

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

The Giant Mutant:

A Study on the Role of Modern Media in the Egyptian  
Revolution

by

Patricia I. Issa

A thesis

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for the degree of Master in International Affairs.

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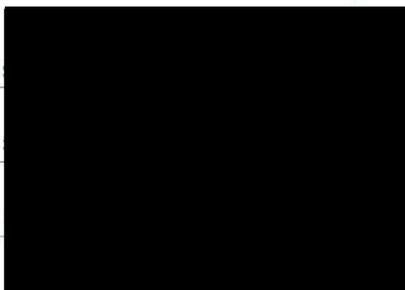
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## Dedication Page

To my loving father, who never held back from supporting my educational and business initiatives in Lebanon and abroad; and the forever anonymous soldier -my mother- who supports me subtly, by acting as the invisible hand that keeps my life together; I dedicate this master thesis.

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# The Giant Mutant

## A Study on the Role of Modern Media in the Egyptian Revolution

Patricia I. Issa

### ABSTRACT

As the Arab Spring was sweeping away one regime after the other in the Arab World during the years 2010-2011; the eyes of the world were centered on the modern media outlets that were carrying and reporting the news. "Facebook Revolution", "Twitter Revolution", "Social Media Revolution" were only some of the titles given to the various uprisings in the Middle East, were modern media played a crucial role in revolutions. This thesis will explore the various roles of the modern media landscape during the three stages of the Egyptian Revolution. It will explore the pre-revolution stage, the apex of the revolution and the post-revolution stage, in order to depict and understand how modern media moves from raising awareness, to organizing protests and then guarding their gains and diffusing revolution. The argument will be carried through a media content study and a narrative study of the first modern Egyptian Revolution of 2010-2011.

Keywords: Social Movement, Revolution, Egypt, MENA, Democracy, January 25th Revolution.

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# Chapter One

## The Giant Mutant

### 1. 1. Introduction

In a world increasingly dependent on technologies of communications, ignoring the effects of these technologies on the realm of social movements and revolutions sounds exactly like turning a blind eye to the industrial revolution's effect on the world's economy during the last century. This topic, as novel as it looks, has known roots in studies carried on in the sixties of the past century before the internet took the world by storm. In effect, studies suggest that media technologies had been tipping the balances in China since the 1980s where the very first debuts of networked protests started taking place (Guobin & Calhoun, 2008). That era was the era when networked technologies started imposing serious changes to the way political contention is carried out (Guobin & Calhoun, 2008).

After the wave of revolutions that swept the world in the new millennium, starting with the episode of ousting Estrada in 2001, passing by the colored revolutions of East Europe, and ending by the highly "media" intermediated Arab Spring; studies about the effects of the media and communications on recent revolutions multiplied. The main factor zeroed in on in these studies, was how different networks of media and social media helped "leveraging the public" (The Revolution Will Be Shared, 2011). These "new forms of connectivity", have effects on social processes in general. Political interactions are some of the highly affected social processes when it comes to the

power of connection (Sterck & Lang, 2013). "Leveraging the public" through the "new forms of connectivity" then, is the focus of too many future-focused studies conducted about the new episodes of contention; those that happened before the cameras, and with the whole world as a "live" audience.

*"Throughout 2011, a rhythmic chant echoed across the Arab lands: "The people want to topple the regime." It skipped borders with ease, carried in newspapers and magazines, on Twitter and Facebook, on the airwaves of al Jazeera and al Arabiya. Arab nationalism had been written off, but here, in full bloom, was what certainly looked like a pan-Arab awakening. Young people in search of political freedom and economic opportunity, weary of waking up to the same tedium day after day, rose up against their sclerotic masters."*

In these semi-poetic words, Fouad Ajami narrated the first episodes of the Arab Spring, a mass movement of Arab challengers to topple dictatorial regimes, without failing to mention mass media (the prominent Arab satellite channels) and social media outlets. These outlets are now, of a parallel importance to that of the main agent behind the revolution "people" (Ajami, 2012). The media is the new element of curious presence in the third pan-Arab awakening.

In January 2011, the Egyptian masses ousted a dictator under the watchful eyes and ears of the world. And with this, Egypt "validated" -after Tunisia "introduced"- a new era of media and international affairs studies. With its altered model of protests, heavily intermediated by both the mass media and social media outlets, Egypt reshuffled our understanding of how protests are carried on. The January 25th and June 30th revolutions in Egypt were both intermediated by the modern mass media that gave them their global reach and raised them international support. Social media too, leveraged the Egyptian public, allowed it to maintain a solid and unified popular speech and

facilitated its on-site moves through the mass protests carried out both against the Mubarak regime and then two years later against the Muslim Brotherhood's rule. The new media landscape was able to play an important role in modern revolutions, because media itself went through a process of innovation and upgrades that allowed it to have a sizable effect. By the year 2009, satellite channels and alternative social media had claimed a substantial audience in the Arab World. Moreover, the relatively low cost social media presented features of interactivity, live broadcasting, direct live time communications and ease of use, which allowed it to become the favorite tool of awareness and organization for challengers.

These upgrades weren't only technological, but also politically relevant, for we witnessed a partial dismantling of the old media model during the Arab Spring and a reformation of the practice of journalism. Media production had become citizen based and more democratic. The content of the new emerging model was that of a media that is less interested in power, and more interested in justice. The new media had for front of its speech these five keys: freedom of expression, independence, public interest, ethics and excellence (Marthoz, 2012).

All of these reformations of media during contention, weren't independent episodes in modern history: Social media had its first true role in Tunisia and Egypt, but the other forms of modern media had already displayed their prominence in previous episodes of contention across the globe. In 2001, the ousting of Joseph Estrada in Philippines was labeled as the first e-revolution. For that specific revolution, a combination of internet news and mobile text messaging carried the seeds of victory. The wave of colored revolutions in Eastern Europe starting in 2004, depended in large on both the mass

media and the power of web 1.0 communications such as internet news and emails; the applications just short of live social media. Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia's people relied heavily on the power of e-communications as well on chains of contending mass media outlets to bring about regime change. And right before the Arab Spring, the protests in Moldova in 2009 relied mainly on Twitter to spread and organize against the fraudulent re-election of the communist party (Pippidi & Munteanu, 2009). The history of new media in contention is far from being all that new.

## **1. 2. Impact of the New Media on Revolution**

The impact of the new media landscape on contention had been dealt with through many angles; some of which aren't directly relevant to its effect on the protests themselves: For instance some authors focused on the gradual buildup of that role culminating into the potential to topple governments through direct action (Shirky, 2011). The true power of the media lies in supporting civil society and finding democratic spaces for the public sphere, allowing it to fertilize the ground to become ready for concrete action. The potential of new media and social media as perceived by most people, lies in its blunt use during protests. In fact this effect hides behind it long periods of preparations and many rounds of incremental changes within the civil society, spanning years even decades of subtle actions (Shirky, 2011).

Speaking of the background support of activism, cyberactivism too is supported by the new media in more ways than one, during modern revolutions. For instance cyberactivism enjoyed the support of mass media especially satellite channels that started quoting and extracting more and more information from the online sources and social media outlets. Cyberactivism also enjoys the huge support of the live interactive features of new channels such as Twitter and Facebook live chatting & reporting. The latter features though, weren't available for the previous episodes of colored revolutions in Eastern Europe. The most important contribution of new channels of interactive media was providing forums of virtual assembly for activists. These forums were risk free, providing a state-free space to exchange ideas and organize. They were also democratic and discrimination-free allowing practically everyone to join and increasing participation rates (Khamis & Vaughn, 2013). The existence of these forums fall both

under the theory of on-site support of activism during the different phases of protests as well as under the theory of incremental build up of capabilities and links underlying contending activities.

Another notable impact of the new media in the recent revolutions was the direct replacement of an important feature: The charismatic leader. According to Herd, modern revolutions didn't have a key individual or a key leader taking up the responsibility of raising awareness, building shared sentiment, shaping political cohesion and solidarity, and creating identity. New media was taking up these roles, and redirecting the masses towards a message instead of an individual. The position of the main challenger had been replaced by a key message, making the recent revolutions leader-less and decentralized comparing to the previous waves. Erasing hierarchy was also one of the general contributions of mass media and social media to the new model of revolutions. The masses weren't only leaderless, but also able to outmaneuver the hierarchy and security apparatus of the state through the connected potential of an educated urbanized and globalized youth. Moreover, unlike the previous episode of revolutions in Eastern Europe, foreign embassies and NGOs weren't part of the media coverage of protests; making the leaderless revolutions truly societal-led (Herd, 2011). In sum, new media in post modern revolutions had an overall changing effect, for the new media replaced many of the revolutions' key features: Mediums of communication, the live effect, the replacement of leaders and cutting through hierarchical structures as well as security apparatuses. These effects of the mass media and user generated media were intensified by the motivation of the youth to use user generated outlets and connect them to the global mass media. They found in them an optimal way to diffuse

uncensored data, to circumvent authority's control, and to relate to each other in a free democratic space. A space where they can bring about their vision of political and social reform (Sayed, 2011). This cyclical relationship between the effect of new media on modern revolutions and the youth, is fueled then by the many motivations to use these new forms of connectivity to bring about change.

### **1.3. The Innovative Aspect of Media in the Arab Spring**

Talking about the role of the new media in general does not capture the specific aspect related to the Arab World specificities during its own wave of contention. That is because, on top of the mass media, more instant media with live and interactive effects were used during these revolutions. Alternative social media that was used during the Arab Spring presented features of live reporting and instant communication. These features were unavailable to previous waves of contention, including the colored revolutions of Europe only a few years earlier. The way interactive media was used within the episodes of contention in the Arab world involves too many complexities, that general studies didn't point out. The media had become very intrinsically built in, in these episodes that they have been labeled "Twitter Revolutions" and "Facebook Revolutions" (Lynch, 2011). These labels were used worldwide, despite the fact they were generated by the masses without any scientific evidence but rather weak correlations. For instance, Hoffman and Kornweitz's extensive research among a good number of similar scientific sources, confirms that these media outlets couldn't be the main agent of the relevant revolutions, nor is the flow of information their trigger (Hoffman & Kornweitz, 2011). The Arab Spring showed us many new areas to look into; such as the agency versus medium debate, the interactive new media and the live effect.

According to Anonymous (the legion of international ethical hackers and web activists), new media -specifically social media- was able to outwit authoritarianism in the Arab world; and establish what looks like a permanent shift of the balance of power away from the dictatorial hands of governments (Anonymous, 2011). That in itself, is a

step that might reshuffle our view of a whole region, especially under the domino effect that we have witnessed after the Tunisian and Egyptian episodes of the Arab Spring. This reshuffled understanding has to go through more detailed research with more detailed outlines in order to look at every aspect of the new media's roles in the Arab Spring, such as Lindsey's research that looked in depth into the following topics: the intensity of the social media effect over different phases of revolution, the different benefits of user generated media, the agency versus medium debate, and the episodes where social media had the most heightened effect during the insurgency in the Arab World (Lindsey, 2013). Just like a lot of researches dealing with the same set of variables and the same recent time frame, the study of Lindsey ended up looking at different agents and casting some doubt on every claim over-crediting social media for the insurgency in the Middle East & North Africa. Indeed; the novelty of the topic commands attention to many details, especially in the light of the domino effect that involved Europe, Africa and even some Transatlantic countries.

