sender. This is done not in isolation, but the receivers (audience) interact and form a network of communication that produces shared meaning. The audience reads, watches, listens and *creates* news. This can be done through for example blogs, social networking and mailing lists where readers can respond (Tilley & Cokley, 2008). Thereby the shift from the one directional mass media towards an active audience that is carving out a meaning is becoming clear, which Castells refers to as the creative audience. The result of the interactivity is the rise of an interactive production of meaning (Castells, 2009).

There are two modes of social shaping which distinguish new media from more conventional, linear, mass media processes and effects. These are *recombination* and the *network metaphor*. Recombination is defined as the 'continuous hybridization of both existing technologies and innovations in interconnected technical and institutional networks' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 23). Recombination and a sense of novelty are associated with new media design and use. By the end of the 20th century, mass media had stabilized into a few major channels. The forms and genres of new media continue to branch and recombine and older media becomes content of newer media. It is a remediation whereby older media are absorbed or appropriated by the new media (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). The network metaphor suggests that 'the point to point network has become... a

broad, multiplex interconnection in which many points or nodes (persons, groups, machines, collections of information, organizations) are embedded' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 24). Networks are seen as a departure from the hierarchical, one-way distribution which is linked with mass media (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). Castells has written extensively about the network society.

Networks are an old form of social organization, and not a new phenomenon (Castells, 2000). According to Castells, networks are dynamic, self-evolving structures, which can grow and cooperate; a network society is a society whose structure is made around networks. They are powered by information technology and communicate in the same digital language. This self-generating process can be compared with molecular biology, whereby cells evolve and develop through their interaction in a network of networks, within the body and with their environment (Castells, 2000). In other words a network society is a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks. The social networks process and manage information and are using micro-electronic based technologies. The social structures are organizational arrangements of humans in relationships, expressed through communication. But it is not purely technology that defines modern society, but also cultural, economic and political factors that make up and shape the network society. This modifies, either raises or hinders, the outcome in processes of production, experience, power and culture. The organization of its components (individuals, groups, organizations) is no longer tied to particular times and places; The network society is both global and local, but this does not mean that everyone is included. It is spread uneven across the globe, but everyone is affected by the processes that take place in the global networks (Castells, 2009). Aided by information and communication technology they can transcend and create virtual times and places and act, perceive and think simultaneously in global and local terms. The network society works with inclusion/exclusion logic, and boundaries of a network programme change when social actors act and modify them in the direction of their interest. In the end the local can become connected to the global as a node in alternative global networks constructed by social movements (Castells, 2009).

Communication today differs from mass media processes and effects in that it is recombinant, networked, ubiquitous and interactive. This new form of communication is captured by the concept mass self-communication, introduced by Castells and explained below.

2.4 Mass Self-Communication

Castells calls the new form of communication mass self-communication; the internet and the development of mobile technology facilitate the emergence of this phenomenon. 'Mass' stands for the potential of reaching a global audience and 'self' stands for self-generated content (Castells, 2009). According to Castells the growing interest from corporate media in internet based forms of communication shows the importance of this form of communication. Castells states that mass self-communication has the potential to make an unlimited, diverse and autonomous production of communication flows. This can influence the construction of meaning of the public mind (Castells, 2009). Through the networks of mass self-communication a larger public can be reached. Castells states that everyone has the potential to become a citizen journalist. Equipped with mobile phone,

one can record instantly and upload to the global networks any offense done by anyone anywhere (Castells, 2009). Mass self-communication is the means which enables citizen journalism.

2.5 Citizen Journalists

Citizen journalists are ordinary citizens who are compelled to adopt the role of a journalist in order to give evidence to something that is happening; digital technologies enable alternative information, perspectives and critiques. A citizen journalist can be hard to define, since there are many related terms such as citizen reporter, participatory journalism and people's journalism (Tilley & Cokley, 2008), but the participatory and user centred dimensions of the term are central. Lasica (2003) description of citizen journalism encompasses: audience participation, independent news and information websites, citizen news or collaborative sites and personal broadcasting sites (Lasica, 2003). According to Goode (2009) citizen journalism can be situated in a wider spectrum of news making practices, such as activist's blogging, and cell phone photojournalists. When adding practices like these, citizen journalism is part of a larger mix of representation, (re)interpretation and translation. News, comments and information is reshaped as it passes through various sites and media platforms (Goode, 2009). The definition of Rosen (2010) on citizen journalism in Lewis *et al.* (2010) goes as follows: 'when people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another' (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010, p. 166). The definition shows the agency of the audience to become a sender, thus a citizen journalist, as well.

In this thesis the above cited definition of Rosen (2010) in Lewis *et al.* (2010) will be followed, for it shows the agency of the audience or ordinary people to take charge in communicative practices. In other words the possibility of speaking up has increased with the related developments in the area of mass (self-) communication. Citizen journalists are the actors which use mass self-communication to express their views and perspectives.

One of the implications of citizen journalism is related to gatekeeping. Gatekeeping and agenda-setting and thereby deciding what news is, have become more diverse than just those driven by selling audiences to advertisers. The voices in the public sphere have become more pluralized, because there are more ways for nonconforming voices and views to be heard. Another consequence is the influence of new media and new technologies on existing (mass) media to change and adapt (Tilley & Cokley, 2008). This potential creates counter power for civil society in the public sphere.

The final part of the theoretical framework addresses the perspective of power in the global network society, and will then go into mechanisms of counter power for civil society. To begin with the following section elaborates on the implications of citizen journalists and mass self-communication on society and processes of social change

2.6 Social Change

The technological means gives citizen journalists, ordinary citizens, the opportunity to send a different, signal independent from, for example political institutions or the traditional established (mass) media. The horizontal networks of communication can facilitate the signal send by those

citizen journalists. This can influence the established political institutions and move a society in a direction that diverges from the institutionalized political system (Castells, 2008).

When a signal buzzes in alternative networks, it will empower those who send it. This creates an opportunity, whereby the signal might be picked up by others. If this is successful, the mainstream media will be unable to ignore the signal and this may compel them to broaden the range of their messages. This enables the alternative networks to influence the debate and ultimately foster social change (Castells, 2008). It is the communication technology that empowers the 'audience', but technology per se does not produce cultural and political change. Yet, the possibility created by new interactive communication systems reinforces the chances for new signals to be sent. These new signals, sent by people from outside of the established mass media might be able to dominate the communication networks at large. The construction of communicative autonomy is related to the development of social and political autonomy, which are key factors when promotion social change (Castells, 2009).

Processes of social change are connected to existing power structures. There are many different theories and ideas on power and power structures. Since this thesis follows the theory of Castells on networking society, his ideas on power and ways to exercise control in the network society will be presented below.

2.7 Power in the Network Society

Power in the network society lies with those who have the possibility to reprogramme the network. Castells states that: 'power is the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor's will, interests, and values. Power is exercised by means of coercion (or the possibility of it) and/or by the construction of meaning on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their action. Power relationships are framed by domination, which is the power that is embedded in the institutions of society. The relational capacity of power is conditioned, but not determined, by the structural capacity of domination' (Castells, 2009, p. 10). The relational capacity to influence another actor is the main characteristic within this definition. Society is defined around values and institutions. Domination is embedded in institutions, what is valued and institutionalized is defined by power relations.

In the network society power relations consist of various institutions, such as economic and (geo) political factors, which are very hard to change. This research does not focus on the outcome of the changes in power relations, rather it focuses on the mechanisms that enable these changes. In line with the network theory from Castells, the adopted view in this research, the mechanisms that he distinguishes to exercise control will be explained in the following paragraph.

2.8 Programmers and Switchers

Castells distinguishes two mechanisms in order to be able to exercise control over others in a society of networks. Each network defines its own power system, depending on its programmed goals. The ability to program or reprogram the network in terms of goals assigned to the network is the first

way. The second way is through the ability to connect different networks. This is done by ensuring cooperation through sharing common goals and increasing resources. The first are called programmers, the second are called switchers. Programmers and switchers are not abstract concepts, but they are actors in the networks. Both are social actors, but are not individuals per se or one group, since exercising power in the network society depends on a complex set of joint action, such as ideas, visions and projects to generate programmes and common goals. Rather these social actors operate at the interface of different actors (Castells, 2004).

Ideas like visions and projects may be generated from various backgrounds and linked with specific goals; they are cultural materials. In the network society, culture is embedded in the processes of communication and its core is represented by the media and the internet. Network making power refers to the ability to program specific networks according to the interest and values of the programmers, and the power to switch different networks by forming strategic alliances with different networks. For example academic networks connect with business networks to provide knowledge in exchange for resources for research and jobs for graduates. Or connections between political leadership networks and media networks in order to produce a certain discourse. How different actors program a network is a process that is specific to each network. This process varies in different networks, such as global finance networks or military networks. Power relations have to be understood in specific terms to each network. But all networks have a common characteristic, the cultural materials (ideas/visions/projects) which in turn are influenced by processes of communication. What follows from this proposition is, as Castells states: 'the control of or the influence on the apparatus of communication, the ability to create an effective process of communication and persuasion along the lines that favour the projects of the would be programmers are the key assets in the ability to program each network' (Castells, 2004, p. 15). In other words, those are the places where the power lies in the networks society.

According to Castells the process of power-making must be seen from two sides. On the one hand, processes can enforce existing domination or structural positions of control. On the other hand, there also exist processes that resist established domination. They do so because their interests, values or projects are excluded or down played in the program or composition of the network (Castells, 2009). The processes that resist the dominating power use the same mechanisms or logic as the dominating power in society. This logic consists of the programs of networks and the switches between networks, or the so called programmers and switchers. For example collective actions from social movements aim to introduce new instructions into the program of the network. The collective actions might also attempt to block switches of connections between networks. This is because the connections allow the networks to be controlled by the overall values, which express structural domination. Thus resisting programming and disrupting switching, in order to defend alternative values and interests, are forms of counter power done by social movements and civil society, on local, national, and global level. Eventually, in the network society both the dynamics of domination and the resistance to domination rely on network formation and network strategies of offence and defence (Castells, 2009).

If the dominating and counter power both can use programming, how does the programming capacity, and thus also the resisting programming, of a network work? Castells states that the 'network's programming capacity ultimately depends on the ability to generate, diffuse and move

the discourses that frame human action' (Castells, 2009, p. 53). Discourses shape the public mind and communication networks that organize socialized communication are a key player. The public mind is what influences individual and collective behaviour. Thus actors that are able to programme the communication networks have the decisive source of cultural material that feeds the programmed goal of any (other) network (Castells, 2009). Besides programming, switching can be used to create alternatives to dominant positions. Switching different networks requires the ability to construct a cultural and organizational interface, a common medium in order to generate exchange value, which enables the ability to connect different networks. Programmers can be switchers and vice versa, but eventually the power of programming conditions switching power. This is because the programs of the networks determine the range of possible interfaces, or common mediums, in the switching process; Discourses limit and frame the possibilities of what networks can or cannot do (Castells, 2009).

Concluding, specific means of switching and programming largely determine the forms of power and counter power in the network society. Alternative projects put forward by social actors aiming to reprogram society must go through the communication channels. These communication channels might transform the consciousness and views of the public mind, in order to challenge the dominating powers.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework, which is described in the previous sections, is put in a model and operationalized. This research is based on two concepts, which will form the basis of the model. The two concepts will be elaborated below, and a research model is drafted; see figure 1.

The first concept is mass self-communication, which creates a means to resist established powers. Mass self-communication is facilitated by the three components described by Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) ; *devices/artefacts* to communicate information; *the activities/ practices* in which people engage to communicate; and the *social arrangements/organizational forms* that develop around the devices and practices (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). As Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) state, there is no definitive relationship between these three components; it is more a flow, which can go one way or the other, this is represented by the arrows between the components in figure 1, see below.

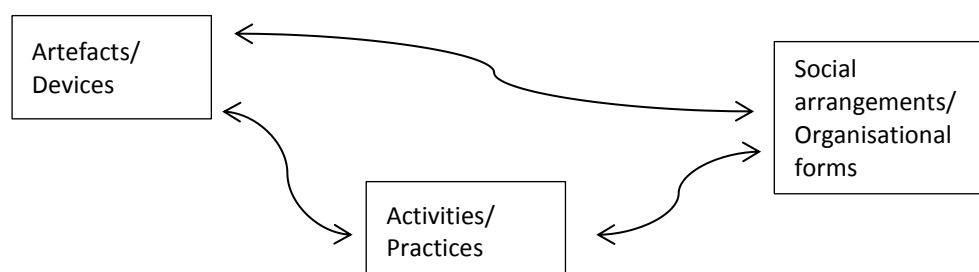


Figure 1 Mass self-communication

The second concept is citizen journalism. The citizen journalists are the actors who are able, through mass self-communication, to spread a different sound than the traditional mass media. This might

lead to a possibility whereby the citizen journalists can, by speaking up, influence the debate and foster change.

The researched event is the Egyptian revolution, which is captured as: the activities and conditions that led to and defined the anti-government protest that occurred between January 25 2011 and February 11 2011, eventually leading to the resignation of President Mubarak. The event is situated in economic, political and social circumstances, which influence mass self-communication. These influences also form the context where mass self-communication occurs and may be stimulating or repressing the occurrence of mass self-communication. How citizen journalists, through mass self-communication, influenced the uprising in Egypt will be investigated in this thesis.

Citizen journalists are the actors, they represents the sender but is at the same the addressee or audience. Citizen journalists are influenced by things that happen through mass self-communication and operate in the broader context, which consists of social, economic and political settings in Egypt and the composition of the Egyptian media landscape. The black line represents a timeline with the economic, political and social developments and changes in the media landscape in Egypt over the past few years. The quadrangle represents Egypt in January/February 2011. The black bended arrows are citizen journalists, one or more, who use mass self-communication, see figure 1, to express their views. They are placed inside and outside the quadrangle because citizen journalists have been active in Egypt and in other places outside Egypt. The size of the quadrangle is chosen randomly and is not related to the length of the black line. The amount of the bended arrows does not reflect any actual or desired number of citizen journalists inside or outside Egypt. The above described leads to the following figure:

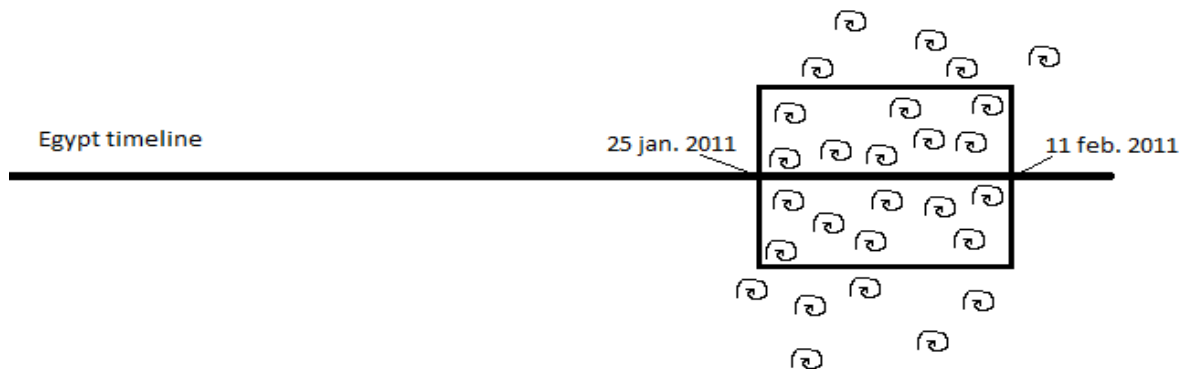


Figure 2 Research model

Figure 1 and 2 form the models which will be used to analyse the Egyptian uprising.

The word *role* in the main research question looks for: what the effects of mass self-communication were, did this empower ordinary citizens as Castells states in his theory and lead to social change? Did the citizen journalists become programmers or switchers, are their social arrangements networks and how did they create an alternative voice against which dominating powers? The role of mass self-communication can be researched by looking at different elements of mass self-communication, the relation between the elements and the broader context.

The next chapter elaborates on the methodology and the retrieved data.

3. Methodology, Retrieved Data and Processing

In this chapter the research design for the study of the role of new media during the revolution will be examined. First the general research design will be discussed; the second paragraph will present the various used research methods, the retrieved data and elaborate on the processing of the data.

3.1 Research Design

The study examines the role of new media during the revolution and in order to unravel the complex interaction between variables of the role of new media, a qualitative study has been used. Although some call the Egyptian revolution a Facebook revolution several researchers, such as Alterman (2011), contradict this vision. This research focuses, amongst others, on how people used it, what types of new media, why they used it and what this did for them. Therefore the underlying processes and thoughts will be studied. Little research has been done on the *role* of social media during the Egyptian revolution; therefore this study has an exploratory purpose.

The method used in this research is a diagnostic event analysis. This method was developed by Falk Moore, and it entails that the researcher looks at dialectically related kinds of processes, instead of the temporal development of processes. A diagnostic event includes the larger process under investigation. As specified in Glaeser (2005), Falk Moore argues that it is useful to look at 'the constitution of relatively autonomous fields of social interaction and their mutual contextualization and delimitation' (Falk Moore, 1978 in Glaeser, 2005, p. 30). By looking at the larger process under investigation one can reveal the tension and dynamics of action and reaction. This method is chosen because it provides the opportunity for an intensive analysis of the Egyptian revolution, thereby stressing the developmental factors in relation to the context. The Egyptian revolution did not occur out of nothing, and as a diagnostic event requires, developments in the Egyptian society before the revolution are included in order to place the event, the Egyptian revolution, in the larger processes that were going on, such as the rise of citizen journalism. The revolution becomes more comprehensible when events and developments in the Egyptian society before and during the revolution are presented jointly.

In order to adhere to the requirements of a diagnostic event analysis, information is gathered on the context, namely: the socio-historical context, the physical settings and the resources available, other research concerning the Egyptian revolution and the use of new media and informants through which the case can be understood. Thus to put the Egyptian revolution in a broader setting social, historical, political, and economic conditions are elaborated and attention is paid to the physical settings and the resources available, such as available new media technologies.

The research strategy used in this research is a combination of literature review of secondary sources and primary data collection. This primary data is collected during field research in Egypt and from a type of new media, namely twitter. Data collection happened parallel, so tweets were downloaded and interviews were conducted at the same time. Also a conference in Bonn on the role of media in the Arab world's transformation process has been visited.

There is an enormous amount of data available, and it is not possible to access every possible source, report, new media message or other source. The qualitative researcher must use his or her judgement to select a doable amount of data which will support him or her in understanding the event, thereby keeping in mind the amount of time and space. As said data will be collected from a variety of sources and use different approaches, until the point of saturation is reached and the researcher has a good sense of the case.

In the following section the methods that have been used to gather data, the retrieved data and the processing of the data will be elaborated.

3.2 Literature Research

This part presents the amount of retrieved data by the four methods that have been used and goes into how the data has been processed. Firstly the literature research will be elaborated, secondly the use of Twitter and tweets in this research will be clarified. Thirdly the interviews and its settings will be elaborated and fourthly a short note on a conference that the researcher has visited.

In order to describe the situation in Egypt before the uprising and to put the events in a broader context a critical analysis of existing literature is done and articles from different scholars have been used. The literature research is represented in the second research model as the horizontal line. The diagnostic event analysis and the definition of the Egyptian Revolution (the activities and conditions that led to and defined the anti-government protest that occurred between 25th January 2011 and 11th February 2011, eventually leading to the resignation of President Mubarak) entail this broader view. Literature research is used to pay attention to other factors that played a role in the advent of the revolution and thereby contrasts the attention for new media.

Most of the literature has been retrieved from scholarly databases, such as Scopus. Search terms included for example 'Egyptian revolution', 'Arab spring', 'social media' and 'new media' to describe the uprising. Besides that the researcher looked for more background on oppositional movements and socio-economic circumstances. The literature is predominantly from academic journals, but for specific figures on socio-economic issues reports from institutions such as for example the United Nations or Transparency International have been consulted to illustrate explanations, give concrete and up-to-date numbers. Some academic books on communication studies and other issues as well as international renowned newspapers, such as The Guardian or the New York Times have been consulted as well.