In the light of all of these innovations spanning both modern media and new social movements lead under the light of this new media landscape, this study will explore the different roles of modern media during contention.. New media roles vis a vis modern social movements, media roles' mutations throughout the revolution's different stages, and media characteristics that allow it to have a substantial impact on revolutions are the pillar cornerstones of this paper.

## **1.4. General Literature Review On Media In Revolution**

Now, having specifically highlighted the presence of the new media and its pivotal role in the course of revolutions. It becomes necessary to go over the many facets the topic had been dealt with already. The literature on revolution and on media in revolution had been extensively visited since the ousting of Estrada in 2001, the first e-revolution. This revival was strengthened by a series of colored revolutions that swept through Eastern Europe in 2004-2005 and a second wave that took the Middle East and Arab World as of late 2010. Separate episodes happening simultaneously throughout the whole world under the movement "Occupy" reinforced the literature with a multifaceted multi-angled and transatlantic view.

New media, whether in versions Web 1.0 (one way such as satellite channels) or Web 2.0 (interactive platforms such as social media outlets) occupied center stage in this revived literature and dominated a large part of the revolutionary discourse and social movement studies. New media also sponsored a large part of that same discourse and acted as medium at the same time. The following literature review will go over the role of the new media in revolutions tackling seven different sub topics: the media role in the unfolding of the Arab Spring; the media actions and reactions vis a vis regime censorship; the media as an agent of change, stability and security; the media content, coverage, discourse, and role in democracy and awakening; the media in education and socialization of social movements; the role of new media in participation, organization and mobilization of the masses; the cycles of media in revolution and information flows; and the influence of new media on the final outcomes.

### **1.4.1. Media Use in the Arab Spring**

On the general use of social media in the Arab Spring, sources abound addressing different issues ranging from political awakening of the Arab youth to the particular use of every single media outlet in the movement. Most sources agree that new media helped facilitating the protests by enhancing participation, organization and coverage (Goodman, 2011) (Chebib & Sohail, 2011) (Behringer, 2006) (Nelson, 2012) (Harb, 2011). Diffusion is another aspect that was dealt with where the media was portrayed as the main factor diffusing in between countries and through different segments of protestors within the same country according to O'Connell and Simon Cottle, sponsored by both new and also mass media (satellite channels) as per Miladi's theory |going against Marthoz which expected a dismantling of the traditional media for the new model to emerge| (O'Connell, 2011) (Cottle, 2011) (Miladi, 2011) (Marthoz, 2012). Parallel to that phase in social movement theory, framing in the media and the way it affected the movement was dealt with by Olorunnisola and Martin (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). The role of other agents invoked in the earlier colored revolutions phase such as embassies, international organizations and security services was downplayed by Herd to credit societal led Arab generated, media sponsored revolutions (Herd, 2011). Even though media wasn't ultimately credited for the revolution, a new free media landscape is still far from reach according to El-Issawi and the international new mass media couldn't forecast the uprisings despite the obvious clues; yet the new media was able to boost individual competences, enhance collective action and sponsor live information flows to allow a head on challenge of authoritarianism in the Middle East (El-Issawi, 2013) (Leetaru, 2011) (Lynch, 2011). Less relevant to the technicalities and

the direct impact of new media on revolution; topics such as foreign aid to net activists as tackled by Christensen, the differences and particular new media uses in each country as mentioned by Riley, user-generated content and the parallel media warfare topics by Bratich also occupied an important part of the literature (Christensen, 2011) (Riley, 2011) (Bratich, 2011).

#### **1.4.2. Media / State Interaction**

Studying the dynamics of the recent insurgencies involved an extended study of the state v/s free media interactions; these interactions accounted for much of the dynamics of the on-site movement. Faris highlighted the legal measures to control online content and the way that impacted the way media content affected revolution, and progovernment digital activism (China), at that Guobin and Calhoun discussed the gradual change in the networked participation and media over time using the same case (Faris, 2012) (Guobin & Calhoun, 2008). Marthoz discussed the importance of dismantling the old forms of media to be replaced by the new user generated media and the relevant changes in the production of content and practice of journalism; all under the effect of the recent networked social movements (Marthoz, 2012). Hassanpour discusses an interesting theory validating the fact that the interruption of connection (the favorite last resort of some regimes) is actually beneficial to social movements as it accelerates the shift from the digital to the real (Hassanpour, 2011). Sterck and Lang discussed the social changes induced by the increasing connectivity, changes that gradually affect every aspect of life casting their shadow indirectly on social

movements in every stage (Sterck & Lang, 2013). Amir highlighted the ways new media bypasses media censorship and allows for emotionally loaded humanitarian causes to break to the public; the costlessness of broadcasts is at the center stage (Amir, 2010). Schleifer takes another angle to tackle partial media freedoms that some regimes grant in order to numb public opinion while indirectly contributing to insurgency (Iran in 2009) (Schleifer, 2009).

### **1.4.3. Media in Change, Stability, Security**

New media in revolution is a topic that goes hand in hand with issues of societal change, state stability and domestic/regional security. A number of academics focused on the role of the new media in revolution in the underlying change, the society' stability and state security. For instance Fuchs addressed the role of new media change as an underlying reason behind turning a blind eye to the shortcomings of capitalism, especially in the light of the recent recession (Fuchs, 2012). According to a media research focused on innovation, which can be linked to a new media repertoire for businesses, regimes and insurgents; the repertoire is now user-generated as indicated by Hoff, the lines between consumers and producers are now blurred (Hoff, 2012). K. Leetaru points out the stability forecasts by the international new and mass media, where the media was alarmed to the upcoming changes before states took account of them in the case of the Arab Spring (Leetaru, 2011). The potential for collective action for change driven by the new media, as delineated by Lynch changes the way some Arab countries are studied to take into account the gradual change; now challenges to authoritarianism are digitally sponsored (Lynch, 2011). The political power of the new media does not only lie in facilitating revolutions and social movements, but also in the

subtle constant support of civil society and a free public sphere (Shirky, 2011). Finally Gladwell adopts a comparative approach trying to assess the impact of new media on change versus that of the traditional repertoire such as sit ins and the like; ending up by validating the traditional over the still minimal impact of the new media (Gladwell, 2010). From a security perspective, plenty of academics and authors focused on the security threats posed by a borderless world ruled by communications and a hard-to-control flow of information. With respect to the case of the Arab Spring, the security of gulf states and Iran were addressed in a particular light (Soltaninejad, 2012) (Kalathil & Boas, 2003) (Vilichka, 2011) (Soriano 2008).

#### **1.4.4. Media Content, Discourse and the Awakening**

The media content itself, was one major area of study within revolution. In different phases of social movements, this content contributed massively in raising awareness, spreading democracy ideals, keeping the democratic discourse alive and covering and recycling revolutionary narratives. Academics such as Saleh focused on assessing the media landscape in the MENA region pre and during the uprisings; the media illiteracy and fragmentation was center stage in most counter arguments against the prominence of new media; innovation in this same landscape was tackled by Smith & Feuilherade as majorly influential (Saleh, 2012) (Smith & Feuilherade, 2011). Baron focused on the voices behind the media and the influencers and organizations tweeting the revolution in Egypt, Rosenbaum for instance focused on Mona Altahawy (Baron, 2012) (ACM, 2012) (Rosenbaum, 2013). Bashri, Natzley and Greiner studied the sources the international and regional mass media used in order to cover the revolution and the way interactive media interacted with the mass media (Bashri, Netzley & Greiner, 2012).

The rise of the power of the media and matters of awakening and loss of control (by regimes) were tackled by Kalathil & Boas; similar writings tackled the heavy participation of the youth in the rise of the digital world and its use to air out grievances (mainly teenagers) (Kalathil & Boas, 2003) (Petray, 2011) (Seongyu & Woo-Young, 2012). On media discourse, different authors focused on different aspects, for instance Christensen focused on the national political structures and their impact on restricting the online debate; Miladi tackled the satellite discourse and emergence of citizen journalism, Faris highlighted the legality of the online political discourse and its relationship with revolution and Aouragh analyzed the socio-political implications of user generated content (Christensen, 2011) (Miladi, 2011) (Faris, 2012) (Aouragh, 2012). Taking that a notch up, Sayed analyzed the motivations and fears of digital activists and the way those factors affected content production, and the links between online and offline activism (Sayed, 2011). Samuel discussed the circular relationship tying the media discourse with social groups based on an American case of 2009; the finding of which validated that social groups and media discourse shape each other simultaneously (Samuel, 2011).

#### **1.4.5. New Media in Organization and Participation in Social Movements and Revolutions**

Technical studies and detailed studies on the role of new media / social media in revolutions focused excessively on matters of participation and organization; particularly the way media was used to enhance participation and to organize protests. Lindsey in 2013 and earlier Altantawi in 2011 focused on the creation of weak links, which even though cannot create the necessary zeal for personal participation, was able

to forge the networked connection facilitating on-site moves (Lindsey, 2013) (Wiest & Eltantawi, 2011). Resource mobilization theory authors tackled resource mobilization through new media according to the resource mobilization theory and contrasted it to traditional resource mobilization mechanisms; contributing to the evolution of social movements (Safranek, 2011) (Movindri, 2013) (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013).

Comunello and Anzera added a layer of realistic analysis through studying the same issue but from both sides of the insurgents and the regime; and Casado contrasted this effect with the functioning of the traditional media especially in the early days of the movement (Comunello & Anzera, 2012) (Casado, 2012). The democratizing aspect of new media post-2000s had been dealt with by Hoffman & Kornweitz as a main factor catalyzing the debuts of revolutions; and Ibrahim and Popkin tracked the same matters historically and across different countries and waves of contention (Hoffman & Kornweitz, 2011) (ICA, 2011) (Ibrahim, 2010) (Popkin, 1995). Hamm & Greer and Hulaimi went into details explaining how social media outlets were used for awareness and on-site organization; while Rosenberg tackled the role of the same outlets in promoting a peaceful movement which never evolved into violence from the side of the contenders; adding to the same topic Seongyi & Young tackled the levels of participation according to the use of new media by population segment (Hamm & Greer, 2011) (Hulaimi, 2011) (Rosenberg, 2011) (Seongyi & Young, 2011). At that, Sheila Riley segmented countries of the Arab Spring according to where new media had the most impact (Riley, 2011). Simon Cottle tackled the issues of participation and diffusion across borders simultaneously ; a center topic to any social movement study (Cottle, 2011). Finally The work on change by Etling, Faris and Palfrey wondered

about the future of new media interactions within social movements and the future potential for countering authoritarianism (Etling, Faris & Palfrey, 2010).

#### **1.4.6. Media Cycles and Information Flow Processes**

Information flows and different cycles of media -particularly new media- are not novel topic to be studied along with studies on social movements and revolutions. In fact, many academics already tackled the technicalities and implications of information cycles and flows in movements and uprisings. This specific line of study is the most relevant to the topic at hand, and the closest direct input. In "Information Flows in Events of Political Unrest" for instance, the authors studied the information flows in contention as divided per outlets, and depicted how different media platforms interact with each other (Nahon , Hemsley, Mason, Walker & Eckert , 2012). Khamis & Vaughn tackled platforms of information, post-documentation and collaboration; explaining the different facets of media functioning during the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia (Khamis & Vaughn, 2013). Olorussinola & Martin probed the changing landscape of media content production and focused on the agency issue which became vested in the masses (Olorussinola & Martin, 2012). Miladi dealt with the interactions between satellite channels and social media, and citizen journalism implications as a product of severe regime censorship (Miladi, 2011). Aouragh focused on the user generated side of media and the way it helped insurgents and counterbalancing conventional mass media (Aouragh, 2012). Axford answered contextualizing questions about socio political environments altering the media content and landscape, as well as formats and flows of information and their respective impacts; the dialect with mass media was another important point of focus where new media seemed to carry the day

(Axford, 2011). Herd went deep into analyzing the role of instantaneous communications and the flow of real time information in cohesion building around a message instead of a leader (Herd, 2011). The same source analyzed the state's reactions and the counterbalancing of traditional mass media (Herd, 2011). Along the same lines academics tackled the issue of alliances and elites relocating the "digital elite" to the front of the social movement theory, providing the resources of formation of a large cycle of protest, overcoming the problem of large movements and lowering risks for free riders and finally leading a real-time emotional mobilization (Breuer, Landman, Todd and Farquhar, 2012). Finally Starbird and Palen dealt with the issue of information filtering and popular endorsement through social media during the protests and the technicalities and mass impact of digital participation (Starbird & Palen, 2012).

#### **1.4.7. New Media Outcomes vis a vis the Revolution**

One of the most important aspects of studying the impact of new media on revolutions and revolutionary cycles, is assessing how much of an impact did the media involvement generate. At that, all the academics and authors who tackled the matter from different angles resorted to a relatively unified conclusion that the new media, and social media was the medium but never the agent, that it facilitated the revolutions and other social movements but wasn't strong enough to create them. Studying the case of Iran 2009, Knight in the Journal of Media Practices, confirmed that the traditional voices and traditional mediums were guaranteed a voice louder than that of the media (Knight, 2012). Gladwell validated the same conclusion stating that when it comes to social movements, the new media was not a life changing event, but rather an enhancing feature (Gladwell, 2011). Harb studied the matter in greater detail -and from

her own Arab perspective- to relocate agency to the people and their common grievances which can still mobilize masses and can't disappear just because the media is cutting down coverage (Harb, 2011). Skepticism when it comes to social media impact were tackled by Tina Rosenberg namely because the movement in Egypt was run in the streets long after the information flow had been consumed (Rosenberg, 2011). The divided nature of countries such a Lebanon, as per Patrick Galey's say, undermined the impact of the new media and the real street clashes carried the credits as added by John Rash (Galey, 2011) (Rash, 2011). Another reason why new media cannot create a social movement, is the fact that it can be counterbalanced by the regime's use of the same media neutralizing a large part of the initial effect (Carafano, 2011); the same was validated by the Tunisian case where the press wasn't credited since it was by majority of outlets in the hands of the regime(Charlton, 2011). Finally, Charlton sums it up by claiming " Asserting the power of social media to mobilize crowds as a necessary condition for pursuing political objectives makes for easy headlines, but anyone who actually believes that ignores what makes protests happen and tick" (Charlton, 2011).

#### **1.4.8. New Media in Different International Affairs Domains**

A study of new media in international affairs specifically in social movements and revolutions, is never divorced of the study of new media in other relevant areas. Particularly, media researches and social media researches referred back and forth to each other in order to highlight the importance of the new media in the modern international affairs landscape. Aronson and Katz & Gilboa focused on the effects of new media on electoral processes in USA and Israel respectively (Aronson, 2011) (Katz

& Gilboa, 1999). The same effects found in the early stages of a social movement. Along the same lines, *The Social Science Computer Review* and *The Asian Perspective* dealt with the effects of the new media and social media on political participation and mainly on polarization (including the socialization of teenagers) and alliance shifting (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard, 2010) (Yun & Chang, 2011). Both impacts further by the user generated content allowed by the social networks sharing features as validated by Smith, which also had a major impact on business and marketing techniques (Smith, 2009). Content monitoring is also another tackled feature in this respect with impacts ranging from regime to corporate uses (Safron, 2010). Authors who tackled the impact of new media in business focused on the opportunities presented to marketers, the ripple effects, career searches and improvement, expansion in content production, the customer/audience reach, but most importantly, the loss of control; a feature that will resonate repeatedly in social movements studies (Beinhaur, 2010) (Silverstone, 2013) (Hoff, 2012) (Ryan, 2010). More relevant yet, are the studies conducted about the legal effects of new media / social media on law and regulation and the impacts of new media on foreign policy making; both areas tackling matter of the real-digital divide and of the potential to outweigh authoritarianism (Venezia, 2012) (Fontaine & Rogers, 2011) (Anonymous, 2011).

In sum, reviewing the works of recognized scholars on media in revolution will bring us to an understanding that the new modern media landscape -with all its technical upgrades and social implications-, can no longer be dealt with as a chapter under revolution. The field of modern media in revolution today is worthy of a parallel study.

## **1.5. Importance of the Study**

The importance of the topic dealt with in this thesis is multileveled and multidisciplinary. For the discipline of media studies and the media industry, this study is important to assess the social and political implication of modern media's latest technical upgrades, as well as the impact of the new media on social movements. Understanding these correlations is important to the media industry, its dynamics, ownership structures, investment and private regulations. Moreover, when it comes to the media realm, such a study will provide new guidelines for responsible journalism whether in the public or the private sector.

For social movements' studies, this study assesses the importance of an element that's already recognized as an important catalyst in social movement diffusion; and moves this element to be viewed in a different light and within a different pattern. From being dealt with as a chapter under social movement studies in the last century, the new media in revolution is today a parallel study to social movement studies; and one of matching importance.

For political studies, understanding the impact of media effects on revolution within a defined pattern is expected to help forecast social movements' evolution, and the likely upcoming political landscape changes. Understanding the political impacts of media is a game changer, and a potential introduction to the dismantling of many existing political models.

For policy making, such a study can be double edged as it has importance for both governments and challengers. For governments, understanding the dynamics of media

in social movements will help them enhance their own counter-media outlets, as well as develop sophisticated government controls and regulations. In the case of rebels, it will allow them to invest media to their advantage more efficiently, as well as circumvent controls through outlet hopping depending on which stage of contention they are.

And finally for the studies of international affairs in general, the diffusive impact of media means the rise of a potentially global model for social movements that ripples far and wide across the world map, streamlining country specific practices and repertoires, and creating a single group of closely related channels carrying the messages of the insurgents worldwide; that is, the giant mutant.

## 1.6. Hypothesis

Having gone through major recent works dealing with the issue of media in revolution, and within the light of the many roles and contributions of the new media to contentious politics in its most recent episodes; this thesis will be a structural contribution to the literature in the form of a new framework. One that aims at not only defining the major roles of the media in revolution but also at contextualizing these major roles as the different phases of the revolution unfold. The question under the light is:

Given the magnitude of the impact of modern media in all areas of today's life, how does the modern media impact modern revolutions? What are the inherent features of media that allow it to play different roles that further modern revolutions? And what are the different roles played by the modern media in different stages of the revolution?

The main point of this thesis is to showcase how the role of the media mutates throughout the different stages of a revolution, hence the title "The Giant Mutant".

This thesis will be combining different media theories with social movement theory to show how the new media landscape, through its many technical and social features, can play different roles in different stages of an unfolding revolution. The aim is to study every major phase of the revolution separately to depict the dominant role of the media during that relevant phase, and the characteristics of the media that allow it to play such a role. By comparing the dominant media roles in each phase of the revolution, I will try to highlight the mutations the media role goes through across the stages of the revolution. My tentative conclusion is that the media too, has its own cycle vis a vis the

revolution; and that this cycle goes hand in hand with the unfolding of the revolution in a parallel manner.

## **1.7. The Agent v/s Medium Debate**

The agent v/s medium debate is one of the most active topics when it comes to the theme of media in revolution. That is because researchers accord different levels of credits to the roles of media in revolution. Some academics deal with the media as a main agent and driver of the revolution. But some others consider the latter position an exaggeration, and prefer to treat the modern media as a catalyst to the primary agent that is the people.

Most of the previous sources in this work accord major importance to the role of media in modern revolutions. Earlier in the introduction, we went through claims such as "The Facebook Revolution" and "The Twitter Revolution" according major importance to the standing of media vis a vis revolutions. These sources were almost alluding at the fact that these modern revolutions weren't possible, without a modern interactive media landscape to trigger and support them.

On the other hand, many researchers dealing with the topic of modern revolutions, believe that considering the media an active agent behind any of the modern revolutions, is an overstatement and an exaggeration. For this group of researchers, people are behind the revolution while the media is the main catalyst that facilitated awareness, organization, and diffusion. For instance, Anonymous wonders but also casts some doubt over the fact whether it is social media or the people who did outwit authoritarianism. According to the international legion of ethical hackers, the shift was through the "tool" of media but not due to it (Anonymous, 2011).

Other sources rest their claims on the differences in media impacts across different revolutions throughout the middle east, to conclude that media wasn't behind the change. Sheila Riley, for example claims that modern media had different impacts in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Yet change occurred in all countries, which validates that media wasn't the main denominator of the revolution sweeping these countries by domino effect (Riley, 2011). Gladwell showcases how activists made good use of the new media and social media. However, he claims that authors are yet to convince readers that without the new media landscape, these movements weren't going to be made possible (Gladwell, 2011). Lifvergen accords a functional role to the new media tools in revolution, and focuses on the expression "supports the protesters' cause" to downplay its role (Lifvergen, 2011). And finally, some others sources such as Patrick Galey, directly state cases where the grasp of the new media use obviously failed instigating major change. Stating Lebanon, where other factors such as the lack of unity and common message hindered the progress of the movement in 2005, made his case (Galey, 2013). "Successful Revolution Takes More Than Social Media" claims Carafano ending the whole argument to the negative conclusion suggested by his title (Carafano, 2011).

Going through the literature of agency versus medium is very important for this work; that is because the very first question asked is always about whether the media is as influential in change as the media studies claim. And the first opposing statement is always related to the agency of the people over change. This thesis studies the mutations of the new media roles in different phases of the revolution, and is completely divorced from the matter of agency. What helps keeping this thesis neutral

vis a vis the agency debate, is the fact that studying the impact or effects of the media roles are out of the scope of this study. The scope is limited at studying the functionality of the media tools and their mutations throughout the stages of revolution, without getting into final outcomes. The matter of agency will rest in neutrality over the remainder of the thesis, while focus is completely shifted to the media side of the debate.

## 1.8. The Case

In order to prove the hypothesis stated above, I will be studying the role of the new media landscape in the Egyptian revolution. By Egyptian Revolution, I mean the original episode that happened between 2010 - 2011; that is the January 25th revolution that ousted the president "Mohammed Husni Mubarak".