3.3 Conference

The researcher has attended a conference in Bonn called 'The Role of Media in the Arab World's Transformation Process' at Deutsche Welle. Fifteen scholars presented their research on the role of media in the changes in the Arab world. Although the title of the conference says Arab world, the main focus was on Egypt, and most researchers had examples from Egypt. Topics that were being discussed were firstly: the media landscape transformation in relation to regulation and liberty, secondly: social media and the freedom of expression and thirdly: connections implications and results of the Arab spring. The conference gave ideas and concrete examples for this research in the

area of changes in the media landscape, which are used in the 4.4. Furthermore there has been contact with one researcher who presented his research at the conference. He looked into the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page, and the question of social networks could be seen as an extension of street activism. As it turned out the visit was mainly to gather ideas on what and how other researchers studied the Arab revolutions, and more specifically the Egyptian revolution. Little data that has been gathered on the conference is used in this thesis.

3.4 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with the aim of finding out more on the role of new media. The interview questions are based on the conceptual framework. The interviews were semi-structured, unstructured or open-ended questions are implemented in order to 'understand the context' and 'to develop familiarity' with the subject (Frey & Fontana, 1991). From the conceptual framework, several categories could be formed. Within the framework of these categories, the interviews were conducted with a certain amount of room to adjust the sequence and the content of the questions based on the content of the participants responses (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2006).

The interviews were conducted between September and November 2012, Cairo is the location where the interviews took place. It is the capital and the largest and most important city in Egypt. Respondents were recruited through CouchSurfing.org, a worldwide travel community and the network of the researcher in Egypt, from which a snowball effect could be generated. Through the snowball effect people from different areas of the city could be reached. Appointments were made by phone, even though most Egyptian people of the target group have regular access to the internet, it is more effective to make appointments by phone instead of e-mail. Interviews were held in public places like coffee houses in different districts in Cairo at different times during the day, but predominantly in the evening. The researcher let the interviewee chose a place according to his preferences. As Thomas (1993) stated: 'the interviewer should be prepared to meet interviewees at a time and in a place convenient to them' (Thomas, 1993, p. 87). The public locations were not an obstacle for the interviews, as interviewees did not have any problems with stating their opinion in public. The openness of the respondents in a post-dictatorial country was remarkable. Furthermore only one of the respondents had problems with being recorded by a voice recorder, which was used by the researcher to make the transcriptions of the interviews more accurate. The strategy proved successful and in total 18 people participated in an interview.

These 18 interviewees were all young, the eldest who participated in an interview was 28, and most of them were (well) educated. Some of the interviewees were active in oppositional movements, one is a journalist, one worked as a fixer (someone who uses his local experience to assist foreign journalists who are trying to get their story with contacts and arrangements) for an international TV station, 2 other respondents were involved in a network of citizen journalists and some were Egyptians who were active on new media during the revolution. All of them used new media during the uprising and all of them participated to some extent in demonstrations in the street during the uprising. Of the interviewees 17 are men and 1 is a woman, in general it is more difficult to meet up with women in Egypt in public places than with men. The duration of the interviews differed per respondent. An attempt was made to use about 30 till 40 minutes per interview, however some respondents needed less and others needed more time.

The researcher focused on a single group of people within the Egyptian society: the higher educated youth. There are several reasons why this target group has been chosen. First it is expected that this group are the more affluent of the Egyptian society who can read and write, afford a smart phone or other device to use the internet. Second the educated youth played a significant role in the revolution (Joya, 2011). They were an important group who participated from the start of the revolution in the protests on the 25th and the 28th of January. The third reason, which is a practical reason, is that many people from this group speak English. Since this research was conducted by a non-Arabic speaker, preferably the interviews had to be held in English in order to avoid the loss of data during translation from Arabic to English as much as possible. Note that the focus on one particular group will not generate results which can be generalized over the whole Egyptian society. However this is not the aim of this research, which is to learn more about the role of new media.

The interviews have been transcribed and coded in Atlas.ti. Fragments or sentences led to codes presenting the main argument on a topic of the interviewee, whereby the researcher tried to stay as close as possible to the original text of the interviewee. The coding of the interviews has been done apart from the coding of the tweets, although some of the codes are similar. The researcher used open coding, where a coding scheme develops during the coding process. The researcher develops an insight during the coding process and this entails that some of the first codes might be recoded due to advancing insight.

3.5 Twitter - #jan25 Tweets

Twitter is a type of new media that is used to provide data and to investigate the role of new media during the revolution. All of the reporting is from people directly involved, written as it happened. Twitter is a tool that helped to shape the form of an uprising, and provided real time coverage. Twitter tells a story, the user must select the tweeters they want to follow, and then read the messages as they appear. Although only a very small proportion of the Egyptian population uses twitter (0,001%), there are scholars who state that Twitter did play an important role (Wilson and Dunn, 2011). Therefore the researcher will use tweets to look at the developments during the 18 days.

At the time of the revolution Twitter was dominated by young, educated and pro-revolutionary people, some of them are prominent bloggers and may have up to more than 100.000 followers (Gundy, 2012), (Trew, 2011). Although the percentage of Egyptians on Twitter is quite low, a lot of what is said on Twitter, by activists, international journalists and others, is ultimately heard by an international public. It is a gateway to the international arena, whether it is reflective of the larger Egyptian sentiment or not. This gives the researcher information on the role of new media during the protests, and especially global (transnational) component of communication networks. The Egyptians that use Twitter are those with laptops and smartphones which are the more affluent in society, among them English is quite common, therefore and for practical reasons the researcher used only English-language tweets.

Because of the large amount of tweets the researcher chose to take several days and time slots and the hash tag #jan25.² Several hash tags were used in relation to the protests. Hash tag #jan25 is chosen because it is the first and far most used. It became a worldwide trending topic and a rallying cry during the revolution (Wilson and Dunn, 2011).

The dates are selected between 23rd of January, just before the revolution started until the 12th of February 2011, just after Mubarak stepped down. Thereby the whole duration of the revolution is covered. The selected dates are: 23rd January, 27th January, 31st January, 4th February, 8th February and 12th February. Each date has three days in between. The researcher has chosen three timeslots of one hour, one hour in the morning, one hour the afternoon and one hour in the evening. The three timeslots spread over the day allow the researcher to catch the different dynamics of a day. This will help to get a broad and complete image of the use of twitter. The three different timeslots intercept time difference, because twitter was not just used in Egypt but people in other parts of the world tweeted about the revolution as well. The three timeslots are between 09-10, 16-17 and 21-22 (UTC/GMT +2 hours).

Through the =RAND function in Excel the six dates have been randomly coupled to different time slots (the time slots represent Egyptian time (UCT +2)). This led to six sets with tweets, consisting of up till 999 tweets.

There are limitations using these sets of tweets for analysis. It is hard to determine whether the tweet sets are complete. Topsy³ uses API service and it is reasonable to assume that some tweets are missing. Also people may have tweeted on the go and not included a hash tag. This excludes potentially a (large) number of tweets. Furthermore the researcher has chosen to keep the amount of tweets up till a maximum of 999 tweets per timeslot. This makes the amount of data analysable within time and space limits of this master thesis. Given the other techniques to gather data, the different time slots and days, and the size of the data set, it is unlikely that this will have a significant impact on the results.

There is a difference between the amount of tweets retrieved and the amount of tweets Topsy states that have been sent. For example on January 23rd the amount of tweets retrieved is 6, whereas Topsy claims that 7 tweets have been sent.⁴ It is not clear why the amount of tweets as indicated by Topsy doesn't correspond with the amount of tweets retrieved, as the researcher is not familiar with the (programming) techniques used by Topsy to retrieve tweets, nor did the researcher found a decisive and for a layperson understandable answer on the internet forums. The result of the retrieval of the #jan25 tweets is summarized in the table below:

² Only on the 25th of January 2011 there were more than 23.000 tweets with the hash tag #jan25
<http://topsy.com/2012/02/02/how-to-get-old-jan25-tweets-from-toppy/> (latest accessed 25th July 2012)

³ <http://topsy.com/> (last accessed 26th of July 2012)

⁴ Except for 4th of February; the technique allows retrieving up till 999 per time. If more than 999 tweets have been send in the selected timeslot and you want to retrieve all of them you need to decrease the amount of time within the chosen timeslot.

Date	Timeslot	Amount of tweets retrieved	Amount of tweets send	Difference
23 rd January	21-22 hrs.	6	7	1
27 th January	16-17 hrs.	716	856	140
31 st January	9-10 hrs.	642	803	161
4 th February	21-22 hrs.	999	1370	371
8 th February	16-17 hrs.	683	807	124
12 th February	9-10 hrs.	221	270	49
Total	6 hrs.	3267	4113	846

Table 2 Summary tweet sets.

The six retrieved tweet sets were put in six Excel sheets and Atlas.ti was used to assist the analysis. The tweets are treated as qualitative data (textual) and labeled on the basis of codes, for example, a call to join the protests in Egypt or abroad, information on arrests or clashes with the police, which represents the main message of the tweet. The Twitter data was coded in Atlas.ti and throughout the coding process, the main message of the tweet was coded. The code is a word or short sentence which represents the body of the tweet. In the course of the coding process the researcher tries to stay as close to the original content of the tweet as possible. A coding scheme was developed during the coding process. Through the coding process the researcher gained more insight in certain types of messages, this led to a more definitive coding scheme and therefore some tweets have been recoded that were coded differently at first.

Not all coded tweets could be used in the analysis, because the subjects of a part of the coded tweets did not fit with the subjects addressed in this thesis. There were tweets which referred to protests in other Arab countries, the role of the Egyptian army which is not addressed in this research, other tweets contain comments on speeches of Mubarak or other initiatives from his party, the NDP. Eventually 1927 of the 3267 retrieved tweets (see above at table 2, summary of tweets) have been used in the analysis. Tweets that are quoted in this research are anonymized and presented as they appeared in the tweet set, spelling mistakes are not corrected by the researcher.

The following chapter elaborates on the socio-economic and political situation in Egypt, preceding the revolution in 2011. Also the media landscape, several oppositional movements and the Tunisian revolution are presented, the chapter finalizes with an oversight of the Egyptian revolution and a conclusion.

4. Egypt

Every moment has a history, including Tahrir. Before the uprising in January 2011 there had been social unrest, strikes and oppositional movements were formed. Between 2004 and 2008 some 1.7 million Egyptians participated in 1900 strikes, well before the financial crisis when the number of strikes and work stoppages reached into thousands (Dahi, 2011). Political action group protested both on internal and foreign policy issues, and struggles rooted in labour grievances broke out in fall 2004, due to the liberalization of public-sector factories. This chapter elaborates on the broader settings in which the revolution is embedded; The economic situation, social conditions and the role of the military are described. Subsequently, this chapter presents the developments of the Egyptian media landscape and the main oppositional movements are elaborated, as well as the pioneering work of the activists in the usage of new media for their cause. The effect of the successful revolution in Tunisia is shortly discussed and a short timeline of the 18 days revolution of 2011 is provided. The chapter finalized with a conclusion.

4.1 Economic Situation

On the one hand, the Arab Human Development Report painted a picture of a stagnating economy, growing inequality and poverty. On the other hand financial institutions, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), repeatedly praised Egypt and other Arab countries for their economic performance (Dahi, 2011). The real picture of the Egyptian economy lies somewhere in between, and is not fully captured by either of those narratives.

The Egyptian economy was highly centralized during the rule of Nasser, but opened up under Sadat and Mubarak. Sadat pursued the policy of 'infitah' or economic opening up, and imported goods entered the market. In 1990 Egypt received debt relief from Western countries. The intention of the debt relief, arranged by the IMF, was that Egypt would be able to pay the remainder of its foreign debt. In 1991 Egypt signed the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program of the IMF and the World Bank. The programme involved privatisation of public sector enterprises, liberalization of trade and prices, the introduction of flexible labour legislation and the removal of progressive social policies (Farah, 2009). As a result, during the 1990s almost 200 firms were privatized (Lesch, 2011). However public investment declined, private investment slowed down as well and despite initial growth the economy was stagnating and gross domestic product (GDP) rates were in decline at the end of the 1990s, as can be seen in figure 1 below (Ciezadlo, 2011).

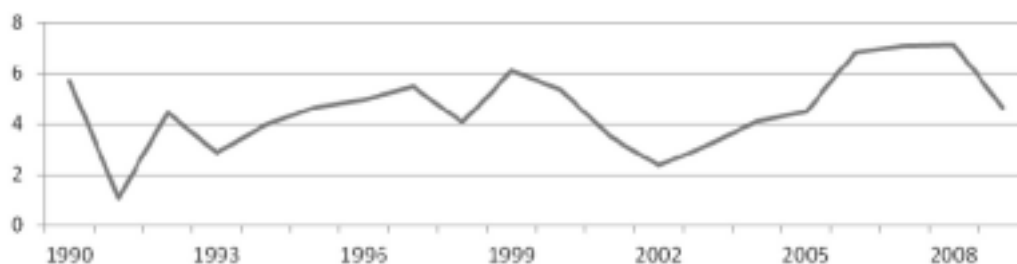


Figure 1: The annual GDP growth rates of Egypt between 1990 and 2009, World Bank.

Inside as well as outside the regime there was pressure to expand the liberalization and adjustment programmes. In 2004 the IMF urged a significant acceleration of the pace of structural adjustment in Egypt (IMF, 2004). Egypt undertook further liberalization and a programme of privatization to enhance economic growth. It signed a free trade agreement with the EU and the USA. The primary goal was to attract direct foreign investment from the EU, USA and China (Dahi, 2011). As can be seen in figure 1, in 2003 the GDP started to grow again. Rising revenues of the gas export had a positive impact on the GDP. Some scholars were sceptical about the effect of the liberalization programmes. Springborg (2011) states that the rising revenues of the gas export had probably more effect on the growth figure than the liberalization programmes (Springborg, 2011).

The privatization of state enterprises transferred public resources and resulted in a new economic elite. Between 1990 and 2010, two decades of liberalization, an alliance between business men and public servants was created. The amount of businessmen in policy making increased and the state became an active promoter of business interests. This is reflected in the amount of businessmen that were elected in Egypt's parliament. Between 1995 and 2005 this number rose from 8 to 150 (Joya, 2011). The collaboration between business and politics is reflected in the composition of the cabinet as well. Between 2005 and 2011 six of the important portfolios in the cabinet, namely trade and industry, housing, transportation, health, agriculture and social welfare, were held by businessmen (Farah, 2009). Governmental support was distributed to key constituencies in the interest of political stability.

Eventually the economic stimuli provided by liberalization and rising gas revenues were insufficient to create real economic growth. The Egyptian economy did not invest in research and development, nor did it rely on competitiveness or involve the population in the economy. Rather the wealth and power of the capitalists was the result of state sponsored appropriation of public resources, facilitated by privatization programmes. The net effect was that real economic growth was prevented due to subsidies, and government employment and credit allocation was favourably going to government-owned or influenced banks (Springborg, 2011).

Along with the privatization came corruption. Large parts of the public sector were sold for personal benefits, along with decreasing public investment in education, health and housing (Lesch, 2011). Businessmen could monopolize whole industries, control markets and determine prices. A happy few were benefitting from a form of capitalism that Osman (2010) calls 'distorted capitalism', meaning that there is no protection of the state or safety net, yet companies who are in the hands of the few can do whatever they want (Osman, 2011). The privatization and neoliberal policies of a reduced role for the state and a bigger role for the private sector were a farce in Egypt (Farah, 2009). To exemplify, between 2002 and 2009 Egyptian government expenditures on food and fuel subsidies and other transfers rose from 24 to 45 % of the budget (Springborg, 2011). Between two-third and three-quarter of the government provided rents were consumed by industries that were owned by acquainted 'capitalists' (Springborg, 2011). Farah (2009) points out that the privatization of the public sector was 'in essence subsidising the private sector at the expense of the nation as a whole' (Farah, 2009). In 2011 Transparency International rated Egypt at 112 out of 182 countries, which indicates that corruption is pervasive (Transparency International). The political outcome of the liberalization policies strengthened ties between the NDP and business. In other words, profits of these companies were guaranteed by subsidies and loyalty was secured by a system of patronage.

4.2 Social Conditions

Economic liberalization had an adverse impact on workers and peasants. The process of economic restructuring introduced a trend towards flexible labour legislation and removed progressive labour laws. Under Nasser workers benefited from various policies such as, public pensions, sick leave, child bonuses, fixed rents and price controls of basic commodities (Posusney, 1993). Under the labour law in 2003 workers were forbidden to strike and often hired on short term contracts, where they had no medical or social insurance benefits.

Public-sector workers were required to join a union under the authority of the Egyptian Trade Unions Federation (ETUF), which was led by NDP officials. The ETUF enforced government policies rather than representing its members, the public-sector workers. For example, since 1984 the ETUF did not raise the monthly minimum wage, which was then set at LE 35 (Lesch, 2011). Private sector workers were even worse off under the labour law of 2003. This law did not provide any protection towards the employees, for example in the field of salary levels or overtime compensation (Lesch, 2011).

Rural Egyptians had benefited from policies which originated from Nasser rule. Examples were secure tenure, fixed rents as well as the land redistribution from 1954. In 1992, Law 96 (implemented in 1997) ended the 1954 Land Reform. Under the Land Reform the tenancies were permanent (and inherited), but this changed under Law 96 and tenant farmers lost their rights. Landowners seized land back with the help of security forces and in cases where landowners did not seize back the land they increased rents ten times or more, thereby making it impossible for the tenants to pay (Lesch, 2011). The government had closed agricultural cooperative services and quitted subsidizing fertilizers and pesticides. In order to buy materials small landowners often fell back on loans from the Bank of Development and Agricultural Credit. If small landowners could not pay back the loan, their property was seized and they were thrown into jail by the Bank of Development and Agricultural Credit.

The privatization of water- and electricity companies, phone services and the abandonment of the cleaning of irrigation canals caused living expenses to rise. In order to make a living, farming families resorted to daily wage labour on landowners' estates (Lesch, 2011). The neoliberal policies resulted in 1.3 million peasant families (or around 6 million individuals) to become landless as rural land was privatised and turned into large estates. Workers who had experienced the progressive policies saw the abandonment of their rights as a violation of the gains they made during the rule of Nasser (Joya, 2011). One could state that with the implementation of the structural adjustment programmes, the Egyptian state abandoned their support for peasants and workers.

The liberalization programmes had an adverse effect on the agricultural sector in Egypt. Over the last decades Egypt went from a net agricultural exporter to a net importer, especially of American subsidized wheat. In 1960 Egypt was producing enough wheat to be almost self-sufficient, in 2010 it was importing roughly nine billion tons, half the countries intake. This makes Egypt the biggest wheat importer in the world. The liberalization programmes of the IMF and World Bank encouraged Egypt to lift trade barriers and import bans, and discouraged or restricted the Egyptian government from investing in their own agricultural sector (Ciezadlo, 2011). The trade liberalization programmes neglected and hollowed out the agricultural sector and the low global wheat price pushed Egypt into

dependence on cheap wheat from abroad. The import of wheat caused unemployment and the discouragement of domestic agricultural investment had negative effects on the Egyptian population in general.

According to the UN's 2009 Arab Human Development Report the number of malnourished people has been rising and the standard of living has declined for most Egyptians. Around 20% of the population was living below the poverty line (United Nations Arab Development Report 2009). Whereas the GDP increased, the living standard declined, except for the top 20% of the country. For Egypt's poor it became increasingly challenging to satisfy their basic needs, such as food, education and transportation (Hassan & Quarter, 2011). Moreover, between February 2007 and 2008 bread prices rose by 37%, which made even more people dependent on subsidized bread and led to bread riots in Egypt and several other countries (Ciezahl, 2011). In 2008 the global economic crisis pressured Egypt's economic growth. Key sources, such as tourism, remittances, gas exports, Suez Canal revenues and foreign direct and other investments were hit (Springborg, 2011). This made the economic situation of the country more precarious.