Choosing the Egyptian case to illustrate this thesis is far from being random. In effect, my choice of this country and this revolution is justified by a multidisciplinary perspective. First of all, the case of Egypt is the pioneer case for the effects of the new media in revolution. This is the first significant case to illustrate the true effects of the new global media landscape. Despite the fact that it is not the first chronological case - second after Tunisia-, it is the first case that displayed a truly obvious role for the mass media in conjunction with social media. Second, Egypt is a significant country, both regionally and internationally; which makes the choice even more relevant to international affairs. Being a pivot in the Middle East and to a certain extent in the world (specially with respect to Middle East - West relations), events in Egypt tend to have far and wide ripple effects that prove to be relevant on the international scene. Third, Egypt is viewed as a pillar country among the Arab countries; both its demographic and historical weight contribute towards the fact that events in Egypt can destabilize more than one Arab regime. Fourth, Egypt is a country of key importance to the west; historically a connector between Arabs and Westerners, and a main agent in the globally involving Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Egypt has the West's eyes constantly on it. Fifth, the state's reactions in Egypt -in terms of censorship, media controls and blackouts- were significant and the countering media outlets used were powerful; let

alone the fact that the physical state responses were also intense and heavily invested by the media locally, regionally and globally.

Finally, the media attention the recent contentious episodes of Egypt received globally was unprecedented, contributing into making the case of Egypt the "IT" master case of media studies. This attention came in different unprecedented forms: Huge social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube created special proxies for the activists on site to use. International satellite channels with huge capacities such as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera risked personnel and investments to cover events around the clock and even got politically aligned and involved in the conflict. And international supporting activists created fake IPs and secure internet lines for the Egyptian activists so they can be able to access international media and circumvent censorship and state controls. In sum, the media attention invested in the Egyptian Revolution, in terms of capital, technology, involvement, personnel and live air space had been exceptional, and contributed directly into making Egypt the main case to study media involvement in modern revolutions.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will use a strict definition of the modern media. The new media landscape referred to in this thesis is the media structure combining mass media and social media. In terms of mass media, I will be referring mainly to satellite channels (pan-Arab channels more than others) as well as other one way media outlets such as the print and online newspapers. When it comes to social media, I will be using mainly Facebook, Twitter and Youtube in terms of their relevant content. I will be dealing mainly with the kind of modern media that possesses the flexibility,

adaptability, high tech solutions and high instantaneous reach -due to its nature- to affect modern revolutions the most.

The methodology adopted in content studies for the case, will be that of collecting secondary data reports derived from content aggregators. These aggregators are technological tools (software) that have the ability to screen and sort media content in live time. Data collected from these aggregators is later classified and used as direct evidence of media roles during revolution. Sources used in this thesis, rely in majority on such reports and data studies.

## **1.9. Theoretical Framework**

As stated above, this thesis will try to combine media theory with a prominent framework of revolutions. The theoretical framework will include theory elements of both disciplines handled in parallel according to a clearly defined time frame. The theoretical framework will be based on Sydney Tarrow's social movement's stages (a choice to be explained in the coming section). According to this framework, the revolution is divided into three major stages or phases: The pre-revolution phase that encompasses the period straight before and the beginning or the early sparks of the revolution (marked by the actions of the early challengers and the first media highlights). The revolution phase, which encompasses the actual dynamics of the revolution (the protests, escalations and potential violence, as well as heightened media coverage). And finally the post-revolution phase which is characterized by a lessening of action on behalf of the protesters, a clearer view of the changes and outcomes as well as the diffusion of the outcomes to the rest of the world.

In the first phase, Sydney Tarrow & the late Charles Tilly emphasize: the boldness of the early challengers translated into the acts that spark the revolution, the exchange of democratizing values through the media and means of communications, the window of opportunity which is the event that the challengers exploit to advance their case, the old repertoire which is the classical range of methods of protests, and the early framing of the movement which is the identity cast on the revolution by the state and the media as well as the protesters themselves (creating conflicting framings). During this phase of the revolution, the educational or awareness raising role of the media tends to be the most prominent; at least according to the literature so far. The theoretical backdrop of

this argument will be drawn from the awareness raising theory of the media such as the theory of Kalathil and Boas. This theory states that the media in its current advanced form (satellite channels and social media) plays a huge role in promoting democracy and educating the masses (and the protesters), about their civil rights and other democratic values (Kalathil & Boas, 2013). In the corresponding chapter, I will attempt to single out this awareness raising role of the media, explain the characteristics of the modern media that allow it to play this role, and the how-to of the role.

In the actual revolutionary phase, Tilly & Tarrow focus on: resource mobilization, testing and recreation of a repertoire (as defined in the previous point), organization and participation efforts of the protesters, actions and reactions by and against the state, inner diffusion among different social strata or political agents (from the classes that are the most concerned with the revolution, to those the least concerned), and the struggle to reform. During this phase, the organizational role of the media (defined by the use of the media as an on-site organizing tool by the protesters) tends to be the most prominent. The argument for this part will take off from the media theory focusing on protest organization and the on-site street uses of media. The theory of Lindsey focusing on the creation of weak links among protesters which facilitated on-site moves, and the theory of Rita Safranek focusing on the use of modern media in mobilizing the masses and directing them throughout the protests are key pillars in this argument (Lindsey, 2013) (Safranek, 2011). At this stage of revolution challengers are already taking the streets, so the media role shifts to becoming the connecting tool of protesters. In the relevant chapter, the characteristics of modern media that allow it to

become an organizational tool of contention will be explain. Then, the how-to of media intermediated organization will be displayed in details.

In the post-revolution phase, Tilly & Tarrow's framework focuses on: the outcomes of the social movement (change and new stability found), the learning & building of a new repertoire for future reference (based on the trial and errors and subsequent successes), diffusion and international aspects of the revolution. That's where the diffusive and transnational roles of the media are thought to be the most prominent. I will take off this argument from the theory of the role of the media in transnational diffusion of protests by Simon Cottle. The new media aided by social media promoted a quick "live" diffusion of the protests across national borders simultaneously as the revolution was succeeding in reaching its immediate goals (Cottle, 2011). In this respect, the literature on the diffusion of contention across borders, and the domino effect starting from the Middle East, dominates the conversation on media in revolution. In the relevant chapter, the technical and social characteristic of modern media that allow it to intermediate cross borders diffusion will be addressed. Then the mechanisms of cross border diffusion will be explained one by one.

My purpose in this thesis is to highlight the dominant role of the media in each stage of the revolution and the media characteristics that allow it to play this role; and to prove that media roles have their own cycle that goes hand in hand with the cycle of the revolution. However it is very important to note that all three primary roles and other secondary roles of the media in revolution are at play at all times, with the only difference being the relevance of each specific role of them to the specific phase of the revolution which heightens its impact within the relevant context. Most media content

carries in it valuable information that contributes to awareness raising. Most media content gets circulated in a way that connects minds and people in webs of solidarity prone to become a unit of action when the conditions present a window of opportunity. And most media content has the potential to become global and contribute to the diffusion of an event, an idea and a social movement or a revolution. However, the dominant media role in the realm of revolution is the one affecting revolution the most according to the stage the revolution is going through. The roles I am trying to depict as principal and dominant are neither exclusive to the phase concerned, nor exhaustive vis a vis the whole entirety of the revolution.

## **1.10. The Background Framework Adopted**

Before diving into the study of the topic, it is worth it to stop and explain the elements of the adopted framework of social movements, which is the backbone of this study.

The Tilly & Tarrow framework divides the revolution into three different levels, depending on the intensity of action. The first phase gathers all the moves and interactions that happen right before the protests and mass action. These encompass the making of claims, the adoption of these claims by different social classes, the creation of a common identity and message, the validation of the new political actor, and the creation of windows of opportunities to launch the movement in full fledge. The second phase which is one of heightened action encompasses: the actual protests, interactions with the state at different levels, cycles of mobilization and demobilization, testing of repertoires and creation of new repertoires, cycles of interactions between the different actors of the contentious episodes, and different outcomes and the resulting political shifts and alignments. Finally, the last phase encompasses: the settling of results, creation of a new balance, definition of a new repertoire depending on outcomes, institutionalization, and most importantly, diffusion. These three phases constitute a bell shaped curved of action that will serve as a flexible background for modern revolutions. The latter mentioned bell curve of action, is the first reason why the Tilly and Tarrow framework is the most suitable to analyze modern revolutions.

The first reason why this framework is chosen for this thesis, is its flexibility vis a vis the cycle of events. A bell shaped curve of action defines the unfolding of the social movement or revolution, through its phases of heightened action followed by

decreasing stamina; which makes it a logical fit that's also globally acceptable as it fits almost every other form of events.

The second reason, and one of the most important, is the fact that this framework is not linear and accounts for the many probable intensities of the movement. Tilly and Tarrow do not define the level of intensity of unfolding actions; but rather offer different options ranging from peaceful protests and escalating up to civil war. The Tilly and Tarrow framework offers enough options to cover different levels of violence and intensity, allowing the framework to be flexible enough to encompass the Arab Spring in its very different episodes from Tunisia to Syria.

Moreover, the framework also doesn't predict specific outcomes as most other frameworks do, but rather offers a range of possible endings for social movements or revolutions, depending on the unfolding of events and their intensity during the apex of the cycle. And regardless of the general outcomes and the changes implemented, the framework also looks at the future of different agents participating in the movement, also offering a range of possible outcomes or paths to take for each agent while studying the overall shift in the balance of power resulting from the events.

Fourth, the framework is flexible enough to contain different and new elements in its structure. It leaves enough space as to be able to insert media theory within the different interactions of the agents involved. It has no strictly defined links allowing for the technology of communications of the time to fill in the gaps, without affecting the framework. The temporal frame is also undefined which allows the technology of the relevant era to define it. Overall, the flexibility of the Tilly & Tarrow framework, its

adaptability to different scenarios, and applicability within the frame of any technological landscape, makes it the perfect framework for the modern revolutions of the Arab Spring specifically Egypt.

## **1.11. Core Outline**

In the next sections of this thesis I will be dealing with the three stages of revolution in the chronological order, as displayed in the introduction. The first part of each core chapter will focus on the technical and social characteristics of new media outlets, that allow it to play its role in the relevant stage of revolution. The remainder of the chapter will focus on how the media contributed to the revolution through its dominant role in that stage.

Chapter two "The Modern Media Educates", will cover the pre-revolution phase, and will aim to depict the modern media role in it relying on media characteristics and media content; as well as technical media moves. Chapter three "The Modern Media Organizes" on the apex of revolution, and chapter four "The Modern Media Globalizes" on the post revolution phase, will follow the same logic trying to reveal and dissect the dominant new media role in each phase. Chapter five "The Modern Media's Cycle in Revolution" will wrap up the results of the study to put them in a parallel cycle, and will carry the conclusion of this work.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Modern Media Educates**

The first chapter of this study will tackle the role of modern media at the onset of a revolution. The first stage of revolution, the stage dealt with in this chapter, corresponds to the stage defined by Tilly and Tarrow as preceding revolution, with all the activities and interactions culminating into mass protests. During this stage, pre-revolutionary signs can be observed, such as: the recognition of common grievances within a significant portion of the population, the rise of claims on behalf of challengers, the validation and consolidation of these claims bearing on the interests of the state, the creation of a common identity, the polarization and politicization of the masses, the forming of popular alliances around common claims, the early challengers' moves against the state and a heightened popular will for participation in the revolution (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007).