The prospects for the new generation were not optimistic. Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East; on a municipal basis Cairo is the most populous metropolitan area in Africa, and one of the most densely populated cities in the world. In 1950 Egypt had 21.5 million inhabitants; this number has grown to over 81 million, with a median age of 24. In the next 50 years the Egyptian population is projected to grow over 50% (LaGrafte, 2012). Around 45% of the population live in urban areas, with over 7 million in Cairo and almost 20 million in Greater Cairo. Nearly three fifth of the population of Cairo is under 30 years old, and among the youth in this city the unemployment rate is higher than the national rate (Lim, 2012). Young people aged 15-29 make up one-third of the country's total population. In 2010 the official unemployment rate was around 10%, unofficial employment levels were estimated at 25%. Egypt has high youth unemployment figures, estimations are 24% in December 2010 (World Bank) (twice the global average in 2009). Unemployment among the educated is even worse; college graduates are 10 times as likely to have no job as those with only an elementary school education (Goldstone, 2011). Underemployment (an engineer working as a cabdriver) is not just affecting the youth, but many more Egyptians.

4.3 The Military

The Egyptian military was linked with the stability of the Mubarak regime. Military men were appointed on important bureaucratic posts, such as provincial governors and heads of state companies. During Mubarak's rule the appointments provided guarantees for the regime and the NDP and secured electoral outcomes (Joya, 2011).

The Egyptian military is involved in various branches of the Egyptian economy, namely manufacturing, agriculture, transport and waterway construction and improvement, consumer industries, tourism and gasoline industries (Mitchell, 2002). Through its factories and companies the military plays an important role in the economy. Besides the involvement of the Egyptian military in the various branches of the economy, the military owns vast tracks of land, engages in land sales, real estate development and speculation. Large scale military reservations are strategically located in the Delta, near growing urban areas where land values have risen and are rising vast (Roy, 1992).

During Nasser's rule construction of infrastructure and public housing projects were the first branches of the economy where the military was involved. Under Sadat and Mubarak this role expanded and included land development projects for tourism, for example coastal resort development and tourist services. It is the hidden and often secretive nature of economic activities of the military that forms the main issue. The military kept its business deals secret, did not pay taxes and had access to a secure and controlled labour market, largely of enlisted labourers. Roy (1992) cites a former senior official: 'The military are benefitting themselves, they rely on imported components and engage in sales of land. This process of market intermediation creates big profits, which they keep – but does not create jobs or products for the public good' (Roy, 1992, p. 703). All in all, the military assets like land, factories and hotel businesses, amount to millions of Egyptian pounds. No disclosure of their revenue is given and therefore no accountability.

The military experienced competition from their neoliberal counterparts with links to regional and global capital, 'privatisation had forced military-owned companies to improve the quality of their work, specifically in the hotel industry, to compete with private firms and attract critical foreign investment' (Joya, 2011). The military has a large grip on the Egyptian economy, and was fearful that neo-liberal shifts would challenge their interest, because businessmen became increasingly involved in political and economic decision making processes.

4.4 Political Situation

During the 1990s, security forces were used against violent Islamist groups, such as Jama 'at Islamiyya (Islamic Groups) that destabilized Egypt. In 1997 the Islamist groups renounced violence, but emergency and military courts continued to function (Kienle, 1998) and (Lesch, 2011). The police increasingly harassed people in the street, demanded bribes from small entrepreneurs like shopkeepers and mini-van drivers. Bribing went hand in hand with violence, which was used to coerce false confessions or to pressure people to become informers. People who came to police stations to get routine documents, such as IDs, were harassed as well (Lesch, 2011). According to Amnesty International 'torture and other ill-treatment of detainees was systematic in police stations, prisons and Secret Service Investigations (SSI) detention centres and, for the most part, committed with impunity' (Amnesty International, 2010). An example of the police brutality is the death of Khaled Said, a case with huge effects on Egyptian society, as will be shown in chapter 4.6.

In the 1970s Sadat began to liberalize the political system, in order to gain legitimacy at home and abroad. He allowed opposition parties and movements to gain some influence in elected bodies, as long as the National Democratic Party (NDP) maintained its two-third majority and in control of the real power switches. When Mubarak came to power in 1981 he continued this policy, with a few adjustments. However, over the last five years, the Mubarak regime began to violate this implicit agreement (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011) and (Lesch, 2011). In 2007 Mubarak drafted 34 constitutional amendments that increased his control and further silenced ordinary citizens. These amendments included repeal judicial supervision of parliamentary elections and impose restrictions to prevent unaffiliated independents to run for office (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011).

New constraints were imposed on the ability of political parties and movements to organize and contest elections. In 2010 the state manipulated the parliamentary elections in favour of the NDP, which won with 97% of the votes. Thereby it effectively denied all opposition groups any representation in parliament (Shehata, 2010). The NDP's representation rose from 318 (out of 454 seats, or 70%, in 2005) to 420 (out of 508 seats, or 83%, in 2010). The Muslim Brotherhood supporters in Parliament dropped from 88 to 1. The rest of the seats went to secular opposition parties and independents (Alterman, 2011). The 2010 parliamentary election has been regarded as a power grab of the NDP and raised expectations that Gamal Mubarak, the president's son, would be appointed as his the successor. Gamal Mubarak returned at the end of the 1990's after a six year period working as an investment banker with the Bank of America. He was appointed to the general secretariat by his father and later headed the NDP's Policies Secretariat. In 2006 he became one the three deputy secretary generals of the NDP and accompanied the President on diplomatic missions. In 2007 the Policies Secretariat drafted amendments for the constitutions that cleared barriers for the succession (Lesch, 2011).

Egyptians have been living under nearly a constant state of emergency since 1967. The State of Emergency consolidates the President's authority, it grants power to restrain movement of individuals, search persons or places without a warrant, tap telephones, censor the media, forbid meetings and detain suspects for long periods without formal charge (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). In the light of these political as well as economic circumstances it is not surprising that the uprising is seen as a call for dignity; a rejection of the humiliation and degradation which the protesters were confronted with and subjected to in their daily lives. Presidential elections were planned for the fall of 2011, but many Egyptians expected and feared that Gamal would be the successor. For ordinary Egyptians this prospect was all but encouraging.

4.5 The Egyptian Media Landscape

Before the 1952 revolution Egypt was rich in its cultural wealth and intellectual diversity. Egypt was a monarchy and struggled against Ottoman (1517-1882), French (1798-1801) and British occupation (1882-1952). The political context influenced the many newspapers and magazines which were published. The focus was on fighting Ottoman rule and foreign occupation, political debates, nationalistic sentiments and patriotic struggles against colonialism were general themes. During this period leading daily newspapers, radio and cinema were introduced. The result was a politicized and vibrant media scene, where newspapers acted as forums and platforms for writers, thinkers and poets (Khamis, 2008).

In 1952 a group of army officers seized power, toppled the monarchy and turned Egypt into a republic. Gamal Abdel Nasser became President; he used an iron fist against opponents, which led to a backlash in the margin of freedom enjoyed by various media. The pluralistic and lively media scene was replaced by a more monolithic and restrictive media scene. Newspapers that existed before 1952 were closed down by the government, financial fines were imposed on editors and/or journalists, and many of them were jailed. Media ownership lay only with the government and all media fell under strict governmental supervision and regulation. Broadcast media were used to spread and support the government's domestic, regional and international policies (Khamis, 2008).

After the death of President Nasser in 1970, Anwar Sadat became President. Initially Sadat eased some restrictions and limitations that had been imposed by Nasser. He legitimized the birth of political parties, which were allowed to publish their own newspapers. These measures did not bring back the lively media scene from before 1952. The political parties and their newspapers did not succeed in building strong popular foundations for themselves, they did not enjoy real credibility or support among the average Egyptian. In 1981, after continuing criticism on his policies, Sadat closed down many newspapers and jailed journalists. Thereby he put an end to the relatively wider margin of freedom the media (Khamis, 2008).

Mubarak had an ambivalent attitude towards the media. When he came to power in 1981, after the assassination of Sadat, he initially encouraged opposition parties to publish their own newspapers. But the lack of democratic and political participation left the newspapers and the political parties without a real supportive base among Egyptian citizens. Another obstacle was the high rate of illiteracy, and the lack of trust in the political parties that published them (Khamis, 2011). The literacy barrier explains why there was some tolerance of press freedom and diversity in print media. This was not the case in broadcast media, which remained under heavy government control, through direct ownership, censorship and several forms of economic incentives or disincentives (Khamis, 2008). Although Mubarak allowed opposition parties and their publications to exist, police assaults and raids, arrests, abuses, detentions and even torture of journalists happened. This behaviour is comparable to the behaviour of both President Nasser (1954-1970) and President Sadat (1970-1981).

During Mubarak's time major changes influenced the Egyptian media landscape considerably, media privatization emerged, private satellite channels were launched, and internet was introduced in 1993 (Khamis, 2011). The introduction of private satellite channels offered an alternative to the state-owned and government regulated media. The Egyptian audience was exposed to new cultural, political and social influences, which was not possible in the past. In the early 1990s, Egypt was the first to introduce direct broadcast satellite technology in the Arab region. In 1998 the first private television channel emerged (Khamis, 2008). Currently there are about 20 private Egyptian satellite channels; a large number of Arabic satellite channels are available via subscription (CIA World Factbook). Besides, many small opposition newspapers were set up, and created websites where different voices and political views were represented. In 2002 the Egyptian government started a plan to increase internet connectivity. As access to the internet became widespread, the concept of blogs emerged as well as the use of other social media (Khamis, 2011). In brief, the media scene shifted from monolithic to a more pluralistic one. Nowadays there are many choices which were not possible before 1990.

Connectivity numbers are hard to provide because the lack of data collection; but below some general numbers will be presented. Most people have access to television (95% have television and 70% have satellite television) (Alterman, 2011) and many people have access to cell phones (about 80%, which is even more notable considering the 24% increase over the previous year). The amount of cell phones that is internet capable is raising as well (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). Internet is less widely distributed, about 20% to 30% of the Egyptian population use internet, only about 6% of the Egyptian population are on Facebook (Wright, 2011 in Wilkins, 2012). In 2003 there were still relatively few personal computers, nowadays home computers and laptops are common and taken for granted among the middle and upper classes (Radsch, 2008). Twitter is used by very small part of

the Egyptian people, only 0.001% Egyptians use it (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). The connectivity numbers are higher for urban areas like Cairo, where more than 64% of the households have internet (Lim, 2012).

Since most Egyptians have access to TV, it plays an important role in the distribution of news. Al Jazeera is the most widely watched news channel in Middle East (Pintak, 2011). According to a survey from the University of Maryland of the Arab world, around 80 per cent of the respondents were getting their international news from television, and most (58 per cent) were getting their headlines from Qatar-based Al Jazeera. Introduced in 1996, Al Jazeera was the first 24/7 Arab news broadcaster (Al Jazeera English was introduced in 2006). The channel is owned by Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, head of the Gulf state Qatar. The channel was the first to address taboo breaking issues, which were long ignored by state controlled news agencies. Al Jazeera started off with topics that concern every Arab citizen, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Gradually the channel started to address more personal and local news, still closely connected to Arab citizens, like government corruption or the role of religion. Al Jazeera is not a neutral channel and is for its resources fully dependent on the Emir of Qatar, the channel is involved in regional power politics. Its coverage of regional conflicts follows the lines as set by Qatari foreign policy (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2003). Al Jazeera's breakthrough was during coverage of the second intifada in September 2000 (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2003). Although not neutral, Al Jazeera has won a massive following because it is the only Arab broadcaster that has successfully given voice to Arab frustrations and sufferings (Boukhars, 2011).

Al Jazeera was critical on the state of Egypt and the rule of Mubarak. Relations between Qatar and Egypt strained in 1997 after a dispute over an alleged pro-Islamist coverage by the newly arrived news network. Allegations were that Qatar would finance pro-Islamist groups in Egypt. Economic and political sanctions followed and Al Jazeera reported the way it wanted on Egypt (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2003). Al Jazeera gave a voice/platform to oppositional movements as Kefaya and covered the 2008 Mahalla strikes, broadcasted amateur videos of mass rallies and state violence (Pintak, 2011). Otherwise most Egyptians would have been unaware of the strikes.

Egyptians increasingly use new media. Arabic Facebook was introduced in 2009 and led to an increase in Facebook users from 900.000 to nearly 5 million in late 2010 (Lim, 2012). Given a population of around 82 million, this is still a relatively small percentage. To illustrate the popularity of the usage of new media in Egypt, Facebook is the second most accessed website after Google and YouTube is the fourth most popular accessed website (Lim, 2012). Before 2005 there were about 40 bloggers in Egypt. While small in number, the bloggers made a lively alternative political sphere committed to individual right and national unity. In 2005 the number of bloggers had risen to around 400 and in 2006 there were more than 1800 bloggers (Radsch, 2008).

Changes in the Egyptian media arena have been much faster than in the political arena. The margin of freedom allowed for the media wavered between press freedom and government repression. Censorship and government regulations were present but oppositional voices created their own platforms to express their critical thoughts and oppositional views (Khamis, 2011). Internet is a rapidly growing medium in Egypt and in the Arab world in general. Internet allows for an in- and out-flow of information simultaneously, and according to Khamis and Vaughn (2011) provides

opportunities for public mobilization; new media enables a form of citizen journalism, by providing forums and to spread words about on-going activities (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

4.5 Kefaya, April 6 Youth Group and We Are All Khaled Said

The power of the Egyptian government, the restrictions imposed by the State of Emergency on public gatherings and the unchecked violence by police and security forces made people fearful of protesting in the streets (Lesch, 2011). However, this did not prevent the emergence of several social and oppositional protest groups in Egypt since 2004. Examples are 'Students for Change, Youth for Change, University Professors for Change, Workers for Change, Artists for Change and the People's Campaign for Change' and Kefaya (the unofficial name of the Egyptian Movement for Change) (Joya, 2011).

Kefaya was nonpartisan and the first anti-Mubarak oppositional movement. Kefaya was founded in November 2004 by around 300 Egyptian intellectuals from various ideological backgrounds (Islamist, communist, liberal and secularist). Their main drive was provided by the anticipation of the Egyptian presidential elections of 2005. Egyptian activists were brought together during the second intifada and the U.S. invasion in Iraq, which led to protests on Tahrir Square. These protests were as much about the compliance of Mubarak to the US, as they were about the invasion itself. The activists were able to turn this sentiment into an oppositional movement calling for political reforms and the resignation of Mubarak (Lim, 2012).

In 2004 Kefaya organized their first gathering and between 500 and 1000 activists stood in front of the High Court building demanding that Mubarak stepped down. The protesters had their mouths tapped, inscribed with 'kefaya', meaning 'enough' in Arabic. Kefaya did not have a physical headquarters or permanent meeting place. Instead news was spread through online forums and activities were coordinated through their main website HarakaMasria.org. MisrDigital.com was another important website. During the first months of 2005, Wael Abbas (one of the key figures of the 2011 revolution) started blogging about repression, human rights abuses and corruption on this website (Lim, 2012).

Kefaya made strategically use of information and communication technologies, such as e-mails and text messages (Oweidat, Benard, Stahl, Kildani, & O'Connell, 2008). The 2003 anti-Iraq war protests helped the movement to develop strategies to circumvent government control. This helped the movement to become less dependent on the state controlled media when reaching the public. The foundation of Kefaya coincided with the beginning of the blogging scene in Egypt. The blogs were used to mobilize street protests and to provide reports from the streets countering the state controlled media interpretations of the protests. To counter these developments the Egyptian government tried to silence bloggers through intimidation and arrested them as well.

Ultimately Kefaya failed to reach beyond a small group of activists largely based in Cairo. The limited internet penetration in Egypt (it reached about 10% of the Egyptians) was not enough to counter the mainstream state-controlled media (Lim, 2012). But Kefaya played an important role in the development of online activism and inspired and informed the April 6th movement.

Formed in 2008, the April 6th Youth Group was the first opposition group to make use of Facebook. Several members of the April 6th Youth Group had been active in Kefaya. The group was named for its first effort, a labour strike it supported in the city of El-Mahalla el-Kubra on April 6th, 2008. In December 2006, workers in textile factories in El-Mahalla el-Kubra protested the government's failure to pay end-of-year bonuses (Lesch, 2011). Similar protests escalated as privatization accelerated and food prices rocked. On April 6th, 2008, the workers in Misr Spinning and Weaving Company struck and demanded a monthly minimum wage, security forces cracked down hard (Lesch, 2011). The April 6th Youth Group used cell phones, blogs, Facebook and YouTube to document police excesses, organize meetings and protests, alert each other on police movements, and get legal help for those who had been arrested (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Activists uploaded videos and posted blogs on the events, filling the information void left by Egypt's mainstream media, which completely ignored the events. Al Jazeera and other pan-Arab satellite channels broadcasted the events to a wider public. Fights between security forces and strikers were broadcasted, as well as amateur video of strikers tearing down a picture of Mubarak. This deed brought a severe blow to the credibility and status of Mubarak (Pintak, 2011).

By early 2009 the Movement's Facebook group had grown to 70.000 members, a notable number, at that time the number of Facebook users in Egypt was less than 900.000 (Lim, 2012). The New York Times identified the April 6th Youth Group as the political Facebook group with the most dynamic debates in Egypt (Shapiro, 2009). In spite of their large online presence, the April 6th Youth Group was unable to reach out to a broader, offline audience; In 2009 they tried (but were unable) to transform the Misr strike into a nationwide one-day general strike (Lesch, 2011). Inspired by the Iranian Green Movement, the April 6th Youth Group was the first to utilize Twitter in September 2010. The #orabi2010 hash tag was used to recruit and mobilize the Orabi (No to succession) demonstrations against the supposed plan of Mubarak to hand power to his son Gamal Mubarak. The police was not able to track down the protesters, and it did not generate a massive protest (Lim, 2012). However, it did contribute to the toolkit of the activists.

A few months after the founding of the April 6 Youth Group, a group of Tunisian activists set up the Progressive Youth of Tunisia following a strike in Tunisia. Facebook became the channel of communication between the two groups. Ahmed Maher, the leader of the April 6 Youth Group, said, 'we share experiences with strikes and blogging' (Kirkpatrick & Sanger, 2011). But there were also links outside the Arab world. Egyptian activists had contact via internet and in person with the Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS). This organization was set up by people from the Serbian youth movement Otpor ('Resistance'), who had participated in overthrowing Milosevic in 2000. Members of the Serbian and Egyptian oppositional groups met and learned more about organizing peaceful protests (Zhuo, Wellman, & Yu, 2011).

A popular Facebook group affiliated with the April 6th Youth Group, 'We Are All Khaled Said'. The group is named after Khaled Said, a 28 year old Egyptian blogger who was beaten to death by policemen after he visited an internet café, just before midnight in Alexandria on June 6, 2010 (Khondker, 2011; Lesch, 2011). The café owner gave details of the murder in a filmed interview, which was posted online and pictures of Khaled Said's shattered face appear on the internet. A young Google executive Wael Ghonim, initially anonymous, created the Facebook page, which enlisted between 350.000 till almost half a million members before 14 January 2011 (Alterman, 2011;

Khondker, 2011; Ritter & Trechsel, 2011). Ghonim used the site to educate and inspire Egyptians about democracy, stating: 'this is your country; a government official is your employee who gets his salary from your tax money, and you have your rights' (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, p. 7). He also called on followers to go to the streets and protest Said's brutal murder. From June to August 2010, the group held five silent protests. Thousands of Egyptians were involved, including Mohamed ElBaradei.⁵ Khaled Said became an iconic figure, a martyr, the story and the images of Said intensified the emotion of the oppositional movement (Lim, 2012).

4.6 The Tunisian Revolution

The uprising in Egypt cannot be seen without the effect of the successful Tunisian revolution. The revolution in Tunisia (Jasmine Revolution) began in December 2010. The self-immolation of the fruit seller Mohamed Bouazizi on 17 December 2010 sparked the first protests in Sidi Bouzid, his hometown (Khondker, 2011). The protests spread throughout the country and led to the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali 28 days later on 14 January 2011. The protests in Tunisia inspired the activists in Egypt. 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). Bloggers in Egypt wondered if this could happen in their country as well. There was contact between the online activists. Esam Al-Amin notes that the Tunisian revolution 'inspired Egyptians beyond the activists or elites' (Al-Amin, 2011). There were still people who thought a revolution like the one in Tunisia would not be possible in Egypt and few people saw it coming, the US and other Western allies were taken by surprise, as was the Egyptian elite (Joya, 2011; Sharrock, Shenker, & Harris, 2011). Days before the unrest the Egyptian government rejected possibilities of a Tunisian style uprising, though they introduced precautionary economic and social aid packages for urban and rural areas, as well as raising spending on food subsidies (Brown, 2011) (Joya, 2011). The events in Tunisia were an example that inspired activists/people in Egypt and gave hope.

4.7 The Revolution

On 11 February 2011, after 18 days of protesting across the country, Egyptian citizens brought down the government of Hosni Mubarak (Joya, 2011). He had ruled the country for 30 years, since 1981. The uprising began on 25th of January, with slogans as 'bread, freedom, social justice!' (Challand, 2011). Ultimately the event brought millions of people to the streets, making political, economic and social demands.

Since the death of Khaled Said there had been ideas for a large protest. Early in January the first ideas for a 'one million protest' were posted on the Khaled Said Facebook page. The uprising in Tunisia stirred up the ideas. In fact, the National Association for Change (a broad movement, led by Mohamed ElBaradei), had proposed holding a protest for political reform in Cairo's Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011, when late president Mubarak was going to give a speech to celebrate Police Day, a day in honour of a police revolt suppressed by the British in 1952 (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The

⁵ Mohamed ElBaradei is an Egyptian law scholar, diplomat and former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an international organization operating under the UN, between December 1997 and November 2009. In 2005 he and the IAEA were awarded the Nobel peace prize (Wikipedia) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_ElBaradei; last visited 02-07-2012).

activists planned the demonstration carefully. The demonstration on January 25th was presented as an independent event by the moderators of the Khaled Said Facebook page. This enabled other movements and groups to participate as well, like soccer fan clubs, April 6th Youth Movement and others (Ghonim, 2012).

The Iranian Green Movement warned activists for the risks of using internet for political purposes. During the Iranian revolt the Iranian security agents successfully spread false information that was picked up by Twitter users and by traditional media without any fact-checking (Morozov, 2012). The Iranian example showed the Egyptians that if everyone knows about an online call for large demonstrations, so does the state. Also, if activists can distribute information online, so can agents working for Egypt's state security.

The National Association for Change used a wide array of communication networks to spread their message, this included Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Ghonim, the creator of the Facebook page 'We Are All Khaled Said', invited all members to protest on January 25, and within 3 days more than 50.000 people responded that they would attend (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

Initially only a few hundred were drawn into the streets (Alterman, 2011). The difference was made by street activism, which preceded the revolution and paved the way for it. Through street activism people were reached who do not have internet access. The protestors included economic grievances, besides social justice and freedom, and secured support from people living in poor neighbourhoods (Alterman, 2011; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

As the number of protesters began to rise, they began to constitute a movement. Early on January 28, the Egyptian government shuts down the internet and mobile phone network, but the demonstrations for that day had already been organized (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The blackout lasted for about 6 days, and besides a political struggle it became a communication struggle between the governments and the activists as well. Although there was some internet monitoring before the uprising, during the uprising protesters were quite successful in circumventing internet controls (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The concessions Mubarak offers are not enough, and the protesters hold their ground. Over the next week thousands of people join the protests and call for dignity and freedom.

Finally the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces compels Mubarak to step down. When Mubarak resists leaving, the generals make the newly-appointed vice-president to inform the president that if he doesn't step down, he would face charges of high treason. Then on February 11 Mubarak steps down and the Egyptian Army Supreme Council takes over (Lesch, 2011). The described events are summarized and presented in table 1.

Table 1		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Action/Event</u>	<u>Effect</u>
January 14-24	Calls for Egyptian demonstration spread on Facebook and Twitter (Tunisian Revolution forces Tunisian President to flee Tunisia).	Up to 85.000 people confirm their participation on the January 25 demonstration.

Tuesday January 25 (Day of Revolt)	Tens of thousands of Egyptians protest in streets of Cairo, and in other cities in Egypt.	The large turn-out leads to a call (also on social networks) for another demonstration across Egypt on January 28.
Wednesday January 26 & Thursday 27 January	First hints of the fact that the Egyptian government decides to cut internet and cell phone communications for six days.	The actions of the government have an adverse effect on demonstrators. Demonstrators decide to demonstrate day and night in Cairo's Tahrir Square and other places in Egypt.
Friday January 28 (Friday of Anger)	1-2 million people demonstrating and expressing their anger, in different places across Egypt. Internet providers and mobile operators are cut off till around Wednesday the 2 nd of February.	Mubarak addresses the nation and promises to form a new government.
Tuesday February 1	Again, Mubarak addresses the nation, promises not to run for president and announces that he will stay in power until September	
Wednesday February 2	Pro-government forces beat and kill many Egyptian demonstrators (also known as bloody Wednesday)	Demonstrations increase, 4-5 million people protest across Egypt.
Friday February 4 (Friday of Resilience)	Demonstrations grow, estimations are around 20 million people across Egypt	The size of the demonstrations increases, additional demands are put forward.
Thursday February 10	Mubarak refuses to step down, instead he delegates his duties to the vice-president	Demonstrators surround the parliament, ministries, and national TV, and vowed to surround Mubarak's palaces and residences.
Friday February 11 (Friday of Departure)	Mubarak steps down from presidency, Supreme Council of Armed Forces takes over and Egyptians celebrate the success of their revolution	A major objective of the demonstrators is achieved.

Table 1: Timeline of the events in the eighteen day revolution in Egypt 2011; Source: (Attia et al., 2011, p. 371).

Conclusion

This chapter elaborated on the conditions in which the revolution was embedded. The economic situation was challenging, inequality was growing and prices for staple food were high. The liberalization of state owned companies had resulted in a small wealthy elite, whereas the poor were worse off time and again. While investment in public sector shrunk, the private sector did not step in to fill this gap, which resulted in deteriorating infrastructure and declining services for society. The structural adjustment programme had a profound impact on workers and peasants and took away the progressive rights and small privileges they enjoyed. Egypt has a young population and suffers of high (youth) unemployment. The military was hesitant towards the liberalization course pursued by the government. The political situation was gloomy. It was expected that Gamal Mubarak would take

over during the next elections and connections between the business world and politics would become even more profound.

The revolution can be seen as a call for dignity, in a sense that the protesters were rejecting the humiliation and degradation that has accompanied the authoritarian rule as well as the absence of rule of law, the lack of transparency and the indignity brought by corruption. 'Enough is enough' as Kefaya, one of the first of several real oppositional movements, stated. The first demonstration on the 25th of January, which would be the start of the uprising, did not come overnight but was the result of online and offline preparation. In the last decades the Egyptian media landscape developed towards a more varied one with the introduction of satellite TV and internet. The internet was utilized by those who opposed the Mubarak regime. Between 2004 and 2011 oppositional movements, like Kefaya and April 6th were formed, which would play an important role during the revolution. Online a political sphere was created, first in the form of blogs and personal sites, later Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were added. This created a toolkit for the activists and the gained experience was used during the protests in January/February of 2011 and ultimately led to the ousting of Mubarak.

The next chapter provides an analysis of the retrieved data from the tweets and interviews.

5. Analysis

From September until November 2012, 18 interviews have been conducted in Cairo. The retrieved data will be presented below, together with relevant data from the tweet set. The structure of this chapter is as follows: firstly devices, the blackout (see 5.1.1) and TV will be elaborated, secondly practices and especially two Facebook pages that stood out will be described. Thirdly organizational forms are presented, and attention is being paid to organizing the protests, medical support and the Tunisian revolution. This chapter finalizes with a conclusion.

5.1 Devices

This part elaborates on the devices, such as mobile phones, laptops – the hardware– that respondents used to access new media. The blackout and TV, when none of the devices were working, will be treated in this part.

The image that appears from the interviews is that most respondents accessed new media from any place that was available, although two respondents could access new media only at home, because they had no smartphone. Respondent 16: *'I was online like 24 hrs. On the street I am checking my mobile, if I am at home just at my laptop or on my mobile whatever is available'*. The biggest exception was during the blackout, when there was (almost) no internet, and people had to use other ways such as TV to get information about what was going on. The blackout and TV will be elaborated in 5.1.1 and respectively 5.1.2.

When the protests continued, and after the blackout, the protesters set up a media tent in Tahrir square where people could upload their videos via usb modems. When people had no smart phones, internet cafés were also used. One respondent mentioned other reasons to go to an internet café, namely to be off the street for a little while, relax a little and watch video's or photos. Respondent 7: *'sometimes we go to internet cafés, to share, to watch...'*. Internet cafés were also used to upload video's or photos because internet in public places/on the street was too slow, or respondents would upload their photos and video's at home. The devices aided the people in the street to act as citizen journalists and mass self-communicate, they were able to make photos or videos and to upload these materials directly, if internet was available or otherwise they might do so at another place. As will be elaborated, the materials from the people in the street ultimately reached a global audience.

Although most respondents were online almost all the time, they didn't use every practice on a device everywhere. One reason provided for this is the fact that some practices, such as uploading video's or photos requires more bandwidth than just a tweet and the internet available in the street wasn't fast enough. To support the protestors people who live near Tahrir square were asked to open up their wireless network, which would make it possible for more people to access internet and join in online activities, until the 28th of January when mobile communication and internet was blocked.

5.1.1 The Blackout

On Thursday January 27th, the third day of demonstrations, the first hints of the blackout emerged, the government had begun to block individual sites as Facebook and Twitter.⁶ Apparently the regime somehow felt threatened by people who used new media. Between the 28th of January and the 2nd of February all four major telecommunications companies, Telecom Egypt, Vodafone/Raya, Link Egypt and Etisalat Misr blocked internet. As a result up to 93% of Egypt's internet addresses and networks were out. But the blackout was not total, the Noor Group/Telecom Italia, used amongst others by the Egyptian Stock Exchange and financial processes, was left uninterrupted (Stepanova, 2011). The blackout lasted almost a week; on the 2nd of February all communication methods were functioning again (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The blackout on the third day of the demonstrations, when the internet and the mobile networks were disrupted for at least three days⁷, had an enormous effect on the protesters and on the course of demonstrations to come.

By cutting the internet and the mobile phone signal the government tried to undermine the assets of the activists, and block switches of connections between networks, in this case the various oppositional movements. Respondent 10: *'Cause I'd like to tell you for example what's going on in Egypt. The cut of in Egypt, his main aim was to cut the connection between the activists. To isolate Egypt. Whatever happened in Egypt no one will know of course I overcome the connection by land phone, I overcome the connection by sending the message to abroad. I have people who are updating the page, because the internet was cut off. So it was like they cut the mobile connection and they cut the internet'*. The Egyptian government did not manage to isolate Egypt and by shutting down the internet, the government made it difficult to trace the activists who used the internet, unlike the Iranian government did in 2009 during the actions of the Green Movement.

During the blackout new media played a minor role inside Egypt, but it ensured something else, the government's attempt to block Internet was actually positive for protesters, it made people more determined, pushed undecided people to a more active role and forced people to find creative ways to communicate and organize. The measures taken by the regime to make the protesters go home had a reverse and unintentional effect. It caused an increase in numbers of demonstrators, respondent 18: *'During the blackout new media played little or no role, some independent newspapers tried to cover and spread the real image. During the blackout people began to find out that things were taking its turns, and they wanted to join the protests'*. All respondents agree that the fact that the internet and mobile phones were cut led to more people on the street, it made protesters more determined to continue protesting and cutting the internet the regime made sure that everyone knew that something was going on, even people who were not into politics at all. Certain orders from 'above', the dominant power, lead to an intense opposite reaction from below. Respondent 5: *'This was very stupid of the ministry, because it make the people... let's say there is some guy staying at his home and he is not in to politics at all and then when you cut the phone line and you cut his mobile then he will say like why are you cutting it, there is something, so this was like you know the stupidity of him, like the tried to make an act, very very stupid act, this made all the 80 million people in Egypt knew that there is something and there might be something. And made them*

⁶ It is difficult to provide hard facts on the blackout, exact information on the dates that mobile phones and the internet didn't work varies, different sources give provide different numbers.

⁷ The mentioned duration of the blackout by the respondents differs from three to five days or sometimes even up to a week.

feel that these people who went protesting are really powerful. They are so powerful, otherwise they wouldn't have done such a dramatic act. They wouldn't have, because he didn't cut only the phone line (land lines), but he cut the mobile, the internet, all the communication. The mobile, all the mobile and no one in Egypt doesn't have a mobile, everyone have mobile, even the poor people have mobile. And when they thought he give them the feeling that the people in Tahrir square were really powerful. Even if they are not, but he gave them the power from his acting, from his frightening. And everyone knew'. Although about 20-30% of the Egyptians have access to internet, almost 80% has a mobile phone, so even poor people knew that something was going on. The blackout loosened emotions among Egyptians, respondent 4: 'So when I found out that I had no connection it made me angry, it made me disconnected from the world. So... that's the reason which made more people take to the streets. Mubarak thought that by cutting off the internet connection he will be able to deprive demonstrators of their effective weapon against him but actually it united people against him'. Instead of what the government intended with the measure, people stayed in the streets, and more people went to the streets. Respondent 12: 'It was a mistake for them, because you know we gathered all people and forced them to go to the street. Because people weren't able to communicate. They stupidly thought that maybe it was really very stupid of them, that if they suspend all this so we won't be able to communicate with each other we will not encourage each other to go out But in fact was the opposite, everybody went outside'. Instead of making people go home the cut of the internet had the opposite effect. It ensured that the whole population knew that something was going on.

The blackout attracted the attention of the international community, it was unheard of that a country would cut off all means of communication in a snap. Two respondents mentioned this in the interviews: respondent 4: *'It made the international community condemn him. I remember that Hillary Clinton made a speech and she urged the regime to respect freedom of connection, freedom of expression'*. Not only became Egyptians more determined and united against the regime because of the blackout, it also had consequences on the attitude of the international community vis-à-vis the protests against the Egyptian regime.

Events that happen in society have an expression in social networking, because whereas inside Egypt new media played a minor role during the blackout, outside Egypt the conversation on Twitter continued as this tweet illustrates: *'NO INTERNET IN EGYPT AND WE ARE STILL TRENDING IN 14 COUNTRIES! in your face Mubarak! #jan25'*. Also as the number of retrieved tweets suggests, during the blackout the amount of retrieved tweets is not considerably lower than before or after the blackout, see table 2 in 3.5. This indicates that Twitter played a role in connecting the local (Egyptian) public and the uprising with the global public, in other words the network of virtual ties of the real world. Most tweets were sent abroad (Wilson & Dunn, 2011), as the small amount of people who use Twitter in Egypt indicates as well.

In spite of the blackout protesters were still able to communicate and get their news out, which shows local global connections. The blackout illustrates networks between Egyptians in Egypt and Egyptians living abroad and others who sympathized with the Egyptians, who offered advice and tried to help the Egyptians in circumventing the blackout. The blackout demonstrates the real ties of social networks and reached a global audience. As one respondent points out: *'We get phone calls from engineer abroad, they speak English and say how to overcome the cut off of the internet.'*

Something simple, you can do it at home, by dial-up and there is other things by street dial up. And then we make some sort of, there is every person is responsible for his area and every three hours he will update the page through the land phone. So like every three hours this person would call me and update me through the land phone. And I will call a person in Qatar and in Saudi Arabia, they are Egyptian, my friends, and they will publish on the page to make the people who are outside Egypt connect with us. So mainly at that time our focus was the people who are following outside Egypt'. Regardless of the blackout, the activists were still able to spread news of what was going on, through Egyptians living abroad or other international connections. In the tweet set 89 tweets are addressing the blackout and tweets show various ways to get around the blackout: 'For everyone who is suffering f/ internet blockage in #Egypt here are ways to get around it <<http://bit.ly/g5Q1PF>> #jan25', or 'Keep Tweeps & Bloggers from #Egypt #Jan25 Online! List of proxies <<http://bit.ly/aAO0pf>> #jan25'. Speak to Tweet was another way whereby landlines were used to create tweets: 'we are trying to spread these numbers among Egyptians: +16504194796 & +390662207294. Speak to Tweet. #jan25'. Or '20 Ways to Circumvent the Egyptian Governments' Internet Block <http://bit.ly/fSJhEp> #jan25 #Egypt'. Some tweets showed more humorous remarks on the blackout: 'Mr. Mubarak, please step down, and before you go; please put the plug back in on the Internet before it blows up in your face! #jan25'. Twitter was a way to get news out, but maybe even more important to make and keep it 'news' outside Egypt. The fact that the Egyptian twitter community was able to reach a global audience is mass self-communication in action; 'Mass' stands for the potential of reaching a global audience and 'self' stands for self-generated content.

The Egyptian regime is a power holder, it has (communication) means to enforce their existing domination or structural position of control and uses the mechanisms of programming and switching. The regime is able to influence discourses that shape the attitude of the Egyptian population and programme them. By cutting the internet and mobile communication means the regime tried to steer the people and make them go home. But it turned out that the opposite happened, the action of the regime brought more people to the streets. The increased number of protesters gave an enormous impulse to the uprising, as did the support that the protesters received from various sides from abroad. The programme attempt of the Egyptian regime on the first protesters had huge unintended effects inside as well as outside Egypt. The discourse, which limits and frames the possibilities of what networks can or cannot do, was influenced by the action of the Egyptian government. By (trying to) block the flow of information the regime accidentally changed the mind-set of the silent majority and created cooperation among the first protesters and other large parts of the Egyptian population, they went to the streets as well or aided the protesters in other ways. By cutting the internet and mobile communication channels the Egyptian regime unintentionally reprogrammed the silent majority, the Egyptians who stayed at home the first days, as well as support from Egyptians living abroad and other international actors.

The Egyptian regime acted unintentionally as a switcher as well during the revolution. Accidentally they increased the resources of the first protesters with help from abroad, and made more people go to the streets. They didn't mean to, but their measure lead to determination among Egyptians, and a shared goal for the protesters. The action of the regime set things into motion that they had not intended, different networks connected and the blackout created cooperation among the Egyptians. The action of the regime increased the number of the protesters, and with the increased numbers the ability of the protesters to influence the discourse among the Egyptians in the Egyptian society

grew. The increased resources and numbers aided in the activists in their ability to reprogramme society.

In their effort to reprogramme society the protesters were assisted by other communication channels during the blackout, namely the TV, which transformed the consciousness and views of the public mind and thereby helped to challenge the dominating regime. This will be elaborated in the next part.

5.1.2 TV

Almost all Egyptians have access to TV (95% of the population), about 70% of the Egyptians have access to satellite television.⁸ In general about 60% of the Arab population get their headlines from Al Jazeera, which indicates that Al Jazeera is an important broadcast channel the region, especially during the blackout in Egypt (Dickey, 2011). Respondent 16: *'So at that time, before the internet back and the mobile connections we just used the TV to know what's happening, or anyone wanted to know what is really happening they needed to go by themselves'*. Besides the interviews Al Jazeera, and though to a lesser extend Al Arabiya, is mentioned in the retrieved tweets. In the tweet sets there are 80 tweets on Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya is mentioned 17 times. Tweets contain links to news items, like: *'Interview with Hossam el-Hamalawy - Features - Al Jazeera English <http://qoo.gl/N4stz#jan25>'* or capture headlines of news items such as: *'@AJArabic estimate total loss in Egypt Stock Market rounds 60Billion LL #jan25'*.

The stories on the state owned TV were different from the stories on Al Jazeera. Seven respondents indicated that the state media was telling lies, whereas Al Jazeera was exaggerating things. During the uprising Al Jazeera was not only monitored public opinion, but also shaped it. The news network raised awareness and influenced public opinion by news selection, framing of the messages and prioritizing of events. Respondent 5: *'Al Jazeera was not fair, making it more bigger, maybe it is only 1000 people sitting, they zoom in, show you the screen full of people'*. Al Jazeera referred to Egypt's demonstrations as a revolution after three days of protesting, whereas the channel didn't call the demonstrations a revolution until 11 January, three days before the departure of Ben Ali (Alterman, 2011). Al Jazeera also gave the demonstrators a positive head count. By referring to the demonstrations as a revolution Al Jazeera validated the protests and gave meaning to the events on Tahrir Square and other places in the country. The way Al Jazeera handled the demonstrations may have triggered undecided people to go to the streets as well, especially after the regime tried to shut down the Al Jazeera broadcast. Respondent 14: *'that was the main reason why some people decided to check what was going on really, cause the television was telling some lies. They knew this wasn't true'*.