The role of the modern media will be tackled in general, then refined to focus on the specifics on the Egyptian case. In order to explain the role of modern media in the onset of a revolution; a general framework of media in action followed by an empirical study on Egypt will be displayed. The latter will be done within the confines of the larger social movement framework of Tilly and Tarrow.

The awareness role of the media is its most basic and historical role; as the media in all its forms is meant to be informative. Even before media became interactive (a two ways communicative tool), its information distribution capacity gave it a strong awareness

potential. But why is awareness important in the first phase of revolution? How does it create a true opportunity to revolt? How did modern media raise awareness at this stage? And how does this role fit with the Tilly and Tarrow framework of social movements?

The study will start from tackling the opportunity window concept, which is the first step of any social movement, to explain how the modern media affects opportunity. After studying opportunity window, the study will proceed into establishing the importance and effect of modern media in Egypt, as well as the characteristics that allow it to be influential within the context of the revolution. Finally, the focus of the study will shift to the three themes of awareness: democratization, identity creation, socialization and motivation.

## **2.1. A Revolutionary Opportunity Window**

Before starting any study on revolution, the opportunity window concept stands first in the chronological order. For a social movement or a revolution to take place, opportunity must be presented to challengers so activate their motivations and launch their activism. According to Sidney Tarrow, "political opportunity refers to consistent - but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national - signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements" (Tarrow, 1996). According to Sidney Tarrow, windows of opportunity can be opened following many factors, most notably: political access, relative consensus, shifting alignments, and perception of success. Challengers will take any opportunity to revolt, if they perceive that any of these previously mentioned factors is to their favor. In a simplest form, challengers will take a risk when a window of opportunity opens in a way as to make them believe some elements will increase their odds of success.

The modern media landscape has direct effects over the furthering of the window of opportunity presented for challengers to launch their activism. This interaction with opportunity windows, happen on three main levels: the loss of legitimacy on the part of the regime, the tipping of the odds of success towards the challengers, and the breaking of the barriers of fear on the part of the protesters.

This landscape through its different media outlets (mass media and social media) can contribute to enlarge the window of opportunity presented ,through positively interacting with each of the three levels. Through focused content, wide reach, impact,

interactivity and influence; modern media can activate all three factors positively to create an opportunity window, allowing early challengers to start a social movement.

Awareness raising is one of the oldest and most important roles of the media, since the inception of the print. It is also the role that allows it to interfere with the legitimacy of a system through its content and reach. It is true that politics has the power to define what's right and wrong; but it is the media that will carry these definitions and make them known to the public sphere. Through mass media in its modern forms, the public today has access to the main political speech in a country. And through social media, it also has access to a wide range of alternative speeches as well (Christensen, 2011).

Through these definitions, modern media can carry in its content the first seeds of opportunity by planting ideas on democracy, freedom, political and economic rights, and participation within any population living under a dictatorship. Being exposed to these concepts of democracy, people will start contrasting them with what is available for them through the country's system. The gap created between these concepts and reality, directly causes a loss of legitimacy on the part of the regime; a direct factor in creating a new opportunity window.

However, being aware of their right to freedom, economic and political rights, and democratic participation, is not enough to get people to revolt. They need at least two more factors of motivation: The first is a perception of a chance for success; and the second is breaking the barrier of fear. The modern media can directly influence both factors.

After having created a public sphere that is democratically awake, the media redirects its content as to create a mood that is receptive to activism, through tipping the perception of the odds of success towards the challengers. People will revolt if they can, if they believe that they have chances for success. This is the node where media interferes highlighting shifting alignments, local and international support, and numbers. Support is a key concept within this regard, because when challengers feel they are supported by new political allies, by the international media and public opinion, and by high numbers of their compatriots; they will naturally start perceiving that the odds are in their favor.

The final node in opportunity window is breaking the barriers of fear. The modern media contributes to breaking the barriers of fear and motivating people to take it to the streets by relating successful precedent. Showing the challengers that other challengers in a different country were able to overthrow a regime under similar conditions, is the last straw that can get people to take the risk. Being exposed to images of others dictatorships breaking under revolution, furthers the perception of success and diminishes the public fear of authorities.

Modern media then, furthers opportunity window through a three steps process: First, modern media raises the awareness of people about the gap between their rights and their current conditions; delegitimizing the regime. Second, media creates a perception of success, through broadcasting other successful revolutions. This new perception gives people a hope in change, which pushes them to take action. And finally, modern

media decreases the barriers of fear among people; and makes contentious moves look less risky to them.

In sum, when the protestors feel they have a chance to succeed, they will adopt a "can do" attitude. And modern media influences the perception of challengers, pertaining to their potential success. Once the challengers feel the odds are in their favor; they will take a risk. This is how modern media can help an opportunity window materialize into street action.

## **2.2. Modern Media in Egypt**

For modern media to be able to play an effective role in a revolution, it has to have certain characteristics. First, it has to be able to send the right message to a group of people large enough to challenge the system; which means it has to have focus content coupled with high connectivity rates. Second, its stories have to be impactful enough to generate local and international support; which means it has to have credibility and international connections. And finally, it has to have more than annoyance value to the government, which means it has to be able to present a real threat.

Modern media in Egypt was indeed capable of playing a vital role in the January 25th Revolution, because it enjoyed all three characteristics, and because challengers knew how to use the latter fact to their advantage.

### **2.2.1. Connectivity Rates**

In Egypt, the modern media landscape starting with social media was capable of playing its role in furthering the opportunity window presented to challengers, due to the high rates of reach and connectivity among the masses (at least in urban areas).

Media moves focused on content and claiming reach, encompassed many attempts with different levels of success: The rise of the April 6 movement, the rise of the many Facebook Twitter and Youtube channels and the rise of dissenting bloggers like Khaled Said, Wael Ghoneim, Eman Hachem and others. The true spike in media content spreading awareness happened before the major protests and violence in Egypt in January 2011 (Howard & al; 2011). Taking this into consideration; the "breakthrough"

moment of the Egyptian revolution happened 6 months earlier than any protests. Historically speaking, 8 June 2010 marked the moment where awareness started taking effective form. That was the day Wael Ghoneim was startled by the Facebook picture of the disfigured Khaled Said, and decided to start the Facebook group "We Are All Khaled Said" to inform the Egyptian youth of the abuses of the Egyptian police under Husni Mubarak (Vargas, 2012). All of these moves focused on spreading dissenting content, wouldn't have been significant without a fair internet connectivity rate (22% as reported by the Egyptian government in early 2010) (Vargas, 2012). A comparative field study by professor Sahar Khamis, confirmed that successive online dissenting moves were commanding more attention and subscriptions from the people, the closer we got to the breakout of Tahrir protests in Egypt. For instance, the 6th of April movement gathered seventy thousand (70 000) subscribers on Facebook within 3 months in 2008; whereas the "We Are All Khaled Said" group of Wael Ghoneim claimed three millions (3 000 000) subscribers within the same time range in 2010 (Khamis, 2011). Modern media in Egypt was increasingly becoming more effective, round after round of dissenting moves, regardless of the success of these moves. Focused alternative speeches of alternative media were claiming higher subscriptions and unprecedented dimensions, due to a reach ironically provided by the government itself.

Starting with the spread of content focused on the "Khaled Said" murder by the state police, the first calls for action were issued through a Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said". These calls encompassed the calls to protest in Tahrir Square, the calls to spread the news through other media outlets, the calls to specifically named days of

rage and the most notorious "the people want to overthrow the regime" call. The virtual space became the target of laser focused coherent messages, making the best out of the high internet reach to influence people to protest. Throughout the process, the levels of awareness were increasing and more youth was being exposed to the now clearly defined dissenting speech (Herrera, 2014).

*"We [wanted] to expose the bad practices of the Egyptian police"* Wael Ghoneim says. *"Because the last thing a dictator wants is that you expose their bad practices to his people."* Khamis & Vaughn quote these previous words of Wael Ghoneim in the context of an interview, where the challenger explained that he clearly intended making the best out of both real graphic content and Facebook connectivity rates in Egypt (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

Awareness groups created on online platforms with substantial numbers of users quickly gained notoriety, and the debate shifted from humanitarian to political. The content in the group "We are all Khaled Saiid" started as a reproach to police brutality, then shifted to include the keywords "freedom" "democracy" "government" within a few days from the launch of the group. In October 2010, political personas like "Mohamed Al-Baradei" joined with their own pages (on Facebook and Twitter), and added more focused content to the already awakened media discourse. Professional terms such as "governance" "alternative" and "solutions" started circulating with this high scale presence. Next, teenagers stepped in starting their own "January 25: The day of revolution over torture, poverty, corruption & unemployment" only days before the big day "January 25th", and still were able to gather millions of subscribers within 9

days! (El Tantawi & Wiest, 2011). The "virtual audience" was consuming daily, the focused content early challengers intended to diffuse. An even more interesting observation within the same study, noted that the higher the number of subscriptions to a Facebook group, the higher administrators of groups diffused dissenting content (El Tantawi & Wiest, 2011).

But content alone, stays passive unless it is being backed up by a wide reach and high interactivity. It is crucial then, to start by looking at the rates and numbers of people effectively exposed to modern mass and online media. As indicated by research conducted in 2011, the numbers of internet and mobile phone penetration in Egypt at the time were as follow: 21% of 90 millions of Egyptians had internet connections, that is about 20 millions of users; 70% also had mobile phone subscriptions and that is over 60 millions of indirect users who are also reachable one way or another (Tantawi & Wiest; 2011). These numbers of connectivity were translated into high rates of subscriptions on social media, for instance: The page Wael Ghoneim started gaining notoriety pretty fast and gathered hundreds of thousands then millions of sympathizing youth. Three million (3 000 000) users joined this page that constituted the first public forum for debate on the recent infringements of the regime (Vargas, 2012).

In this early stage, the process of engagement (interactivity) as depicted by Kelsey Williams in her Master Thesis at Karlstad University, reflected a raised "active" awareness: People used specific hashtags on Facebook and Twitter (230 000 tweets per day carrying the hashtags #Revolution #Egypt #Freedom), and used joining Facebook groups and retweeting (sharing a tweet by someone else) already shared tweets as means to endorse activists (Williams, 2014).

The ability to diffuse focused dissenting content through alternative means (social media.

channels), coupled with the high rates of connectivity and social media participation; was the first indicator that the modern media in Egypt was truly rising to the rank an impactful tool of contention. Focused content and high connectivity were the first tools in the repertoire of contention of early Egyptian challengers.

### **2.2.2. International Reach and Credibility**

At the first stage of revolution, modern media cycles of awareness are established due to many forms of cyclicity between the media outlets themselves. These developed cycles of awareness with wide reach happen when international mass media outlets amplify the awareness spread by smaller alternative media channels, giving them magnified effect, credibility and proportion. But this cycle of going from social media outlets to mass media couldn't happen if it wasn't to the credibility gained by the social media pages. This latter credibility was indicated by the high and constantly increasingly number of subscribers. This process of shifted credibility, spilled from the social media to the mass media using social media outlets as journalistic sources. And consequently to the latter process, modern media outlets started gaining a much bigger audience, since the number of people with satellite connections, is much higher than the number of people with internet access.

Social media and the internet were massively viewed as the only alternative to challengers, in the light of high controls over mass media in Egypt (Ibrahim, 2015). It is the perception of the masses that lifted user generated media to the ranks of esteemed

mass media. In clearer terms, the credibility of alternative media outlets, was a direct function of the numbers of subscriptions. What was happening at this early stage -after credibility was numerically verified- was a discreet negotiation between social media and mass media over journalistic sourcing (Hermida, Zemith & Louis; 2012).

Journalistic sourcing in this context happened by the international mass outlets media using the local social media outlets as sources of information, adding a layer of international credibility to these user generated media forms.

This cycle was launched when social media too, was being redefined as a good source of information. Social media was credible enough for the mass media to start quoting during live pan-Arab broadcasting time. Important international newspapers were already sourcing content directly from Facebook and Twitter: For instance The Guardian in its international online edition was quoting Egyptian twitter activists in its articles; but also live streaming their feeds on its banners. Mohammed Abdul Fattah for instance (Twitter handle: @mfatta7) was frequently quoted and streamed on the online pages of The Guardian (El Tantawi & Wiest, 2011). Al-Jazeera English was also one of the international satellite channels that frequently used social media output as newsfeed for its news about the unrest in Egypt; reason for which it was one of the first TV Channels whose reporters and photographers were detained and banned from Cairo (Mainwaring, 2011).

In Egypt, social media became as powerful as the international media, due to the links Egyptian media established. Egyptian channels and websites were far more likely to link to the CNN or to Facebook, than they were likely to link or source from each other.

This changes the whole Egyptian media network, to be one that finds its main sources from the much freer international satellite channels, and the un-controlled user generated social media sources (Howard & al, 2011).

We are witnessing an area of convergence between the producer of news on one hand and the consumer of news on the other hand; now that user-generated media is gaining widespread credibility. People from all walks of life, including news producers and journalists, can talk to each other and exchange information all ranging from political opinions to their favorite restaurants in a certain city (Hoff, 2012). In Egypt, this convergence started happening during the first phase of revolution and manifested in the narrative of the revolution. Different online activists such as Wael Ghoneim and Alaa Abdul Fattah , DIY (do it yourself) journalists such as Houssam El Hamlawy and Manal Hussein, and dissenting bloggers such as the late Khaled Said, Michael Nabil and Eman Hachem ; were all examples of this convergence. These people took it upon themselves to create and operate information hubs through the World Wide Web and social media outlets, in order to re-broadcast more credible news to the people of Egypt.

This exchange, notably when it happens live and through videos and photos, can become a credible source for the mass media to broadcast. This helped putting user-generated media at the forefront of news making, running live on the screens of international mass media outlets. This cycle of journalistic sourcing and strong interlinks between alternative social media and mass media, allowed the Egyptian media landscape to become more international, more appealing to worldwide media;

hence more threatening to the regime. But also more effective inside Egypt itself, because it allowed small internet activists to reach every household with a satellite connection: people without internet connection were able to connect with activists through Pan-Arab satellite channels.

Through the cycle of journalistic sourcing; the number of people actively aware was increasing exponentially. The small outlets of user generated media were being given stage in the international and pan -Arab mass media; making them more credible and impactful. The reach of powerful satellite channels was now at the service of the small outlets, through the journalistic sourcing process, and people who weren't connected online, were now easy to reach via television. Suddenly, the Egyptian government was no longer facing a few challengers and their local Facebook pages; but rather the international mass media cycle.

### **2.2.3. The Media Threat, State Reaction, Loss Of Legitimacy, and Erosion of the Barriers of Fear**

The active awareness potential of the modern media landscape prior to any event a direct threat to dictatorial governments, this is why states try to do their best to censor it. The "state reaction" argument here is centered on the latter fact. Following this logic, the question becomes: if the state didn't acknowledge the disturbing effects of awareness by the modern media, why would it invest in all sorts of censorship policies and tight controls? When it comes to revolution, a lot can be inferred from the way the state is handling its affairs during protests; and a lot can also be inferred from the kind of controls in place before the protests break.

In the case of Egypt, the Egyptian government always had controls over the non-state owned media, and censorship was always a running process as to protect the regime and its fellows. Media content was censored in a way that any direct critique of the ruling clique was banned. The same applied on every direct demands of freedom or change (Faris, 2012). Empirically speaking, the Egyptian government under Mubarak had many controls over the media landscape, already in place: Egypt had been under the state of emergency since 1981, which means the government had full control over the media. A tight blasphemy law was in full effect since the 50s. Licensing the media was under the full control of the governmental "High Press Council". Radio and television licenses were under the Ministry of Information. And the Egyptian Radio and Television Union which controls all the public broadcasters was also under the Ministry of Information. In short, all operating media outlets in Egypt were under the watchful eye of the state. Before the revolution broke out in Egypt, it is important to note that the government realized early in the process how important the news from Tunisia were going to be; this is why state media covered sparingly and reluctantly the successes of the Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia. The government knew very well that the revolutionary potential of these news will be the last straw that'll push the Egyptian youth to the streets (Hassanpour, 2011).

On the other hand, and while the awareness effect of the media was taking place among the Egyptian youth, authorities still tried to censor the media and limit its awareness potential. In January 2011, before the 25th, mobile connections were already unavailable due to an emergency order to telecom providers in Egypt. Next, data limits were decreased substantially in order to slow down the speed of the internet. Text

messaging was also disabled. Governmental agents and user accounts were infiltrating Facebook, Twitter and Youtube in order to stay ahead of the contenders; this is why they started using emails instead. Satellite coverage was also controlled, and journalists broadcasting live expelled and persecuted. These measures pushed important media personalities like Shahira Amin the deputy head of Al-Nile TV and Suha Al-Naqqash from Al-Jazeera to submit their resignations on air, protesting against the tight controls on media (Movindri, 2013).

Recent research on censorship proves that censorship couldn't hinder the progress of the Egyptian revolution. In effect, people's awareness of censorship mechanisms themselves, made it easier for them to surpass them. Censorship also fueled their rage against the dictatorial Husni Mubarak government (Hassanpour, 2011). At this level, people had become aware of their right to be exposed to unaltered information, and to consume some free thought away from Mubarak's state media feeds. Censorship itself had become obvious, and the state run media outlets were exposed for altering coverage.

The awareness potential of the modern media, is the reason why dictatorial government usually have very tight measures of censorship and control. Censoring the incoming media helps the government filter out democratic ideas but most importantly, filter out the diffusions of successes elsewhere. These diffusions are dangerous because they imply a direct loss of legitimacy, and encourage people to break their fear and take action against the regime . Egypt's government had controls in place all throughout the Mubarak term. And despite the fact it was the state that encouraged the dispersion of

connectivity and pan-Arab media, it ended up leading major media blackouts during the revolution. The latter action goes to show how much of a threat was the modern media landscape to the government, during the unfolding of the revolution in Egypt.

### **2.3. Modern Media in Egypt Activates the Opportunity Window**

Being aware of the media threat and potential in Egypt, activists decided to put this powerful awareness tool to use. Once the first spark of opportunity window presented itself with the mass outrage over Khaled Saïid's brutal murder, early challengers started mobilizing their media sources. All digital sources and other virtually costless solutions were now at move, within an unintentional concert, to motivate people to activate their newly acquired awareness into a true willingness to revolt. The three pillars of opportunity window were activated through the modern media. The first target was to break the legitimacy of the regime in the eyes of the masses. The second target was to increase the hopes for success among the masses, and the third target was to break the barrier of fear from authorities.

Young motivated challengers, such as Wael Ghoneim and a lot of his fellow "bloggers" and "facebookers" recruited all their mass media and social media knowledge to reach the highest number of connected individuals. The youngsters aimed to spread the word about the violations of the regime, along with demands of freedom, democracy and regime change. The powers of media in bashing and delegitimizing the regime were invested in full, through diffusing specifically targeted speeches and images. This targeted content carried the undertone triggering revolt. The content diffused focused on ideal concepts of public participation, democracy, freedom of thought, importance of public opinion, and human rights. But at the same time contrasted these ideals to the realities lived in Egypt: oppression by the state police, violations of the regime represented mainly by the crime against "Khaled Saïid", crimes against human rights as

well as against dissenters and the free press, fraudulent elections, severe censorship, and the dictatorial government. All of these concepts that were promoted through media content, were aimed at shaking the legitimate grounds of the Mubarak regime, and question the validity of its rule.

On the other hand, tipping the odds of success and breaking the barriers of fear within the masses was centered around content carrying one essential concept: successful precedent. While the Egyptian official media was covering reluctantly the news from Tunisia; online activists aimed at putting the Tunisian victory at the forefront of their content (Hassanpour, 2011). Using this strategy of highlighting successful precedent, helped activists change the perspective of people into a "can do" perspective. A "can do" perspective means that the masses now started believing in their chance for change, which motivated them to take it to the streets. The Tunisian victory, once promoted in Egypt, also meant that the fear of authorities among the Egyptian masses started diminishing substantially.

The modern media in Egypt, through its reach, focused content, credibility and the threat it presented to the regime; was able to further the opportunity window, sparked by the brutal murder of dissenting blogger "Khaled Saïid". As of this level, the media started acting as a catalyst of the movement which became a full fledged anti-regime revolution.

In the remainder of this chapter, the four themes of awareness through modern media will be addressed. As previously mentioned in the introduction of this chapter; the focused content, wide reach, flexibility, adaptability and omnipresence of the media are

all characteristics that allow the modern media to create awareness. This is mainly through: furthering democratization, participating in identity creation and consolidation, accelerating the socialization of the masses, and finally motivating participation in dissent. The four main themes of awareness cross paths with the Tilly and Tarrow framework of social movements, as well as with the empirical narrative of the revolution.

### **2.3.1 Awareness Through Democratization**

One way to tackle awareness by the media, comes through democratization of knowledge, and the spreading of democracy ideals among people. For the purposes of this study, the term "democratization" will exclusively refer to the spreading of western democratic ideals by the modern media. This mission of the media includes propagating ideals of freedom of expression, democratic participation, free elections, and political and economic rights; through the channels of alternative social media.

Spreading democracy ideals always comes before democracy is introduced into any society; and the role of the modern media in this type of awareness is important.

Having originated in the West, modern media (especially social media) tends to relate Western values and ideals all over the world. Through their "instant" high reach and focus on democratic interactivity and participation; new media outlets encourage not only the idea of democracy, but also its practice on a personal level. Facebook, Youtube, Blogs and Twitter are all media outlets that encourage commenting, conversing and debating any idea in real time. The current networked and interactive forms of media, plays a central role in democratization for it serves two main purposes:

it stimulates civic engagement on many levels, and encourages political debate and participation.