Two respondents stated that Al Jazeera was not working and that they got their news from other satellite channels. On 30th of January the Egyptian owned television satellite Nilesat shut down Al Jazeera's broadcast. There are 40 tweets on the shutdown of Al Jazeera but Al Jazeera managed to publicize ways to access alternative satellite feeds and to circumvent government control. There are tweets about continuing coverage, like: *'Now Blocking #AlJazeera Broadcasts to Much of Middle East (via @nealunger) <http://feedly.com/k/iqcErz#jan25>'* and *'Al Jazeera's Cairo office burned down by*

⁸ For more information on connectivity numbers see 4.5 The Egyptian Media Landscape.

pro-Mubarak 'thugs' #egypt #jan25 <http://bit.ly/hV5Ojr>'. The fact that Al Jazeera continued broadcasting the events shows how difficult it is to silence a media in a highly networked world.

The state owned channels told a different story than satellite channels. Respondent 17: *'There is no social media, we just went back to normal human to human communication. So it became normal and depending on TV. So it was definitely like one the state owned TV which was different than other TV so luckily we had like much more other sources of information'*. Al Jazeera provided a counter narrative against the ruling regime and both Al Jazeera and the state TV presented extreme sides of things that were happening, respondent 14: *'the Egyptian media was showing some other country, like everything was so calm, just the Nile... it is a beautiful country while people were being beaten and eh like the police forces were shooting at the Egyptian media was showing the Nile and they said that everything was calm'*. Another experience with these extreme sides was confusion, respondent 2: *'it was confusing once you opened the state TV you see that nothing happened and they just like got the picture of the Nile in front of the TV building which is so quiet, nothing was happening'*. There are also tweets which indicate that people were confused with the news that both sides spread: *'Must say, biggest enemy of #jan25 is Egyptian TV channels. Spread false rumors to cause confusion #jan25'* and some people lost confidence in news altogether: *'I can't even check any news site anymore. I lost confidence with the media altogether #jan25'*. There were also remarks on the images that the state media showed: *'State TV is recycling footage from who knows when-serene/normal Cairo when unprecedented numbers are in Tahrir. #jan25'* and some jokes appeared on Twitter: *'AJE: "Some people called Nile TV DeNial TV" made me laugh #jan25'*. In total the state media was discussed 56 times in the Tweet set.

The fake information was a reason not to follow the state owned media, respondent 4: *'I didn't follow the local television channels. Cause they brought a bunch of idiot analysts and they focus their camera's with on empty spots in Tahrir square'*. The state owned media was trying to paint another picture, so that people would go home, respondent 15: *'...but on state media they were saying lots of false information like eh, police officers have been attacked and some areas are on fire and it is not, just to make people more afraid and stay home and always having false warnings like saying like there is bombs in Tahrir'*. Both the state owned media and Al Jazeera presented a picture that was on one of the extreme side of the revolution, and as the stories of the respondents demonstrate they Egyptians knew that the actual situation was somewhere in between.

Al Jazeera became the voice of the protesters and broadcasted an increasing number of materials from citizen journalists, such as activist videos, blogs, tweets and Facebook posts thereby facilitating mass self-communication. Khondker cites Castells: *'Al Jazeera has collected the information disseminated on the Internet by the people using them as sources and organized groups on Facebook, then retransmitting free news on mobile phones. Thus was born a new system of mass communication built like a mix between interactive television, internet, radio and mobile communication systems. The communication of the future is already used by the revolutions of the present.... Obviously communication technologies did not give birth to the insurgency. The rebellion was born from poverty and social exclusion that afflict much of the population in this fake democracy....'* (Khondker, 2011, p. 687). Al Jazeera can be seen as a platform, for the cause of the activists and for the activists themselves, by rebroadcasting videos for example. By broadcasting this, Al Jazeera bridges the digital divide and enhances the credibility of the activists. Ritter and Trechsel

(2011) underline the importance of Al Jazeera's coverage. They state that, compared to Tunisia, *'Al Jazeera even more aggressively interjected itself into the struggle to evict Hosni Mubarak from power'* (Ritter & Trechsel, 2011, p. 17). Live reports and video's provided by the organization's own journalists formed the main substance of their coverage. This was supplemented with materials from citizen journalists, such as texts, tweets and status updates which all played a role informing the world, Al Jazeera's journalists cannot be everywhere. In the tweet set there are tweets which contain a link which citizen journalists could use to send their own materials to Al Jazeera: *'send ur videos news to #aljazeera using <<http://sharek.aljazeera.net>> #jan25'*. The fact that Al Jazeera broadcasts materials from citizen journalists indicates that their signal was picked up.

Besides a voice for the protesters Al Jazeera acted as a facilitator and stirred up the events. A clear example is the broadcasting of tweets with a calls to join the demonstrations: *'Call on @AJArabic asking all Egyptians for a million man march today at Tahrir sq by Tariq Abed Rabbo Egyptian activist #jan25'*. Information moved from a practice, entered through a device, towards an organizational form. The first protesters would have been unable to attract this amount of attention if it wasn't for the TV.

Al Jazeera is a mainstream broadcaster, especially in the Arab region. They are influential and have a settled basis. They are a power holder in the (Arab region) news scene, in the case of the Egyptian revolution they assisted the protesters and actively assisted a counter power against the regime. By supporting and overemphasizing the news from the side of the demonstrators they enhanced the credibility of the protesters. Al Jazeera possessed in the words of Castells: *'the control of or the influence on the apparatus of communication, the ability to create an effective process of communication and persuasion along the lines that favour the projects of the would be programmers are the key assets in the ability to program each network'* (Castells, 2004, p. 15). During the Egyptian revolution Al Jazeera was positioned in a place where the power lies in the networks society. Al Jazeera had the ability to influence the attitude of their audience in Egypt, as well as elsewhere in the (Arab) world of how they perceive the uprising. Al Jazeera used the mechanisms of programming and switching during the uprising.

Al Jazeera was on the extreme side of the revolution, overstated the events and influenced public opinion. They exercised power through their way of presenting the event, which influenced how people thought about and framed the demonstrations, the approach of Al Jazeera influenced the discourse and reprogrammed people who were not (yet) supporting the demonstrators; By presenting the extreme side Al Jazeera encouraged people to support the protesters. In other words they were a programmer. They had the ability to create an effective process of communication, and their way of broadcasting persuaded Egyptians to join the demonstrations. Al Jazeera favoured the project of the activists, did not support the Egyptian regime, and assisted the activists through their biased reports with effective communication and persuasion which are vital resources in the ability to program a network.

Citizen journalists could send their materials to Al Jazeera, thereby Al Jazeera connected the online activists with people who are not on the internet; Al Jazeera bridged the digital divide and connected the smaller online with the much larger offline public. Besides linking the online and offline public in Egypt and sharing the goal of the activists, they also linked networks of local and global public. The

amount of people that were viewing Al Jazeera (Online) increased enormously, as it appeared in the tweet set: *'#Jazeera Eng had 2500% increase in online viewers - 60% of those viewers USA #jan25'*. Al Jazeera connected local and international viewers with each other through their coverage. The broad coverage of Al Jazeera may have influenced the opinion of people outside Egypt and make them support the protesters.

Al Jazeera raised general awareness, changed public opinion, acted as a facilitator and stirred up the events. Al Jazeera did not start the revolution in Egypt, but the channel can be seen as an accelerator of the whole revolution, it was broadcasting live from Tahrir square and the streets of Cairo. The amount of time that Al Jazeera spent on broadcasting the event, their 24/7 coverage raised awareness among online and offline Egyptians. The large amount of people who get their headlines from Al Jazeera indicates that the channel has a role in shaping and changing people's opinions. The impact of its broadcasts and their way of presenting the events cannot be neglected. Even Aref Hujjawi Program Director at Al Jazeera Arabic acknowledged that Al Jazeera made an explicit call for freedom (Hijjawi, 2012).

5.2 Practices

This part elaborates on the practices, or the things that people do to spread information, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and blogs. Two particular Facebook pages, namely Khaled Said and RNN which were mentioned several times by different respondents, will be elaborated as well. The practices enable anyone to post anything, but this raises questions about the truthfulness of the posts among the readers. This will be addressed in this sub chapter as well.

There are different practices which can be used by citizen journalists to spread information. Eight respondents stated that Twitter was the most important way to spread information. The reasons they provided were that it was fast, much faster than Facebook and you don't need to be friends with someone in order to see or look for an update. Respondent 10: *'For someone like me who is activist and he is in the street I need to know the fast information I prefer to use twitter'*. Respondent 1: *'Twitter is fast, no need to be friends, like on Facebook. You can find anything with the hash tag'. Facebook more difficult to find stuff, twitter is easier, a hash tag and you can find anything.* The fact that anyone can see the information was also mentioned by respondent 3: *'Actually the Facebook was updating about the revolution with the picture with what was happening in Tahrir eh but the main social media was Twitter. It was the most effective one. Because with twitter when you tweet something and you retweet all the people you can see it'*. This includes people abroad; Twitter was also a link to the outside world, because medium is open to anyone with an account. This means that anyone anywhere with an account can follow and retweet things that were happening in Egypt.

Another advantage of Twitter is in order to use it in the streets little bandwidth is needed, whereas other practices, such as Facebook or YouTube, require more bandwidth and the internet in the streets might be too slow to use these practices. One respondent compared Twitter to a news ticker. Hash tags were helpful to get the latest information, sometimes hash tags were as precise as pointing to specific streets, respondent 14: *'but for us, people who went to the square, we used Twitter, just 140 characters you writing through the hash tag so that you could spread the word quickly and we had hash tags during the revolution so many hash tags with what was going on, even by the name of*

the streets'. Twitter provides instant journalism, there is no time difference between the 'events' and the 'news', both happen in the present. Information on Twitter could be very specific, but also more general, in the tweet set there are 90 tweets which contain information on protest places and the amount of people present, 104 tweets are about the situation in general, such as *'there is protest reportedly at Ramses square #Jan25'* or *'in front of press syndicate our number isn't big #jan25'*. Overall Twitter is much faster than for example Facebook, and some activists kept on tweeting, even when the situation in the street was pretty rough; Respondent 14: *'sometimes they were shooting at us, teargasses and I swear I couldn't even see what I was writing and when I go back I read it and I had some grammar mistakes. But it was very intense, I remember my cousin once he beat me on the street cause I was like, it was very crowded and I couldn't see what was going on and I kept on grabbing my hand to run and I just wanted to write what was going on. And people would actually never believe that we are tweeting. They thought that we are making things up because we are tweeting from inside the square. There was teargas everywhere we smelled teargas and at the same time we were tweeting'*. Twitter was fast and updated all the time and accessible for anyone with an account, but at the same time there were respondents for which Facebook was the most important way to receive or spread information.

Besides the enthusiastic users of Twitter, there were six other respondents who said that Facebook was the type of new media that was the most important way to spread and receive information. Respondents indicated that Facebook was used to pass news or to post/watch pictures and videos. Also events were created and promoted. It was a tool to communicate and to organize things on the ground, but also for people who went home in the night or stayed at home - for various reasons- they could/would encourage the people in the street via Facebook. Another noted difference between Twitter and Facebook is that a Facebook post is not limited to 140 characters and allows for more discussion and interaction on issues. Respondent 2 stated that information was spread *'through Facebook, Facebook so common. Twitter not that much familiar. Not very few, but few'*. Respondent 5 also stated that *'Facebook was most popular then Twitter. Twitter became after very popular'*. One reason for the importance of Facebook was the fact that it was easier to share video's and photos; Respondent 17: *'I like to see pictures and in Twitter you also have to click and open different links, so it was never very convenient and comfortable to use Twitter, I depended more on Facebook for social media, Twitter is out of context, Facebook is bigger'*. There were more Egyptians using Facebook than Twitter, and Facebook reached a bigger audience in Egypt but you need to be friends to see updates, which is not the case with Twitter, where you can search for any update through a hash tag. Besides people being Facebook friends and seeing updates from each other, there are also Facebook pages, where an administrator can post updates and people who follow the page can comment; A Facebook page is not limited to one's own network and can reach a bigger audience because updates are visible for all those who follow the page. There are two famous Facebook pages related to the Egyptian revolution, namely Khaled Said Facebook page and RNN, which will be elaborated in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

One respondent admitted the downside of Facebook; Respondent 16: *'Facebook it was easier and better for sharing videos and photos, but that was just limited to your own network and your friends'*. Then again respondent 5 stated that: *'then they used the Facebook to expand the people who knew because it is always about that when you, for example I am a friend of you and then you have like 20 friends and I have 50 friends and then we are common friends. So you make the post and then I share*

the post, then some of my 50 friends let's say maybe 20 of them will like the post and share it and then from the 20 it goes like this maybe 10 of them will like the post'. Although you can share each other's updates it seems that on Facebook it was more convenient to share photos and videos. Although you have to be friends with each other on Facebook in order to be able to see updates from someone else there are also other ways on Facebook such as the before mentioned 'pages'.

YouTube was used to spread news during the revolution, but compared to Twitter or Facebook it played more of a supporting role. Respondent 16: *'the things that I call infrastructural more than social media tool like YouTube and Flickr, that storage areas where you can put video's and then you can share it through Facebook. This was important because without YouTube you cannot easily share video's'.* YouTube was also used in the advent of the first protests. There was a movie circulating with a girl (Asmaa Mahfouz) who called upon people to go protesting. Respondent 6: *'I was stimulated by the video I was engaged by the video, informed by the list where to go, where not to go'.* The video was circulating in networks of activists and others and encouraged people to go to the street. By delivering the message the video created an alternative towards the dominant position, which was stay at home and increased the switching power of the activists.

In the tweet set there are 96 links to videos on YouTube or Vimeo and 219 links to pictures and cartoons. Some are self-made video's, for example: *'RT @jilliancyork: A short (and subtitled) film from the streets of Cairo <http://bit.ly/fKcxg4> #jan25'* or *'Video from Tahrir Sq. showing a little girl screaming "down with Mubarak" <<http://youtu.be/ERdEZYdl6jo>> #egypt #jan25'.* Others are (re)tweeted reports from international broadcasters such as Al Jazeera: *'Egypt holds 'Day of Departure' - Middle East - Al Jazeera English <http://t.co/AMpkNDh> via @AddThis #jan25 #egypt'.* Or from people elsewhere who show their solidarity: *'I SUPPORT EGYPT : #Jan25 Egyptian Revolution - The World Calls for Peace #Egypt #peace <http://youtu.be/wv9kDyaOyll?a>'.* YouTube and other pages where citizen journalists could post videos and photos enabled them to spread their message or the messages from others that supported their point of view. As a practice it supported mass self-communication.

Blogs played a role before the revolution, as can be read in 5.1 There were some famous bloggers who informed the Egyptians about things that were wrong in Egyptian society, acted as a wakeup call, respondent 15: *'So also lots of bloggers have been starting since 2000 and 2001, writing in English and Arabic about corruption mainly, violence, the state security violation, the human rights violations, Coptic's... So there has been some kind of a movement online that's involved more of an activist that brings those things but it was in a smaller circle so most of the time they know each other. Very concentrated? Very concentrated, most of the time they know each other and not to the general public'.* Blogs were shared through Facebook and Twitter and played more of a supporting role as well, respondent 6: *'if we are going down the streets we will lose friends, maybe we'll lose our lives, maybe we get hurt and injured and we use our future in jail. But this is the price for freedom and we are willing to pay and I remember my friend Amroe, we are having this conversation two days before the revolution and he told me that he would like to write an article about the revolution and I told him if it is priced by blood I'm ready to get the first bullet and he named the article the first bullet. And he send us to read of the price of freedom and that we are willing to pay this price. This article on Facebook has been shared a lot, we shared this article and the comments on this article people volunteered for the second bullet, third bullet, fourth so we have about 20 bullets volunteered*

for'. This fragment shows that an article can trigger emotions and feelings from people who read it. Blogs can encourage people, and emotions and feelings can be strong stimulants when striving for a cause.

Links to blogs were also found in the tweet set, namely 22 times. Sometimes blogs were written abroad and supported the Egyptians on the street: '<http://jan25egy.blogspot.com/2011/01/letter-to-world.html> MUST READ. #jan25 #egypt'. But it could also be stories from the ground written by independent bloggers or bloggers who write for a new agency: 'RT @Mwforhr: Great story from the ground at Egypt Tahrir Square yesterday: <http://j.mp/euLPC2> #jan25 #sidibouid #iranelection #Yemen #Egypt'. Blogs can trigger discussions on the street and on the page itself and provide a place where Egyptians could speak their minds. It provided an opportunity to publish stories, speak their minds and inform others without interference of a third party. Like the videos the blogging scene increased the switching power, and created an alternative towards the dominant position. It enabled people to increase awareness among fellow Egyptians, encouraged people, and activated emotions and feelings, which are strong motivators and drivers for change.

Practices such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and blogs enabled citizen journalists to express themselves without interference of someone else. In its own way each practice provided any citizen journalist a manner to speak to fellow Egyptians and other hearers around the world. The solidarity video or the blogs written by Egyptians living abroad demonstrate that the internet facilitates a network of like-minded people. Facebook and Twitter were ways to spread information, whereas YouTube and other content related pages are practices which citizen journalists use to show information. The various practices supported the protesters to become programmers and switchers, this will be elaborated in the following part of this sub chapter.

5.2.1 Khaled Said Facebook page

There are two Facebook pages which were mentioned several times by various respondents, these are Khaled Said and RNN. Out of 18 respondents 11 mentioned that they got info from the We Are All Khaled Said main page. The Khaled Said page played an important role before and during the revolution.

When the Khaled Said Facebook page was set up in June 2010 they started with a newsfeed on the case and small actions; as respondent 10 states: '*In the beginning I say we make some sort of action potential in the Facebook, so in the beginning we just giving information feed, and do something small things, like just small just wear black, you know small to see the reaction of the people*'. The Khaled Said page was used to exchange opinions, and people found out that they were not alone. The page was a place where people could share their frustration about things that were going on in Egypt. People could join the page, join a network and engage in discussions with other like-minded people. As respondent 8 states: '*But then like I said, the Khaled Said case, we started to talk, we started to discuss, everyone got a picture, everyone had something to say...*'. The Khaled Said case was not the first case of corruption and police violence, but it became a turning point, and Khaled Said became a martyr of the revolution. Respondent 15 stated on that the Khaled Said case '*brought lots of people into rage because that was kind of a breaking point because, it was going, going, going.... it was building up. He gave the revolution a face, but the anger and the discomfort and the*

discontent it was already with everyone'. In the tweet set 28 tweets are about Khaled Said, to remember his death which indicates that he became an iconic figure, 'RT @Alshaheed: Remember this video made after Khaled Said's murder with english subtitles <http://bit.ly/aVMJfO> showing silent stands & torture #Jan25 PlzRT'.

Respondents stated that the Facebook page was important to gain knowledge on the initial plans for the demonstrations. Besides discussion and small actions, the page also called for demonstrations against the police, was used to distribute information and to encourage people to speak up. Before the demonstration on the 25th of January there had been calls to organize a protest. Respondent 18: *'From the end of 2010 onwards the Khaled Said Facebook page was used to call for a demonstration against the use of violence by the police, and also against the Ministry of Home Affairs and the government. When people were beaten up they were called upon to continue'.* The page had an invitation where people could indicate if they would join the protests on the 25th of January. Respondent 9: *'Through the internet, through Facebook, there was like a group. They are going to ask for our rights, on Tuesday 25/01, ok so we will go'.* The National Association for Change, one of the initiators of a protest, used various media such as Khaled Said page to spread their message. Respondent 6: *'the group Khaled Said was key posting and advertising about the day'.*⁹ The demonstration was presented as an open event, not linked to religion or political preference, so that everyone could participate. The National Association for Change collaborated with the administrators of the Khaled Said Facebook page to spread the news of the upcoming demonstration.

New media provided autonomous communication for people to create and build their project. The National Association for Change is a counter power, and strived for change in Egypt. They cooperated with a largely online based counter power, namely the network of the Khaled Said Facebook page to spread information about the demonstration. Within the National Association for Change and the Khaled Said Facebook page people acted as a switcher, they connected both networks and tried to reach out to a broader public and motivate their supporters to join the demonstration. The planned demonstration created an organizational interface, both wanted change in Egypt and together they tried to get as many people as possible to the street. Together they would be able to generate more publicity and attention and raise awareness for the event, this is an incentive for both movements to cooperate with each other.