New internet channels allowed for the democratic political debate to start in the virtual space (online), long before any contending action followed in reality. Democracy expressions were being aired out and adopted in online forums of discussions, Facebook groups, and small virtual live media podcasts. The latter happened despite the fact that the online challengers were still living under a dictatorship, that wouldn't allow these manifestations to be carried out to the streets (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Richard; 2010).

The gap created between this virtual online space of free speech, and the reality that doesn't allow for democratic participation, started creating high pressures on the stagnant political scene, at least four years before change started happening (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). This pressure was being mounted by a population that had become more aware of the regime's abuses, but also of its own economic and most importantly political rights. This pressure in Egypt, furthered the loss of legitimacy of the regime, one main goal of the early challengers.

Media content throughout the phase preceding revolution, bears witness to the heightened interest in democratic ideals and their adoption by a high number of connected individuals. The media efforts were directed towards enhancing political debate. Throughout this debate, democratic values took center stage in the media content: "regime change", "democratic government", "freedom", "equality", "liberty", "social justice", and "participation" became recurring terms in the alternative media.

These themes were mentioned over 200 000 times a day on Facebook and hashtagged equally on Twitter; as well as used as Youtube titles (Williams, 2014).

With the concerted efforts to amplify the democratizing aspect of the media, research validated that 71% of Egyptian people started using a more democratic lexicon while talking about their aspirations for the future of Egypt. The same statistical numbers applied to the percentage of Egyptians believing that gone are the days of a potent leaders, and that a democratic government granting equal participation is the key to the efficient political and economic management of Egypt. Keywords in the new speech, over 70% of Egyptians now adopted, included: "new constitution", "new era of government", "institutions" and "people's power" (Williams, 2014). This new awareness didn't only change the perception of people on democracy and their rights, but also diminished their respect for the existing regime and eroded its legitimacy.

### **2.3.2. Awareness Through Identity Building**

Going back to the Sydney Tarrow and Charles Tilly's framework; identity building and consolidation is a main theme in the beginning of any social movement. In fact, it is the phase where the dissenting body starts shaping up around a common identity. This common identity stems out from the common grievances, and consolidates around a common mission or goal (Tilly & Tarrow; 2006). Identity building starts when people start recognizing the fact that they have the same grievances; which unites them around a common cause transcending over other differences they might have. Identity consolidation, happens when people mutually recognize the new identity and decide to

uphold it and frame their movement within its confines all while walking towards the same goal or future aspiration.

Modern media has a direct influence on the public landscape where identities come to play; and the modern media landscape has made this landscape compact and instantaneous, which helps promoting and solidifying these identities (Nahon , Hemsley, Mason, Walker & Eckert , 2012). The same applies to the identities created by the common cause of dissent; common grievances and common political goals. They are carried by mass and social media, and furthered through instantaneous high reach broadcasts causing two main effects: On one hand an identity brought about by a common grievance starts claiming more subscribers; among the media audience that finds itself relating through empathy to the first claim makers. On the other hand, a feeling of solidarity starts emerging between people who just adopted the identity of dissenters. This same feeling that will trigger a higher level of sharing in terms of media and information, and later on a willingness to participate in further actions.

During the phase preceding the Egyptian Revolution, the pan-Arab mass media and international mass media started lending credibility to the social media sources adopting the identity of dissent. The identity of dissent in the Egyptian revolution, was that of a unified righteous movement against dictatorial authorities. This identity promoted by the challengers, was meant to face the "chaos" frame that was being promoted by the authorities. The pan-Arab media supported the challengers' frame through using alternative channels of social media -fed by the challengers- as real sources of information. Mass media also recognized citizen journalism and gave it air

space on Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya ,as well as other pan-Arab media outlet (Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide; 2012). In effect the following actions by Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera became quite common: using Facebook pictures as news background, displaying footages and photo galleries by Youtube and Facebook albums, sharing the tweets of different activists, and taking news from the official pages of activists as credible news. The page "We Are All Khaled Saiid" was at the front of these social media outlets given credibility by the mass media. This newly found credibility allowed the modern media to play a bigger role in identity formation. The newly formed identities were being viewed as legitimate and credible; which allowed them to proceed further through the stages of social movement.

Identity creation and consolidation is one of the main themes of awareness by the media that find direct translation into media content. Empirically speaking, and within the broader realms of framing the Egyptian revolution, the CNN and other American multinational media outlets, started using the expression "Chaos in Egypt", but by the end of 2010, and due to the heavy media and social media use of a more supportive vocabulary, this transformed into "Uprising in Egypt". Both Egyptians and Arabs, locals and expats, contributed to the shift in framing the revolution through their use of neutral or positive hashtags such as " #Egypt, #Tahrir, #Revo, and #Freedom" (Al Sebaei, 2013). This goes to show that the dissenters in Egypt were able, through heavy social media use, to sway the frames imposed by the powerful international mass media, to their favor.

Photos and videos too, were a powerful tool for the revolution. Unedited photos and footages of the state assaults on Khaled Said and other activists from the pre-revolution phase, had no options of being interpreted but for what they are. Three networks were primarily used to distribute these photos: Flickr, Youtube and Facebook. The themes of the photos focused on: The brutality of the regime in handling contenders, physical violence, and sensationalized moments of solidarity. Specific photos were also highlighted more than others, and furthered as star content for both mass and social media: the disfigured Khaled Said as a top tweeted photo, the police hitting early challengers, Muslims and Christians in unity praying and protesting together as well as youngsters carrying provocative slogans. Moreover, these graphics carried within them the seeds of solidarity and national unity by displaying humanity free of religious divisions, race, or social status (Martens, 2012).

Expressions used online by activists and their supporters, furthered a "unity" frame for the movement. A frame that is unaltered by the multiple inherent divisions of the Egyptian populations. Such expressions included: "Egyptians United for Freedom, Voice of Egyptians Abroad, Held Your Head Up High if you are Egyptian, March of Millions, and Free Egypt". Explanatory phrases that framed the movement as a national movement, were also part of the awareness propagated. For instance, "As one million march on the streets of Egypt, our goal is to reach one million voices in support of their march" the administrators of the march kept tweeting. Al-Baradei himself shared most of these frames, using his own pages and media statements. (El Tantawi & Wiest, 2011)

The role of the media in furthering identity creation and revolution consolidation, and speeding up the process by briefing it through social media feeds; contributed in moving society from passive awareness to active awareness. The Egyptian audience moved from the role of a passive observer to a role of true civic engagement, and political participation through dissent. Identity creation and consolidation through media content, is yet another important node in the Tilly & Tarrow framework where the modern media landscape plays a major role.

### **2.3.3. Awareness Through Socialization of the Masses**

Tilly and Tarrow, in their framework of social movements, talk about shifts in alignments within the elites and the masses as a main stage. A shift in alignment means that the masses tend to choose sides within contenders themselves or with and against the movement. Alignments among the masses is due to the adoption of one side or the other; which media can affect through "socializing" the masses around particular political concepts. Socialization of the masses means getting them to adopt certain ideals, as a result of a slow process of education, which the media can contribute to by bombarding the audience by the same ideals in different forms. The process of political socialization affects cognitive, emotional and behavioral factors related to each individual; and tends to alter their beliefs, trust, support, values, opinions and perceptions in different ways contributing to different outcomes (Peterson, 2011). This is why, media can through laser focused content, affect the socialization of the masses by guiding awareness along specific lines. The modern media, due to its ability to diffuse focused content and biased information, has the power to alter awareness in one direction or the other.

Mass media and social media -whether on personal or organizational levels- constitutes the main sources of information, especially for the younger segment of the population. Media content during revolutions then, becomes the main background for perception and opinion formation causing these segments to shape a common identity, and to develop a willingness to organize and mobilize later on (Yun Young, 2011).

Real time media content preceding the Egyptian revolution, shows clear evidence of socialization. Tweets against Mubarak and supporting the revolution ballooned from a poor 2300 per day, to an impressive 230 000 per day. Tweets after the events took place dropped back to an unimpressive 2500 per day; showing that the real awareness, subscription and socialization happened earlier in the process of media intermediation of a revolution (Howard & al, 2011). Despite the fact that Egyptian bloggers and twitter users kept on publishing their dissenting speech, the highest levels of media following were registered in the first phases of revolution (over 1000% increase); which shows that the masses were the most receptive to be socialized before the revolution.

Research on socialization in Egypt during revolution revealed that mass media and social media content was divided mainly between Islamic and secular; but in both cases was focused on solidarity, unity and the willingness to revolt. Focusing on twitter for instance, secular tweeks (Twitter users) were separated from Islamist tweeks. The most notable secular tweeks were @ElBaradei, @alaaaswany, @AymanNour, @waelabbas and @belalfadl; and the most notable Islamist tweeks were @MuhammadMorsi, @FadelSoliman, @EssamAlErian, @almogheer and @HazemSalahTW. This divide in between the generators of social media content was based on the form on the content

shared; but not on its essence, which in both cases focused on unity and solidarity. The content shared by the secular users and shared by their followers was neutral and national; whereas the content shared by Islamist users and retweeted by their followers carried Islamic connotations. In addition to the social media content, it had been concluded that the secular opposition was mainly choosing Al-Arabiya as its go-to pan-Arab channel, whereas the Islamist opposition was following the highly polarized Al-Jazeera. Yet, in the phase preceding revolution, the two competing channels were broadcasting the same messages, images and live coverages (Weber, Garimella, Batayneh; 2013). The clear message transmitted was: "we are united, and we want to overthrow the regime".

Mechanisms at play during this digitally intermediated phase, were highly related to social media mechanisms. Bratish confirms that convergence was created through being "encouraged", "liked", "friended" and "tweeted"; while anti-revolution voices were "pre-empted", "dissuaded" and "unfriended" (Bratish, 2011).

#### **2.3.4. Awareness Through Motivating Participation**

Between activating the opportunity window on one side, and actual protests on the other, there is a link that stems from awareness and moves us smoothly into the apex of the revolution. This link is the "willingness to participate", and the media role here is to stimulate the will of participation among the population on the receiving end. In the frame of revolution, this is the final link in the pre-revolution phase, for its direct effects take us straight into the second stage of street action and state reaction. The modern media landscape contributes in the process of motivating people to protest; for

it helps delegitimizing the regime and eroding the barriers of fear. It is through this process that the will of change on the part of the Google executive Wael Ghoneim, was transferred to hundreds of thousands of "Facebook likers" (the people who liked his page "We Are All Khaled Said"). Dissent in this important step was transferred from one person, to 3000 people within hours, to 3 million individuals within a few months. The same thing applies to Mohammad El-Baradei, who reached a little over 1 million individuals in Egypt within months (Mainwaring, 2011). In order to highlight what happened exactly in Egypt at this point of revolution, we will go back a little to previous studies of political participation. Research proved that exposure to mass media and the use of internet had changed the patterns of political participation, especially among the young segments of society in the past 15 years. Surveys relevant to the previous research proved also that there are specific patterns involved: The young are more affected than the old, and women more than men (Seongyi & Woo-Young, 2011). Research showed that the conversion rate from audience to protesters, rose during the Egyptian revolution from a mere 17.5% to a 62%, especially among the youth between the ages of 15 to 26. Online sources at the same time reported a dramatic increase in traffic. For instance horytna.net online radio who had an average audience of 80 000 persons per day, started recording numbers as high as 3 to 8 millions in the days preceding the major protests!! This increase in audience was matched by a relative increase in the numbers of challengers on the streets of Cairo, especially during the times closest to January 25th (Ibrahim & Stroud, 2011).