5.2.2 Rassd News Network

Next to the Khaled Said page, Rassd News Network¹⁰ (RNN) was mentioned by six respondents, but not specifically asked for by the researcher.¹¹ RNN originally began back in 2010, at the time of Egypt's parliamentary elections. Egyptian media largely failed to report fraud and intimidation that characterized the elections. Instead, state media aired counterfactual reports and false claims in order to legitimize the NDP's victory. In an effort to document and spread the truth about the election process, some activists decided to set up a page on Facebook under the title 'Field

⁹ The Khaled Said page is the Facebook page where people could confirm if they would join the demonstration.

¹⁰ 'Rassd' stands for 'Rakeb, Sawwar, Dawwan', or 'Observe, Photograph, Blog' in Arabic.

¹¹ Only half way through the interviews the researcher found out about the existence of RNN and its name does not appear in the tweet set.

Monitoring Unit – 2010 Parliamentary Elections’. The Facebook page aimed at providing quick short stories documented in photos and/or videos.

RNN functions on the basis of a network of volunteering reporters, and a small core of volunteering editorial staff. Besides RNN’s volunteering reporters, members of the public are encouraged to send in text messages, pictures and videos documenting events they witness. This was done through a variety of channels, a hotline, email, Twitter and Facebook accounts. A staff of around 190 volunteer RNN reporters checks and confirms the reported events. There were volunteers responsible for certain areas and would check if the news was correct. Once the news items are verified, the editorial staff posts them on the Facebook page and Twitter channel. Before posting they are quickly and minimally formatted by the publishing desk.

RNN reported on the Tunisian uprising from the outset and then RNN set itself to report on the ‘Police Day’ protests planned in Egypt for the 25th of January. At the end of January the 25th, the founders of the page opened a new Facebook page under the title of ‘Rassd News Network’. Like the old page (Field Monitoring Unit – 2010 Parliamentary Elections) the new page relied on citizen journalism and encouraged Egyptian members of the public to take an active part in reporting the truth about rapidly unfolding events all across Egypt.

After an agreement with the ‘We Are All Khaled Said’ Facebook page’s administrator, RNN was endorsed as the ‘official’ news-source for the online community of activists and youths who were involved in the protests. Interview 11: *‘And when the start of the revolution the ‘We Are All Khaled Said page’ shared the page and what happened in Tahrir square. And we are all in Tahrir square, for updates in the moment, live’*. In the span of eighteen days, RNN grew to an audience of 500.000 online members, and around 50 reporters across Egypt. An average of 6500 reports came in daily and 4000 were published online. RNN became a widespread news provider for the youth and the online public and is a prime example of mass self-communication and citizen journalism. The accessible means RNN put at the disposal of Egyptians allowed everyone to become a stakeholder and an active participant in Egypt’s uprising, contributing with matter-of-fact truth and non-violent tactics. Thanks to the widening circle of people who contributed to the network and who accessed the information, facilitated by the fluidity of online connections, the message of RNN spread rapidly. The page was more than a tool for disseminating information, RNN became a place to discuss and assess news among followers, but also for warning and mourning, and a place for calls to rally, thus participating in the online development of the revolutionary spirit through practice.

Both networks, RNN and the Khaled Said Facebook page, are counter powers, they had a different Egypt in mind than the one that was existed at that moment. Although some ideas they had might slightly differ, their general vision corresponded, both envisioned a different Egypt. The discourse of their programme matched with each other, ultimately both networks consisted of like-minded activists who struggled for a different Egypt. The conditions to switch were set, that is to say, the ability to connect different networks. Some people active in the networks acted as switchers, they agreed to use RNN as the official network to spread news about the demonstrations. With the agreement between the two networks they formed a strategic alliance against the practices of the then governing regime in Egypt, a power holder. Both networks were active online and used the (online) communication channels within reach to put forward an alternative vision of Egypt, and

what was happening to people who went to the street and actively fought for this. They used materials from citizen journalists to tell the story of the people on their side and were platforms which could be used for discussion among followers. The increase in followers shows that the online communication channels assisted in transforming the consciousness and views of the public mind, which helped both networks to fight the established power structures.

RNN was approached by established TV channels for material. Updates that were published on the Facebook page of RNN were broadcasted by large broadcasters as Al Jazeera, CNN and others. Respondent 10: *'My important things was to put those things in social media, to make you know as activist that what's happening, where there is protest, where there is security. And it stop here. And there is other people like Aljazeera who take it from social media as directly and they take it to the TV'*. Respondent 10 also stated: *'we cooperate with all the outlets, CNN, NBC, BBC, whatever arrived to us cooperate with us. ...whoever came to us we gave him whatever he want. We are not focusing on money, we are not for anywhere. And for cooperation between us and Aljazeera I know that they put us in publishing whatever came from us we will take it and we will check it and we will publish it, but it's like they have the great capability in Egypt to do that'*. Thereby the scope of RNN increased even more. The signal of the citizen journalists was broadcasted to an international audience, and becomes virtually too big to be ignored. Also RNN was able to update their page during the blackout because they had contact with people outside Egypt. Respondent 6: *'RNN they start using landlines outside Cairo to send online messages in Facebook. They have friends abroad so they call them they speak to them and those people publish things it was just like this'*. Not only inside Egypt was RNN able to connect to other networks and cooperate, also outside Egypt was RNN able to cooperate with networks of people who supported their cause.

The activists and oppositional movements use the mechanisms of programming and switching to resist the established domination of the power holders in a network society. RNN is a prime example of a network in a network society. RNN is dynamic, it evolved from a small page into a large network with many people contributing and accessing the information. RNN grew and cooperated with other networks, such as the Khaled Said Facebook page but also established TV channels; Networks evolve and develop through their interaction in a network of networks. RNN, the network, was powered by information delivered through information technology. In a network society alternative projects put forward by social actors, such as the National Association for Change or the Khaled Said Facebook page, who aim to reprogram society and must use the communication channels. These communication channels might transform the consciousness and views of the public mind, in order to challenge the dominating powers.

5.3 Organizational Forms

This part elaborates on organizational forms, which are the actions that develop around the devices and the practices. Roughly three different types of organizational forms can be distinguished. Firstly new media was used to organize the protests. Secondly, new media was used for medical support. Thirdly new media was used to exchange information between Egyptian activists, Tunisian activists and others.

5.3.1 Organizing Protests

There are various ways of organizational forms that respondents pointed out. There are tweets with practical advice for people who go to the streets: *'RT @monasosh: What u need for ur protection in a demo <http://tinyurl.com/4t532do> #Jan25'*. On different types of new media there were calls to join demonstrations, such as the invitation on the Khaled Said page and the YouTube movie which tried to motivate people to join the protests. In the tweet set there are 12 tweets with a call to join the 1 million marches, 32 tweets which announce planning of mega protests, 36 calls to join the protests and 67 tweets of people who state that they will join upcoming protests.

Previous experience with organizing demonstrations had learned that you had to reach out to a broader public if you really want to achieve something. Respondent 18: *'On Facebook there are groups on football, music or cinema. 6th of April movement tried to reach out to these groups and couple the problems that we have with football and music to Egyptian politics in order to get the attention of people who are not into politics'*. In other words, couple the problems that exist in Egyptian society to the Egyptian political situation so the Egyptian population gets an idea of who is to blame, try to make the people angry, so that people will go to the street when they are asked to.

The announcement of the demonstration on the 25th of January was on internet, 'out in the open', and could be read by anyone, also the from the government or police. Respondent 15: *'the event of the revolution itself, it was giving dates and places to collect people inside it, going from this area to that area so it give us a framework because you know now where to start, and where to go and what to do'*. Respondent 18: *'At the beginning the role of new media was to organize, without social media there would be no way to organize because people would be arrested for the slightest 'offense''*. But besides this open event that anyone could access there was also another plan. Besides using new media to organize the protests, where anyone could read the plans, private face to face contact between activists played a role in order to avoid being trapped by the police. To prevent the security forces from knowing everything the main leaders of the different opposition movements (6th of April Movement, We Are All Khaled Said) met in person and discussed the strategy plan. Besides digital communication, face to face communication played an important role during the preparations of the first demonstration.

In the previous years the activists had learned lessons about demonstrations. They would only work if they would be too big to be contained by Egypt's security forces, could count on support from as many actors of civil society as possible and if protests did not start at the same location, which would prevent early encircling by security forces. Respondent 18: *'Next to the public announcement of the protests with locations and starting times on Facebook, 6th of April had a 'secret plan', namely to meet up 500 meters from the places that were announced on the internet, and then tell the rest on that moment we will be there in 15 minutes. It would be a place close to the police cordon, in order to be able to break through the barrier. This plan was spread only face to face, in order to prevent the (secret) police from finding out. During previous publicly organised protests the protesters got beaten up, which also attracts attention, and Tahrir would be closed off, so they wouldn't be able to enter the square'*. The activists worked with different starting locations for the protests from which demonstrators would march to Tahrir square. These exact locations were only known to the leaders of the movements, they would meet in a public place like a mosque or a bridge. On the day of the protests they would march to Tahrir square. Within minutes their number had grown into hundreds,

too many to be quickly encircled by the police. The security forces knew about the protests, but they did not know the starting locations.

On the Friday the 28th of January, the third day of protests, mosques were used as starting points. Friday is the traditional day off in Egypt, and most men go to the mosques to pray. Respondent 16: *'Cause 25th was a Tuesday, and then demonstrations continued in different locations with small amount of people for Wednesday and Thursday, while everyone agreed that ok, the big thing will be on Friday, cause it is the weekend and everyone will be at home, so and. Naturally most of the Egyptians go to the Friday prayer in the mosques, so ok let's gather in mosques and then move on'.*

A call for to go protesting on Friday was on the Khaled Said Facebook page, but communication also run via the Muslim Brotherhood, Friday was also the day that the Muslim Brotherhood officially joined in the protests, a fact that is mentioned 32 times in the tweet set. In the first days some members of the Muslim Brotherhood joined the demonstrations, but this was an individual decision.

The network of the Muslim Brotherhood cooperated with other oppositional movements. Within the network of the Muslim Brotherhood and the oppositional movements some people connected the networks and acted as switchers. As a political movement the Muslim Brotherhood was illegal in Egypt, they might have seen a chance to change this. The support of the Muslim Brotherhood gave weight to the other oppositional movements, the Muslim Brotherhood is a large organization and has support of many Egyptians. The support of the Muslim Brotherhood consisted of their network, people and organizational skills, thereby they increased resources and validated the actions of the first protesters.

Within the different oppositional movements certain activists possessed switching power, the power to create alliances with other oppositional movements against the dominating power structures. Activists within RNN and Khaled Said formed a strategic alliance with the April 6th movement. The activists knew each other and met in person to discuss a strategy. April 6th also tried to extend their switching power by trying to connect to different networks such as on football, cinema or music scene and couple this to their project. They also went to poorer neighbourhoods to spread their message offline, beyond the online groups who use new media. The oppositional movements tried to plug into other networks in order to get more people behind their cause. From experience and build up connections (networks) protesters had learned lessons for the upcoming demonstrations, previously oppositional movements were too narrow focused and weren't able to generate support beyond the leverage point. This time oppositional movements used causes that affected everyone in Egyptian society, made appealing slogans, and tried to secure support from different parts of society, like the soccer clubs which gave the more weight to the demonstrators. By using causes that affected everyone they tried to set the scene and programme the network of protesters. The demands which were central during the first protests, 'bread, freedom and social justice', were things that were familiar to the average Egyptian. Thereby the protests were made accessible to everyone and not just those who are better off. Tahrir square can be seen as a spatial concrete expression of the virtual networks, an action that was prepared in online networks, landed in the streets, offline.

But not only in Egypt did virtual networks lead to concrete real expressions in the street. Also in other places around the world solidarity demonstrations were held. In the tweet set there are 107 calls for solidarity demonstrations on different days and different places around the world, for

example in the US, Ireland, France or the Netherlands; 'RT @farida904: cc "@BolbolBoi @MinaNaguib90 @waelabbas RT "@monaeltahawy: #US rallies for #Egypt can be found at www.facebook.com/eacusa #Jan25', or 'Demonstration at London Egyptian Embassy <http://t.co/kOnMbt6> via @demotix #Jan25'. Virtual support also came from other Arab countries, there were 29 tweets from which contain expressions of solidarity for the Egyptian protesters. International support can put pressure on governments in the countries where the demonstrations are held. Ritter and Trechsel (2011) state that the widespread solidarity movements throughout the world help to explain Obama's transformation from carefully supportive of their ally to demanding meaningful change and eventually a political transition (Ritter & Trechsel, 2011). Egypt is an important ally for the US in the Arab world and the US supports Egypt financially, the importance of the position of the US shows that in a network society states and geopolitical interests still matter.

The attitude of the EU towards Egypt is discussed 16 times in the tweet set, the attitude of the US towards the unravelling events received 159 tweets; *'Interested in seeing how Obama plays #Jan25 events. Room for bold & defining moves if he is daring & honestly engages citizens of #Egypt'*. The situation in the region and the consequences for Israel and other political issues were addressed 109 times. If the protesters receive backing from the US then the validity of their demands increases. Wilson and Dunn state that the flow of tweets in and out the country gave the Egyptian power holders the idea that the world was watching them and that this may have prevented them from unleashing widespread violence against demonstrations, which had for the greater part a peaceful character (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). The communication networks spread the news around the world and created a global network of people who supported the Egyptian case.

The (solidarity) demonstrations and online activism in Egypt and elsewhere around the world are an illustration of the network society, the organization of the components of the networks society such as individuals, groups or organizations is no longer tied to particular times and places; The network society is both global and local, but this does not mean that everyone is included. Aided by information and communication technology actors can transcend and create virtual times and places and act, perceive and think simultaneously in global and local terms. Real and virtual worlds can meet, and local global connections become apparent. Hackers, activists, and other like-minded people know where to find each other and form networks, help each other, know that they are not the only ones with particular ideas. They operate without borders, but at the same time they can be restricted by borders of the state they live in, for example during the blackout or when they live in Iran or China.

5.3.2 Medical Support

There are practical examples of the use of new media that respondents pointed out, for example calls for medical supplies. Respondents pointed out several cases on Twitter as well as on Facebook. An example from Twitter by respondent 3: *'... we can make a group on something and when you tweet is then all people see it. There was something a group called medical. There is something called ... I don't remember the name related to medical equipment. So what we need and where the point where we should meet to give it to the injured people'*. Respondent 15 also mentioned Twitter as in order to support protesters: *'in Tahrir itself there was like a field hospital and to know what is needed and what supplies needed for that they made a hash tag #Tahrirsupplies so whenever a medicine was*

missing or like bandages or everything, they say that in this area we need this kind of things and people were like donating and going and giving to this area, so it helped to organize what is needed and where and what to do and most of the time they would say that there is a march from this area to this area at that time so this kind of information we could not have accessed it in the normal traditional media which is first manipulated by the government and second was not that fast, not that effective and not that wide spread. So I think that it helped in organizing but it was not the only factor'. Facebook was used as well to support protesters in need, an example from Facebook by respondent 5: '...some people were injured and they were having permanent disease, like a heart disease or blood pressure, and they need to have treatment. So all this was supported by the Facebook because some people, for example doctors sitting at his home and he is not with Mubarak and he is not against Mubarak, he is not with the revolution and he is not against the revolution. He is just sitting at his home and then he checks his Facebook ok the people need any medical stuff then he said ok, this is a person a human being so I will lose nothing I am a doctor, I have this stuff and this is my number. And then they call him where is your address it is blablabla, and then he go and bring the stuff. Many people help this way, because they are not in or out they just helped for the human, especially in the medical field when the doctors in the square needed really help like'. Both Facebook and Twitter were used by the protesters to support their fellow protesters who were in need. In the square and on the street protesters organized themselves, through new media. They used their own network and were powered by information technology. The medical assistance that Egyptians provided for each other it is a clear example of the network society, where key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks.

5.3.3 Tunisia

The whole Arab spring started off in Tunisia with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi and ultimately the Tunisian president Ben Ali fled the country on the 14th of January, days before the first protests in Egypt were scheduled. Tunisia had an enormous impact on the Egyptians, and although the interviewer never specifically asked for the effect of the protests in Tunisia and the escape of Ben Ali the events in Tunisia are mentioned by 12 respondents as positive/inspirational. Respondent 16: *'also that was inspired by the revolution in Tunisia. Also we knew about it from the social media. Because on the news and TV we couldn't rely much on what they were saying and it was really contradicting. So we started sharing experience from people in Tunisia. Ok, how you can deal with the police forces and how you need to go on with the revolution day and night to exhaust, so they won't know how to deal with it and also how to deal with the tear gas bombs and how to deal with all of this stuff'. The influence of the events in Tunisia on the people in Egypt shows that the Egyptian case does not stand alone, as a diagnostic event indicates.*

Before the first protests in Egypt started, Tunisian activists shared their knowledge with their Egyptian companions and contributed to the preparations of the protests, as respondent 15 points out: *'And at that time they were having all kinds of instructions like eh what to wear when they bomb teargasses, what to use, it was very useful. How to make a mask, what to wear, where to go and for the girls specially how to hide and how to not be in the frontlines and everything so it was a little bit helping and organizing, shared knowledge it was like everybody have a thing, they throw and some people pick it up and build on it. And there were manuals where the best places to hide, what to do, how to call the emergency, how to go back to your family'. The Tunisian networks of activists*

cooperated with the Egyptian oppositional networks and exchanged information. Besides exchanging practical information, the internet also provided people a way out of their daily lives and discover that they were not alone.

Initially the protest were intended as just another demonstration, it wasn't meant to be a revolution, respondent 16: *'At the beginning I thought it is just like a normal kind of demonstration, or something like that. I couldn't believe in the beginning that it is a real revolution. I was just dealing with the thing as just people go in the street and trying to express and that's it'*. The date for the first demonstrations was chosen because this was a national holiday, respondent 1: *'We choose 25 of January because it is a day of Police. It is a national celebration for police. So for this reason we pick 25 of January and, we just we were planning to go to Tahrir square to ask for freedom, better life, and to cancel remake parliamentary elections. That were the only reasons. We were not planning to change the regime. It was not in our imagination. It was something very far from us'*. But the events in Tunisia changed the situation and the planned demonstrations might be 'big' after things that happened in Tunisia, respondent 1: *'We got the hope from Tunisia as I told you, this was very important for us'*. The events in Tunisia inspired the Egyptian protesters, especially because there is natural rivalry between Tunisia and Egypt and Egypt used to be the great nation in the Middle East, respondent 6: *'But what happened in the last week before 25 of was really amazing. Inspired by Tunisian Ben Ali escaping after revolution everyone got crazy about having protest in Egypt. and we really got jealous that citizen Tunisian did it and managed to remove their president. If Tunisia can do it, we can do it. But Egypt is not Tunis, we are not a small educated country, we're not it will be a battle'*. The Tunisian revolution inspired the Egyptians, but they still had the idea that it would be a demonstration, not a revolution.

The Egyptians used their networks to gain practical knowledge from others inside and outside Egypt, they could connect with other like-minded individuals and groups on the internet. The networks of the Egyptian activists connected with the networks of the Tunisian activists in virtual places.

Conclusion

New media enables Egyptians and others to engage in mass self-communication, in other words to reach a global audience with self-generated content; Mass self-communication, the devices, practices and organizational forms, enables citizen journalists to communicate and act.

Egyptians were able to spread news via new media, but also used it for more practical issues, such as arranging medical help or exchanging experiences between Tunisian and Egyptian activists, and new media was used by activists to organize protests in advance and in the moment itself. This illustrates the flow between devices, practices and organizational forms, on a device via a practice a call for an organizational form was made.

During the blackout new media played a minor role in Egypt, but attention for the protests continued in other parts of the world, it connected Egyptians in Egypt with Egyptians living abroad and others who were supporting the protesters in Egypt. This gave the Egyptian regime the idea that the world was watching them, and may have prevented them from using harsh violence against the protesters.

In other parts of the world solidarity demonstrations were organized, information about these demonstrations was spread via new media.

The blackout made more people go to the streets and the world condemned the regime for this act. TV played an important role, especially during the blackout. Al Jazeera was clearly on the side of the protesters in the way they framed events and encouraged people to go to the streets. Al Jazeera bridged the digital divide, and connected the online public with the offline public. Citizen journalists could send their videos to the newscaster, mass media connected with and used materials from citizen journalists.

Besides calling upon individual citizen journalists to send their materials Al Jazeera approached RNN, the voice of the protesters, with the question if they could use their materials. This shows that the signal of the protesters was picked up, it enabled citizen journalists to address a global audience with their self-generated content, mass self-communication in action.

Communication was used by both power holders and counter powers during the revolution. The regime and the activists (tried) to use the mechanisms of programming and switching to programme their network or to generate cooperation with other networks. The acts of programming did not always have the intended effect that one had in mind, as the result of the blackout illustrates.

Several oppositional movements worked together during the revolution, such as RNN (a growing and self-organizing network of citizen journalists which spread news from citizen journalists to a large online public), the administrators of the Khaled Said Facebook page and 6th of April. The cooperation between the oppositional movements illustrates the network society, a broad web of interconnection in which many points or nodes, such as persons, groups, collections of information or organizations are embedded instead of a point to point network.

Programmers and switchers are not abstract concepts, but actors in a network such as people within RNN or the administrators of the Khaled Said Facebook group; Programmers and switchers are social actors and can be individuals or a group. In the network society exercising power depends on a complex set of joint action, such as ideas, visions and projects to generate programmes and common goals, in this case a different Egypt. Switching requires the ability to construct a cultural and organizational interface, a common medium in order to generate a surplus value which enables the ability to connect different networks. The oppositional movements shared a vision of a different Egypt and actors in their networks were able to switch and connect the different networks with each other. Programmers can be switchers and vice versa, but eventually the power of programming conditions switching power, because the programs of the networks determine the range of possible interfaces in the switching process; Discourses limit and frame the possibilities when networks can cooperate or when not.

The opposition movements used new media and tried to plug into other online networks, which illustrates the network society, where key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks. The regime cut off the electronically processed information means, the internet and mobile phones, and tried to programme the Egyptians but this had a reverse effect and thereby they unintentionally assisted the activists. The oppositional

movements, or social structures, process and manage information. The oppositional movements can be seen as organizational arrangements of humans in relationships, expressed through communication. It is not just technology that defines the developments of the Egyptian revolution, also cultural, socio-economic and political factors are part of and influenced by the network society. These factors positively assisted the outcome of the processes, the development of the revolution.

6. Role of New Media

New media enables people to engage in mass self-communication, offers a means to communicate and to get involved in networks. This chapter elaborates on the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution and gives insight in how people used new media, how they felt about this, and what it did for them. First of all the responses on the question if there would have been a revolution without new media will be discussed. Then the different roles of new media during the revolution will be discussed. These roles are to motivate, to inspire, to encourage and breaking the fear but also the ability to publish your own stories and whether information is true or not is being discussed. Besides, new media was used to spread practical information, to coordinate and connect with others and to discuss and meet others, whereby new media is compared to an open square. This chapter finalizes with a conclusion.

There is a discussion over if the revolution would have happened without new media. When asked if respondents thought the revolution would have happened if there was no new media, nine respondents said yes, but that it would have been a different revolution, they stated that probably it would have taken longer and that it would have been more violent. Respondent 13: *'During the revolution they cut out the phones and everything but we were still in the street. Why? Because of the idea that we had. So you know, it would still have happened. Maybe not that strong. Maybe not that fast, but it would have happened. Because Egypt reached the level where it cannot go on like that'.* During the blackout there was no new media and there were still people demonstrating in the streets. New media may have triggered the revolution, it was a tool that Egyptians used, it provided them with ideas and connections, but ultimately the social and political conditions were the reasons to go to the street, and revolutions have happened for many years, when there was no new media, respondent 10: *'Yes but different, key is the people. If you want to make a fire and there is no gas you will not be able to make the fire'* and respondent 4: *'...Facebook or social media in general helped in giving the first push to the revolution in initiating or triggering the revolution but Facebook itself is not responsible for the revolution. It was a tool used by people chatting on Facebook and having Facebook accounts. The real reason could be public frustration with Mubarak, brutality of police force, unemployment, lack of proper health system, proper education, harsh living conditions. These are the real reasons and we made many revolutions before, without Facebook, so Facebook is only a tool. It helped by accelerating the process'.* New media facilitated growth of civil journalism, the spread of information between activists and towards a global audience. This speeded up the revolution.

Besides the people who used new media, there are many more people living in Egypt who do not use new media and have no internet access. But even these people who have no internet joined the demonstrations, respondent 15: *'the revolution started in some areas spontaneously and in some areas that they don't have internet even in. So I don't believe that Egyptian revolution was only the effect of the social media and Facebook. It played a big part in it, but also some people participated that they never were online, never on Facebook or Twitter. ... The people in the slums area and the poor and unfortunate areas they were very brave also, they were in the front line, they were part of the revolution, so just exclusively having it as a elites small circle of the activists and the people online would not give the momentum to now'.* The reasons to go to the street were the social and political

conditions, the public frustration with the current situation which didn't provide reasons to be optimistic about the future. The respondents acknowledge that there were people who do not use new media or have access to internet, but those people participated as well.

There are others, two respondents, who state that the revolution would not have happened if there wouldn't have been new media. They emphasize the fact that new media created connections between people, it facilitated the creation of a network of activists who were able to exchange experiences and information. Respondent 6: *'...the social network helped people connect together. Without connecting people you cannot organize people, so you help the community to be organized for a cause and mobilize a community for this cause it creates a virtual community that everyone dreams about, and they would like to actualize their dreams on the ground..... I will not know the places, I will not have this energy to go down, other people will participate for a while. You are inspired by statements from the group, motivated mobilized from online reading but you cannot read newspaper and be mobilized, you cannot see TV and be mobilized because they are too much in control by the security. So the only thing escape security has was that you can publish your statements and news and mobilize people it was online, it was freedom, life and prosper. And that's it, no Facebook, no revolution, it is a Facebook revolution'*. They underline primarily the organizing part new media played during the demonstrations, but also the motivational side new media had on the protesters and the ability to publish your own news without interference of others. Technology enabled the people in the street to become citizen journalists, to express themselves.

During the revolution new media had several roles for the protesters, such as motivate, inspire and encourage people. In the tweet set there are 125 tweets which contain motivational statements and quotes to support the protesters in the streets. Four respondents mentioned new media broke the fear and grew communities, respondent 10: *'Social media caused a spark and broke the fear'*. New media helped to break the fear against protesting in the street, fear against the police violence or repercussions, disappearing, being beaten up, or worse..... For decades Egyptians had lived under a dictatorial regime and weren't able to freely express themselves. Respondent 6: *'Everyone sees this event from this angle and from this angle, this angle so a lot of stories was shared and written. This make a for the revolution so even if you don't know everyone see now you know you'll see, photos video's it moves a lot of people and it break the jails of fear that they have in their mind and heart'*. People had fear, and new media helped people to break through the barrier of fear they had, they saw stories from their fellow Egyptians in the street.

Besides breaking the fear, new media was also a source of inspiration for people to go to the streets, through the updates and discussions on new media people got inspired, respondent 9: *'So that was he (Khaled Said Facebook page) started to inspire, you know this idea that we need to protest'*. The photos or videos that were published helped to overcome the fear and were seen as encouraging, respondent 5: *'So all these photos were published on the Facebook and it was giving the people the feeling ok now we can do it. Even if someone was a little bit scared then he got like here's the people and the people are there and why shouldn't we go there. So one of the effects was motivation...'*

Encouraging messages can also be found in the tweet set, there are 154 jokes to motivate or inspire the protesters. In the tweet set 114 tweets contain felicitations for fellow/the Egyptians when Mubarak was set aside. Funny remarks or jokes were being made about the situation, for example

the curfew, but also just about the protesters or more in general: ‘Cuz Egyptians’ sense of humor has no end: ‘Sources say: Mubarak is fed up and wants to leave but can’t because of the curfew #jan25’, or ‘Protester in #Tahrir told me out-of-town journalists think they are all Muslim Brothers because they haven’t shaved in a week #jan25’. There are also funny remarks about Mubarak: ‘FREEDOM LOADING ██████████ 99% [Error : Please remove Mubarak and try again !] #jan25’ or ‘It seems someone put #Mubarak on sale on eBay, but the post got removed. <<http://t.co/a4q2OXqg>> #jan25’. In general the atmosphere in Tahrir was positive and in the tweet set there are tweets who acknowledge this: ‘The chants, posters, songs, dances, poems, jokes coming out of #Tahrir prove #Egypt’s most potent weapon is its wicked sense of humor #jan25’. Access to new media during the protests gave motivation to continue and to show people that they were in control. They were also had the feeling that they were in control of news that was spread on through mass self-communication.

An issue that respondents addressed is the fact that they were able to publish their own stories. Established power structures and counter power movements both use communication channels to influence ideas that exist in society. New media gave the Egyptian activists a means to resist the established powers and speak out for themselves, the ability to influence a discourse that frames the action of the activists. New media as an important tool, especially when state media tells stories from a pro-government viewpoint and independent and neutral/observational voices aren't able to speak up. The stories of the protesters were spread through new media and could be picked up by television stations, which this happened from time to time, respondent 14: *'It is amazing, we are creating our own media, you know. Television is telling us some lies, and Al Jazeera, you know, I do trust them but sometimes they exaggerate and so we created our real media from the streets. We take real videos of what was going on in front of us and we upload them and everybody could just see them. And actually some television stations which used video's to show what was going on'*. Besides television stations the news that protesters published was also picked up by newspapers, respondent 6: *'I feel empowered, totally empowered, you are on the top of any event. We are making our own event, our statement was picked from our Facebook site to be headlines of newspapers'*. New media connected people with each other, it assisted programmers to reprogramme networks and switchers to connect with other networks. New media gave a voice to the Egyptian people, so they could address their fellow citizens, connect networks but also to the rest of the world without someone or something interfering, and in that way illustrates mass self-communication at work: respondent 15: *'I think also the social media and the internet was very helpful to bring the Egyptian voice outside like eh, the real people through Twitter, through Facebook they could eh transmit their messages outside. There is not only about the reporters of the BBC and CNN for example or the media or the government, like the US government hears and the worldwide citizens knew and hear the Egyptian voices just through Twitter, you know you can have #Tahrir and then you know what is going on there. You don't need anyone to tell you or to filter anything or the gatekeepers that were like somehow in Syria. We don't quite know what's going on, we know this side what does it say and that side what does it say but we don't hear the voices of the public, of the real people of Syria on a daily basis and like Egypt like everybody was tweeting about it and writing their diaries and their blogs and pictures and the videos and everything'*. The fact that people were able to create their own news gave them a voice and more control over publishing stories, respondent 4: *'Facebook put an end to passivity. Like when you watch television you are a passive recipient, you listen what's being explained in front of you but with Facebook you can take your camera you can go to Tahrir square*

you can take pictures you can upload it you act as if you are the owner of the media'. The news that the respondents made themselves was spread on the internet, but also picked up by television channels and newspapers. It made them feel as if they had a voice to speak with to a national as well as an international audience. They were able to connect and exchange with others who used these communication networks as well.

Respondents experienced empowerment or freedom through the use of new media, the fact that they could raise their own voice, speak up and bring out their own news was something different, respondent 13: *'if we have a tool, that makes everything easier on letting everyone know how to do things. It makes you feel that you have power, not power like I have power, but power to change'.* Respondents admitted that new media was a tool, and in the end it is the people who are doing it. Respondent 16: *'It was the main tool that we used in the revolution'.* Although new media can assist in reaching a goal it is still the people behind it that are doing the actual work.

The thing with new media is that accessible and anyone can post anything, but this makes it hard to distinguish between fact and fiction, to verify who is making things up and who is reporting the facts, or to discover hidden agendas. Although RNN (described in chapter 5.2.2) presented itself as objective and nonaligned with political viewpoints, 2 of the respondents stated that the RNN is part of the Muslim Brotherhood and that this blurred the objectivity and trustworthiness of the page. Respondent 17: *'Rassd showed up, at the beginning I thought it was a neutral, and I followed it and I was very happy with it, cause it actually showed out of nowhere. I knew afterwards that it was existing since the election in 2010. But I knew right about it during the revolution day, during that day of revolution. The type of info they were sending, I started afterwards realizing that it is a bit biased cause it is representing a political organization. So I was sort of unhappy, cause what I thought neutral and credible source of information'.* Respondent 16: *'But some of the sources like Rassd sometimes they started posting or tweeting things that is not real or proven later that it is not correct. So people started doubting were not trusting this source until they regained their trust again'.* Even though opinions on the objectivity of RNN differ, it was an important online source of news with a large scope.

The respondents had trouble with separating fact from fiction as well, although most of them found ways in an attempt to verify information. The first mentioned method to judge or check information on its credibility was with their own eyes. Three respondents mentioned this, respondent 15: *'First of all because most of the time we went there, like most of the young people or like people who were in the revolution itself'.* Besides seeing it with your own eyes, if you are into the scene you know who is an activist and who is not, respondent 14: *'when time goes by you know who to trust and who is really an activist and who is a fake account, making actually some police forces, they actually have investigators who go in Twitter and Facebook and make up accounts and try to deceive people, so that that happened but as time goes by you learn who to trust and started to know who are really tweeting from the square and who is writing'. ...So you could actually, these people are trusted and they are calling for a real call, something that is real. So I started to follow them and to trusted other people would actually they were trying to gain followers and this is something that is detract, they would go in and make up stuff, like retweeting from Mubarak. You could go in and find someone who via web is sitting at home and writing stuff... so yeah that was something that we used to knew people from and as I said we knew who are actually an activist and who's faking stuff'.* Another way

was to verify information was by 'natural selection', stories on Twitter would keep on appearing if they were true. As respondent 3 states: *'You know that's happening and this news is sending by more than once, more than one people. You see it coming and coming and coming and one make fake news, you see that's fake no one replies or no one say what he said. You know it is fake'*. Although this might help in separating fact from fiction other respondents stated that it is still difficult, respondent 15: *'Of course there is no guarantee. This is the whole 2.0 media or web that you never know. It depends on the wisdom of the crowd somehow. Of course the good things appear on top and the bad things go down, but you never know. Of course some of the information was fake, the government itself and the police were having accounts and the same counter things'*. Another way to check information which one respondent explained was through re-uploading images to check if they were original ones or came from somewhere else, respondent 17: *'It is very hard, it is very hard to distinguish, especially when there overload of information, like a lot a lot of videos and a lot of pictures and whatever so at the beginning I was just believing it, but then when I started to see that there is always a different point of the story You really have to, I myself I don't take anything for granted, I try to search for different options and re-upload the pictures on Google to check if there is one exactly the same, now it is possible for picture but not for videos'*.

The confidence in news spread by citizen journalists also depends on what news is available. Although not always accurate respondents trusted the news from the street. One respondent stated that at least it was better than the state media, respondent 4: *'Well I would say yes during the time of the revolution cause there wasn't enough time for anyone to fake information and it could be more trusted than local media, so it was the only source I had and I had to trust it'*. Another respondent also stated that although it might not always be completely correct in general it was accurate, respondent 12: *'But in general it was good, because you know I... we started to be closer. It gives you a close idea, even if it is not an exact idea of what's happening there'*. The respondents state that it was difficult to separate fact from fiction, and judging from their answers there is not one way to find out if information was correct or made up.

In the tweet set there are 42 tweets which contain words like fake, rumour or unconfirmed, and also calls to unfollow certain twitter accounts which are fake. *'Egypt Lies I Read on Twitter: Debunking Rumors and Misinformation on the #Jan25 Uprising - Boing Boing <http://t.co/VQPvf8Z>'*. And RT @zander: *'Social net also used for evil #Morozov RT @pakinamamer: There seems to be new Twitter accts created solely for attacking #Jan25 protesters'*. New media enables anyone to post anything, also things that are partly (un)true. It can also be used by people who deliberately want to cause panic or spread information that is not true. It is difficult for users to filter information and to check the truthfulness of a fact.

Two respondents placed some question marks at the concept of new media, when 500.000 people are following a page, is this still 2.0? Respondent 17: *'but then you start to realize that it is still the traditional, it is getting more into the standard traditional media format, you know, just in a different environment, cause when you have like one page having like 2.5 million or 1 million people following and sending information to them then it is just for me like a different form of broadcasting. It is not the interaction anymore? Definitely there is still like space for much more interaction than with standard broadcasting media but I wouldn't say that it is pure wisdom of the crowd. In the end of the day there are like 20 or 30 people who are like managing and sending the information and it gets*

worse when you know that those people are actually following a certain strategy or a certain agenda or certain vision in itself. So this is a moment in which social media is being manipulated and yeah....'. Since interactivity plays a central role in new media, the question rises if this is still new media? Although there is place for interactivity, this becomes much harder if there are this many followers, especially when the administrators of the page have their own agenda.

During the revolution new media was used to spread practical information, to inform other protesters and to coordinate the protests, new media was used to connect with networks, to receive from and give information to other activists. Respondent 17: *'But it definitely social media has accelerated and it give tools to coordinate and it could have actually also failed cause social media it was a way to thousands of people to connect, millions of people to connect together'*. A clear example of practical use of new media was a list that circulated on Twitter, and is mentioned 39 times in the tweet set, with activists who went missing. During the demonstrations some activists were arrested and disappeared (for a while). On Twitter there was a list where people see/edit who was since when missing, *'6 missing now, @mfatta7 @SH_Essam @ghonim @maboulazm & 2 more, pls help locate and list anyone else <http://bit.ly/ghonim> #jan25'*. The link links to a Google document which contains information about the missing people, such as their names, dates when they went missing, and sometimes phone numbers or Twitter accounts are included as well. Besides informing people got ideas as well, respondent 6: *'So it was practical organize. To advertise to position yourself, that you have their people to organize, advertise and indicate that you're there, share news get ideas'*. New media was used to send updates about where you were, where the police was located and if more people were needed in a certain area, respondent 16: *'people started using their phones to update the status, ok we are in a certain location and we need back up, so people start moving and coordinating with themselves. So the police forces, they have their communication ways and then we found alternative one, that we, it can give us like we can communicate in a real time. It is not email that takes time, or sms that is one on one, it is on the ground. At that time the officials they didn't with the Facebook as something real, or something really threatening or effective'*. It was a source of information for the activists, but they acknowledged that the accuracy was not always a 100% and sometimes information was being questioned see 5.2.3, respondent 1: *'We made the video's, uploaded on YouTube and Facebook, and we start to spread it around, so it was a source, the new media was a source to get the correct info during this revolution'*. Although the information which was being spread through new media was not always exact and precise, it is viewed as more accurate than the official media, respondent 15: *'...otherwise we would not know anything about what is going around, because the official media was of course having false information and the print and TV was not as fast and as on the ground as the social media'*. New media was seen as practical because one message could be read by many people at the same time, and you could read updates from other people in the street, respondent 9: *' Inform other people and get information from others'*. New media provided the protesters with information that otherwise would not have been known to them, and it enabled them to exchange information at high speed to a large public.

New media enabled activists within Egypt as well as Egyptian activists with activists from Tunisia to link networks, as can be read in part 5.3.3. Before the first protests in 2011 activists connected online, exchanged information and build an online network. Respondent 15: *'Social media in Egypt gained a momentum even before the revolution itself because many of the activists had been started to making some groups and knowing each other through social media even before the revolution.'*

Specially it was very obvious in 2009 when the 6th of April strike took place by supporting the workers in Mahalla which is a cotton industry. That is the first time we heard an event on Facebook or on social media or online was transferred into an offline action'. Besides connecting activists Egyptians also discovered that they shared something, people that had never met in real life met online and found out that they were all Egyptian. Respondent 8: 'If there is no social media, we would have never known that we are the same. ... On Khaled Said we started to talk and to talk a lot. It changed us. We always thought that upper Egypt is different than here in Cairo. That Alex is being different then Cairo. That Alexandria hated us, we hated Alexandria, we hated everybody else cause they are coming in this city and yeah he is from upper Egypt and he is excused from that and from that etc.'.so we actually found out that there is no differences'.

During the Egyptian revolution one can see power and counter power at work. Established powers, the Egyptian regime and the state controlled media against the activists which form the counter power and use new media to raise their voice against the established power. For the activists new media provides a means to speak up, to connect with like-minded people elsewhere inside as well as outside Egypt, to join or form networks and act as programmers or switchers. New media can assist in creating social change, it enables the counter power to spread alternative ideas, especially in places where people aren't able to speak freely in public. New media can serve as a substitute, a virtual open square, when it is next to impossible to exchange views in real life. New media is being compared to an open square by five respondents, respondent 10: *'It was a free platform to speak, no censorship'*; Respondent 13 stated how he viewed new media and how media in general should be like: *'Like an open square, that's what it should be'*. New media gave people a platform to express themselves, and share ideas, respondent 16: *'The revolution started in social media that was the point. Because social media gave the people some platform or stage to speak and express and share ideas'*. One respondent stated that the regime was not as oppressive as other countries in the region, but it was hard to express your opinion in traditional ways, respondent 15: *'it created the space for Egyptians for freedom of expression. Everybody is saying their opinion, everybody is feeling that they are kind of heard, they are connected to similar kind of people, they form groups. You feel with what you're say you can really express yourself. Because in the traditional way we did not have that much space to say what you want and how do you feel and sometimes it was really hard to criticize the regime and the President and you keep avoiding him. You criticize the prime minister but you never, you say ok the President is very good, but the prime minister so bad. So yeah... Also like Mubarak's regime, I feel it was not the most oppressing regime in the region. It was not like Assad for example. It gave a little bit of space, even for newspapers and traditional media to criticize him. But that was not having that much effect on real ground events. You know criticize what you want but the parliament is gonna be from his ruling party and the security forces are still have that full power on everything and records for everybody and everything'*. New media created a place where people could express themselves, connect with likeminded people and exchange experiences.

Conclusion

According to most respondents the revolution would have happened anyway, the conditions in Egypt to start a revolution, such as the economic situation, harsh living conditions and public frustration with the political situation, were set. These conditions and the use of new media by various oppositional movements are elaborated in chapter 4. In the end new media and the successful

Tunisian revolution helped to spark the first protests.

The role of new media during the revolution can be summarized as: motivating, inspiring, encouraging and it helped to break the fear. People were able to publish their own stories and they experienced empowerment and freedom because this was possible. This indicates that new media enabled Egyptians to resist the established dominating powers in society and enlarged the possibilities of them to fight the dominating powers and create change. It provided an alternative voice, and enabled people to join online networks. No wonder the regime felt threatened and cut off communication means, which had an adverse effect than intended.

Some questioned if new media was still new media when many people are following a page and only a few are active. There were also questions about how trustworthy the published stories were. New media was also used to spread practical information and to coordinate. It enabled activists to exchange information with Tunisian activists and is compared to an open square where participants could meet and discuss issues.

7. Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter elaborates on the conclusions of this research. Furthermore the results of this research are discussed and this chapter finalizes with ideas for future research.

In this thesis the role of mass self-communication, as practised by citizen journalists during the Egyptian revolution is investigated. This is done through literature research, interviews with people who actively used new media during the revolution, and tweets with the #jan25 hash tag.

New media enables everyone to engage in mass self-communication, in other words to reach a global audience with self-generated content. Mass self-communication, through devices, practices and organizational forms, gives ordinary people a means to communicate, engage in networks and become citizen journalists. With these means to mass self-communicate citizen journalists can create alternatives towards existing power structures. Power and counter power in the network society depend on a complex set of joint action, such as ideas, visions and projects to generate programmes and common goals. Programmers and switchers are social actors; programmers are the ones who are able to reprogramme the goals assigned to a network and switchers are able to connect different networks. These are the places where the power lies in the network society. Existing power structures and counter power structures use this logic, the actions of programmers and switchers of counter power structures may ultimately lead to social change.

With this framework in mind one can answer the main research question: *What has been the role of mass self-communication practised by citizen journalists, as part of the Egyptian revolution?*

In order to gain insight in mass self-communication, the term is divided in three components, the devices, practices and organization forms (figure 1), and the agency of citizen journalists is visualized through bowed arrows, inside and outside Egypt (figure 2), see below.

Figure 1 (see below) visualizes mass self-communication, the flow between the three components, devices, practices and organizational forms is shown. Figure 1 helps to distinguish between the three components of mass self-communication. The theory states that there is no fixed relationship between the three components, and emphasizes the dynamic links and interdependencies between them. The links between the components are elaborated below.

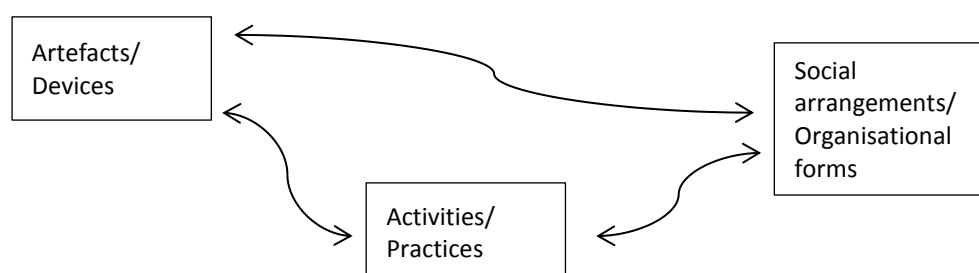


Figure 1 Mass self-communication

This research shows mass self-communication at work. The flow between devices and practices, the hardware and the software, is easily identified. During the Egyptian revolution devices were used to access different types of new media in different situations. Interviewees used Twitter predominantly on the go, whereas YouTube or blogs were more likely accessed from a more comfortable place. The flow from practices, such as Twitter, Facebook or YouTube, to devices, smartphones, laptops or computers, depended partly on the place, but is more difficult to identify. The availability of Wi-Fi and the bandwidth also plays a role in the relation between practice and device. If a practice requires more bandwidth it is more likely that it will be accessed from a laptop with a stable internet connection, instead of a practice which requires little bandwidth and can still be accessed when the signal is weak. The flow between practices and organizational forms is clear in this research. Throughout the Egyptian revolution practices, such as announcements of and calls to join demonstrations, lead to actual output, organizational forms or demonstrations. The actual output, or organizational form, provides opportunities to create materials such as video's and photos, these are spread via practices on the internet. About the flow between devices and organizational forms, devices were used during protests to capture materials and protests provided environments to make these materials.

Figure 2 (see below) visualizes the citizen journalists during the Egyptian revolution, the bended arrows represented citizen journalists in action, inside as well as outside the black quadrangle, inside as well as outside Egypt. In this research the 18 interviewees actively used new media during the Egyptian revolution.

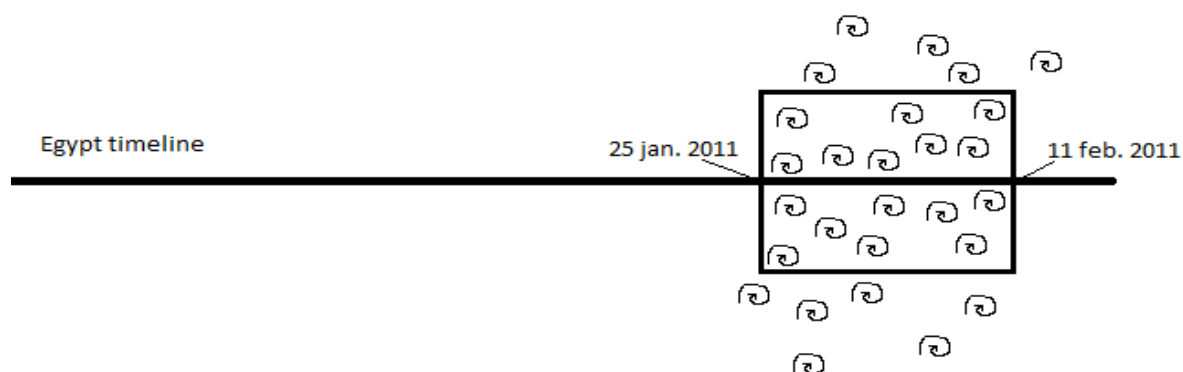


Figure 2 Research model

For the interviewees new media was practical, but also motivating, inspirational and empowering. They used it to spread information, to organize protests in advance and in the moment in Egypt and in other places, and to inspire, motivate and encourage people. This is in line with the outcomes of research by Wilson and Dunn (2011), who suggest that new media was not dominant in the demonstrations but that it may have played an important role in connecting and motivating protesters (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). Through new media they were able to send an independent signal, which could be picked up by international broadcast stations but also individuals outside Egypt. This strengthened the loop of mass self-communication, the signal of the citizen journalists on the ground. But what really strengthened the signal was when the citizen journalists were not able to send messages anymore, during the blackout and the assistance of mass media, such as Al Jazeera. Everybody in Egypt knew that something was going on, and reactions from abroad were very critical

about this measure. Instead of calming down the protests became more intense and more people went to the street. Through the internet people outside Egypt were able to assist the protesters on the ground, by spreading information about the situation. The attention may also have put pressure on governments to make critical statements about the situation in Egypt. This strengthened the call of the protesters. New media helped the activists to find an international audience. Citizen journalists provided content that created a first row seat for international audience, it drew attention to Tahrir and validated the peaceful protests in the streets of Cairo. The international coverage constrained the regime in their ability to use force and the international solidarity put pressure on governments abroad. New media facilitated local global connections and created a network of real and virtual ties.

Mass self-communication is a valuable concept to use in analysis on communication issues in contemporary society. The interactivity between inside and outside the quadrangle of figure 2 points to the globalization of new media and the horizontal connectivity in social mobilization. Although it is spread uneven across the globe, people are affected by the processes that take place in the global networks. The virtual networks, which existed on the internet and communicated via new media lead to expressions in the streets in Egypt, but also to real and virtual support from other places around the world. Conclusions of research by Elthawany and Wiest (2011) emphasize that new media helped activists to send and receive information, encouragement, sympathy and connect with others inside and outside Egypt (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). The international attention put pressure on governments and on the Egyptian regime. Networks are not bound to a geographical place, and mass self-communication can in principal reach anyone. New media technologies create the possibility of being present anywhere, wherever users are.

In this research new media has been approached as mass self-communication, which consisted of three elements and citizen journalists. In total 18 people who acted as citizen journalists have been interviewed, they used new media during the revolution. New media enabled mass self-communication, the possibility of reaching a global audience with self-generated content; It provided a tool for activists to connect with each other and to develop online and offline networks through the devices, practices and organizational forms. Mass self-communication facilitated the ability of autonomous communication for the activists during the revolution, to be citizen journalists and communicate without interference of anyone else. Research by Lim (2012) shows that social media provided a space and tool for the creation of links and networks that were not easy to control by the Egyptian regime, and Khamis and Vaughn (2011) state that new media helped the activists to plan and execute the protests and that it enabled them to document events in their own words and spread this and other information by themselves (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Lim, 2012). Besides new media, mass media played an important role as well.

This research shows the importance of the combination of new and traditional media. During the Egyptian revolution citizen journalism was also broadcasted via mass media. Through the framing of their reports Al Jazeera played an important role throughout the revolution, especially during the blackout. Al Jazeera and other broadcasters used content of citizen journalists and Al Jazeera broadcasted tweets and updates from citizen journalists. Traditional or mass media still plays an important role, particularly when a large part of the population doesn't have access to internet and new media. This points to a development in the relation between mass and new media, the

'continuous hybridization of both existing technologies and innovations in interconnected technical and institutional networks' (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 23). A kind of remediation whereby older mass media are appropriated by the new media.

New media played a significant role for oppositional movements. The technological means, mass self-communication, gave citizen journalists the opportunity to send their own story, independent of established power structures, and when it was picked up by others who supported their cause the alternative networks got a chance to influence the debate about the situation in Egypt. This underlines the results of Khamis (2011) who states that the Egyptian media landscape assisted civic engagement and stimulated citizen journalism (Khamis, 2011). Khamis and Vaughn (2011) state that new media could unleash a social force, through for example blogs and forums, which has the potential to serve as an incentive for social change (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). The ability of communicative autonomy, to independently communicate at large, is related to the development of social and political autonomy, which are important factors when promoting change. Technological means were used by oppositional movements, and gave them the opportunity to act as programmers, capable to reprogramme the goals assigned to a network, and switchers, able to connect different networks. The oppositional movements tried to programme their network and cooperate with each other when they had comparable ideas and visions. New media gave the oppositional movements in Egypt and their supporters from elsewhere a voice, counter power, against dominant powers in Egyptian society.

Nevertheless the role of new media and mass self-communication should not be overstated, the underlying socio-economic and political factors created revolutionary conditions. Conventional mass media, like TV (Al Jazeera) were crucial, as was the decision of the government to cut off all mobile communication and internet providers. The Tunisian revolution inspired the Egyptian activists and the regime was unable to contain the demonstrations.

Things don't happen out of the blue, the revolution in Egypt seemed to happen all of a sudden, but when one starts to look closer, there were clear signals of unrest and underlying tensions. The Egyptian revolution gained momentum as a result of several political and socio-economic factors, such as the large wealth gap, high-level of corruption, no freedom of expression, high rates of unemployment and political power which was concentrated in the hands of a few. This is also emphasized by researchers, such as Attia, et al (2011) and Joya (2011) (Attia et al., 2011; Joya, 2011; Lesch, 2011). New media and mass self-communication assisted the protesters, but the present conditions were suitable to start a demonstration. During the first days of the revolution the central themes were 'bread, freedom and social justice', it was only in a later stage that calls were focusing on 'Mubarak has to leave'. The movement reconfigured, but the central goal was a better Egypt, it was the glue which kept the protesters together. The situation in Egypt shows that there were political and socio-economic reasons why this revolution happened, and not just the fact that Facebook or other types of new media were there.

The following part discusses the findings, the theory and concepts which have been used in this research. The limitations of this research and recommendations for further research are presented as well.

Mass self-communication is present and used in everyday life and can be influential. Mass self-communication is the pyramid upside down, people at the base of the pyramid can get more powerful, and increase ways to connect and coordinate together. Mass self-communication is especially useful when it is difficult to communicate freely, because of censure and repression from the state. It provides a means where people can meet and discuss which would otherwise happen in public places.

The concept of mass self-communication implies that everyone can reach a global audience with self-generated content, but how mass is mass when people do not have access to new media, when they can't read or write for example? How mass is mass self-communication when just a small part of the population is involved? In this research the interviewees were all well-educated, pre-dominantly male and almost all of them spoke English. Other research also suggests that the young and educated were a driving force behind the use of new media during the revolution (Joya, 2011). This suggests that in the case of the Egyptian revolution mass self-communication was for those who are better off in Egyptian society, a small part of the population. Mass self-communication is not as mass as the term suggests, in the case of Egypt it is more of an elite which (can) use it; The ability to take part in mass self-communication is unevenly distributed in Egypt.

Figure 1 (see p. 65) with the three components of mass self-communication provides the opportunity to look at three components and the flow between them. One can use the components to order his research and look at one specific component of mass self-communication during an event. In this research the flows can be a bit forced and some flows between components are not too clear or straightforward that the added value of this figure can be doubted, one needs to keep in mind that during the Egyptian revolution mass self-communication is not as mass as the term implies. It is necessary to place mass self-communication in the context of the local media landscape, in relation to traditional or mass media, and other local circumstances.

Figure 2 (see p. 66) matches visualizes developments in Egypt and citizen journalists during the revolution inside and outside Egypt. It helps to look separately at citizen journalists active in Egypt and people supporting their cause elsewhere. But what is not included in this figure is the recombination of mass and new media. During the Egyptian revolution new media played a role for the activists, but the importance of traditional mass media, predominantly TV should not be underestimated, the bias in the reports of Al Jazeera influenced the event. Especially when a small part of the population has access to internet and new media and a much larger part has access to TV. Although new media is playing a role, mass media is still prominent and as Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) point out existing technologies and innovations mix and recombine instead of one taking over completely. The intersection of new media and traditional media is evident during the Egyptian revolution.

In network society networks are the organizing principle, but how to use this concept in analysis is not always clear. Questions arise about the size of a network, and what about people who do not have access to internet, are these excluded from networks? Are the poor Egyptians who live in slums and have their own social networks but who do not use internet excluded from *the* network society. Castells describes the 'uneven spread of networks', but if people do not have access and have no resources are they not part of the network society? They are busy with their daily lives, surviving.

Especially in Egypt it is only those who are better off who can join or plug into (regional or global) networks. This would suggest that only for a small part of the Egyptian population the network society is real.

Programming and switching are mechanisms to control power in the network society. Castells states that these are not abstract concepts but that they are social actors in the networks, not individuals per se or one group. These social actors operate at the interface of different actors, since exercising power in the network society depends on a complex set of joint action (Castells, 2004). In this research about the Egyptian revolution it is difficult to point out who or where programmers and switchers are situated. How to identify a programmer or a switcher within a network? In the various networks which are being addressed in this thesis it is hard to highlight the programmers and switchers specifically. This leaves the impression that, although Castells states otherwise, the concepts are abstract ones.

The theory used in this research explains structures in society on the basis of networks, communication and communication channels instead of economic or political structures. This might place too much emphasis on communication and too little on other circumstances. On the other hand in an increasingly connected world communication and communication networks play a role which might become gradually more important.

The following part elaborates on ideas for future research.

As any other research, this research had to be defined, due to time constraints and to keep it focused. For this research a limited amount of people, higher educated predominantly male youth, has been interviewed. While these are the people that use new media in Egypt, they represent a very small portion of the Egyptian society. Cairo was the place where this research was situated. Cairo is the capital and largest urban agglomeration of the country, it might be possible that if one goes to other smaller cities and more rural areas of the country a different image appears.

Religion plays an important role in Egypt, but it was not part of this research. During the revolution Egyptians became united and had a single goal, but behind the thin layer of unity lay a divided country and different fractions had their own agenda's and reasons to join the revolution. People/networks may have joined the revolution because they saw an opportunity for their own goals and use a strategic alliance to pursue their own goal.

In case of the Egyptian revolution the army played an important role, they were neutral and didn't use violence against the protesters. The army was loyal to the nation and not (anymore) to Mubarak, the person in office. It was the (riot) police which used violence against the demonstrators. The focus of this research was on new media and the role of the army is not elaborated, but one needs to keep this in mind when reading about the Egyptian revolution.

The communication culture in Egypt differs from the communication culture in the Netherlands. Often Egyptians have several phone numbers, because costs are lower if you call to someone who has the same provider, or sometimes it is even for free. Mobile numbers can be bought on every street corner in Cairo and people exchange phone numbers easily. They are not surprised when you

call them, even if they don't know you and you have met. Besides a different way of using mobile phones, it appears that new media has a different role as well. In Egypt, new media is used for discussion as well, and not just to post fancy statuses. It is a place where people can discuss socio-economic or political issues or find like-minded people.

There is a gap of year and a half between the days of the revolution and when the interviews were conducted, which might have blurred some facts or stories. Responses and answers might be different now than just after the revolution. Additionally respondents can be sensitive when they speak about the revolution and things that happened then. This can influence their rational thinking and facts may be less precise or disappear to the background and may to be recalled as punctual as desired.

As addressed in this thesis, when anyone can post anything on the internet it can be hard to distinguish between things that did happen and things that are being made up. How to know when sources are trustful? Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira (2012) state in their research that tweets addressing the Egyptian revolution contained a mix of individual experience, opinion and emotion (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). This issue is not restricted to the Arab or developing world. During and right after hurricane Sandy hit the US people tweeted pictures that were fake. Other tweets with exaggerated water levels caused unrest. New media, especially Twitter, is fast, but the facts are not always right and the question is how you know that others are speaking the truth and not representing someone/something else, or just want to cause unrest.

Currently there is a vivid scene of young politically active people in Egypt, the revolution is still very much alive among these people and they are developing many new initiatives whereby new media is used. It might be interesting to see how the use new media evolved since the revolution. The current government takes new media more seriously than the previous did, so another interested point is to see how the government uses new media and how this relates to the use of new media by the activists. Also one might want to focus more on one specific group of people during the revolution, such as women, and see if and how they used new media and what this meant for them.

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