On site, it had been observed in a 2012 study (based on field studies conducted back during the protests by international media), that the majority of the protestors were male; and 52 % of all the protestors had a Facebook profile, which almost everybody before and throughout the protests as a source of information. Less than 16% of the protestors had twitter profiles, while 48% of the protestors reported hearing about protests from face to face sources, leaving about 52% to the combined modern media landscape (Tufekci & Wislon, 2012). Regardless of the failure or success of the movement on the streets; conversion rates show us a relative correlation between online activism and actual participation in protests.

From initial awareness to the willingness for active participation, passing through the activation of opportunity window, democratization, identity creation and socialization; the mass media and social media unleashed higher potentials for the Egyptian contenders to bring about change.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter addressing the first phase of the revolution, the purpose was to highlight three things: The first is to explain awareness and its importance in revolution. The second is to explain this awareness role of the media through opportunity window and its different themes through the empirical narrative of the Egyptian revolution. And the third is to prove the parallel road between the framework for social movements presented by Charles Tilly & Sydney Tarrow, and the awareness role of the modern media landscape. All three previous objectives were addressed empirically through the early narratives of the Egyptian Revolution.

At the most basic level, awareness starts by the interaction between the modern media and opportunity window through a few unprecedented moves by early challengers. The importance of these moves and of the medium carrying them, wasn't negligible as evidenced by the reaction to both pan-Arab and international mass media to them which magnified and amplified their messages. The violent state reaction also proved how much of a threat media can be. The awareness role of the modern media landscape at this level happened under many forms or sub-roles: democratization, identity creation, socialization and motivating participation. These sub-roles were observed through both the media content and speed of local, Arab and international propagation of information originating from Egypt. Ultimately, this awareness helped contributing directly to the unfolding of the revolution, and indirectly by moving other agents such as people and the international sphere, to contribute to the uprising.

Awareness then, is the most important role of the modern media landscape in the pre-revolution phase. And according to the literature and the case, it is also the main role of the mass media and social media in this phase. Moreover, the evolution of this media role also tends to parallel the evolution of the revolution, as per the stages defined by Tilly & Tarrow's social movement framework.

"The awareness provided by the modern media landscape is revolutionary and has the capacity to bring about change" (Holmes, 2012). This quote, despite it being inconclusive, sums up the awareness capacity of modern media as a contributor to sparking revolution.

Wael Ghoneim said "If you want to liberate a country, give them the internet", "The revolution started on Facebook", "I want to meet Mark Zuckerberg one day and thank him personally". Then when CNN asked him about which regime will be next to fall, he answered "ask Facebook" (Gustin, 2011).

In the next chapter, I will address the role of the modern media landscape in the second phase of the revolution. At this level, it is important to keep in mind that modern media is fluid, so such roles are neither exclusive nor exhaustive vis a vis the timeline in question.

## Chapter Three

### The Modern Media Organizes The Revolution

#### 3.1. Introduction

After modern media has generated enough awareness as to get people to take their cause to the streets; the breakout of actual protests announces the second stage of revolution, which is the "Apex of Revolution". In this stage, the revolution is no longer in a preparative stage, but is actually taking place on the ground. According to the late Charles Tilly and Sydney Tarrow's framework, the apex of the revolution is the period of direct confrontations and interactions between the state and the contenders. It is also a period of heightened interaction between the agents of the revolution themselves. The agents of the revolution here, are the main challengers, organizers, media personalities and different types of political agents taking it to the streets together. During this phase of revolution, get involved in the process of organizing the movement on the ground: Protests start breaking out and amassing more and more participants. The old repertoire of contention starts expanding through new methods of protesting, intermediated by modern technologies. Inner diffusion of contention starts reaching more political agents (from the most to the least involved), and more distant or less relevant agents become increasingly more emboldened to participate. In this stage, the direction of the movement is often definitively determined, for the intensity of the interaction between the state and contenders will categorize the movement as a peaceful or violent one. This categorization can range between white revolution all the way up to

civil strife. Along the lines, alignments shift and many political and social agents change loyalties. A new repertoire of contention is born in the heat of protests. External agents, such as embassies and international NGOs, start interfering in the unfolding of events. But most importantly, the most likely outcomes of the movement start emerging from the heat of chaos. It is in this phase that change is either brought about or repressed.

When prominent authors such as Simon Cottle analyzing these recent revolutions, talk of a "Facebook" or a "Twitter" media revolution, they refer to the way these mediums helped organizing and facilitating this revolution in an instrumental way (Cottle, 2011). Organizing and facilitating a revolution in this context, encompasses all the different technical ways modern media was used as a tool to organize contentious moves, by the challengers.

In this section of the research, focus will shift to the organizational role of the modern media in the Egyptian Revolution. The chapter will be divided into two main parts: The first part will explore what is needed for a revolution to be successful at this stage, and characteristics of modern media that allow it to respond to these needs and play an organizational role within this stage of revolution. The second part will focus on the specific organizational actions of the modern media landscape, within the apex of the Egyptian revolution.

### **3.2. Key Success Factors of a Revolution**

In order for a revolution in its second stage to succeed, good organization is key. In effect, good organization during a revolution encompasses several technical and social factors that need to be simultaneously in check. These factors are: good leadership and coherent central command, a good organizational structure and available funding to maintain mobilization costs, a strong mechanism of immediate information distribution and shared content that maintains unity and solidarity, a step by step guiding source and finally technical support to circumvent state security measures and counterbalance governmental propaganda.

First of all, good central leadership is one of the most important features of a successful social movement or revolution. Having a single unified center of command -faithfully followed by all challengers- plays several roles in consolidating and guiding a revolution. A strong central source of command becomes the one source of information for challengers, unifies the whole body of protesters around common causes and messages, consolidates the revolution by making sure everyone is receiving similar guidelines, guides the next steps during protests and also serves as the face and official representing body of the movement.

Besides leadership, a revolution with hopes for success needs a strong organizational structure. This organizational structure comprises several elements, primarily: a hierarchy of leadership, an information dissipation mechanism, a defined strategy of action, meeting and gathering facilities, communication technologies, and the capacity to generate multimedia content to be used internally and externally. These elements,

according to resource mobilization theory, are not freely available. The cost of organization then, translates into several types of costs: time costs and its relevant opportunity costs for working professionals, potential meeting points and facility costs, communication costs, media generating costs and different types of smaller overhead costs.

Moreover, a successful revolution needs to stay unified, consolidated with its challengers well informed during its most active stage. This is why it is very important to be able to have effective communications between the center of command and the challengers on one hand, and between challengers themselves on the other hand. The content diffused by both the center of leadership and challengers is also crucial for the success of revolution. A successful revolution needs to keep its content centered around its main goal, and targeted so as to highlight what unites the protestors and keeps them moving as one body.

Technical step by step guidance is also one of the most important success factors of a revolution. Challengers need to be informed of their next steps: where to gather and at what time, what slogans to carry, what to say and when, what to release to the media and what not, what to wear and whether there's any color code plans, how to act in cases of clashes with state security, how to circumvent blockades, and when to proceed or withdraw. This type of step by step information is very important to keep the protests organized yet flexible enough for alternative courses of action.

Finally, for a revolution to proceed successfully, it has to be able to counteract state security, and counterbalance governmental propaganda. To counteract state security,

challengers have to be aware of alternative routes and protective measures against tear gas and similar kind of weapons. They must also stay informed of sudden security attacks and of the level of violence they might be subjected to. To counterbalance state propaganda, protesters must be able to generate their own multimedia feeds, as well as connect to international media in order to diffuse their version of the story.

### **3.3. Modern Media Plays an Organizational Role Within Revolution**

For the modern media to play an organizational role within revolution, it has to possess a set of technical and social characteristics that put it in a position to play this role. The modern media in Egypt was in a position to fulfill many facets of the organizational role amidst the January 25th revolution. For starter, criteria of high reach and credibility as well as impact, which are essential for the awareness phase of revolution (chapter 1), are also essential for this second phase of revolution. Media cannot assume a functional role in a social movement, unless it can reach a substantial percentage of the population. Media can't also be impactful with the people it reaches, unless it has enough credibility as a source of information and call for action. Reach and popular trust, as highlighted in the previous chapter, are crucial at this stage of revolution as well.

Besides reach and credibility, modern media needs a strong link to people to be able to motivate them to participate in a social movement or a revolution. Classical media (television and the print) often relies on weak links, which do not translate into high risk activism; and can't actively lead people on the streets. However, modern media has the capacity to create stronger links through reaching people simultaneously in different ways. Reaching people through satellite channels, the internet and mobile phones, creates a stronger bond through allowing people to interact with news and calls for action via digital means as a first step (Safranek, 2012). The modern media landscape offers bigger opportunities for large scale mobilization and organization, by introducing speed and interactivity which weren't available through traditional media. These features of the media that allow a decentralization of information and the speeding up

of its cycle, give it the capacity to decentralize leadership, override hierarchies, and eradicate organizational structures. Broad organization, which can be lead over the internet and other media outlets, is now less restrained by formal structures and organizational hurdles; it has become intermediated by a few clicks.

As previously mentioned, good leadership is one of the key success factors of a revolution; that, unless a modern alternative is possible. According to Roth, the modern media allows a revolution to proceed without a specific or designated leader; which was the number one reason the revolution couldn't be decapitated; and the number one reason the revolution didn't have a formal representative or leader after which the crowd would be lost (Roth, 2011). This lack of focus allows the challengers to proceed through the first stage of revolution unnoticed by the state, and allowed actual protests to break out without having an obvious center of gravity for the state to focus on, and bring down. The movement was built virtually, and messages were passed through channels of social media; allowing the protest organization to be totally leaderless and decentralized; making it all the hardest on the state to crack down and shut down the movement altogether.

The unity and consolidation of the revolution is one of its success factors as well. Modern media in Egypt contributed many new elements to allow the whole body of protesters to stay united, and to further consolidate the revolution. Keeping the revolution united from the point of view of the role of modern media in it, means that the media content during protests, has to present three characteristics: First, it has to focus on the main goal of the movement without getting lost in small details. Second, it has to identify the protestors by their common denominator (such as their common

nationality or any other powerful denominator), and keep focusing on this denominator so protestors feel as one body moving along. And last, media content has to use any segregating criteria between protestors as a source of unity, through a progressive tolerant speech; especially when these difference are pointed out by the states' media.

When it comes to information, no other time in history so far was as convenient for quick and easy cycles of information to develop, as our current time. In fact, media today enjoys the "live effect", which translates into an instant transfer of information to connected individuals. This live effect can directly respond to modern protesters need to information through linking them directly to their respective center of command, and allows them to receive guidance instantly. Having a substantial amount of connected individuals during a protests means crowds can be guided remotely by head challengers, and stay informed in real time of any occurrences.

Good funding, and a clear organizational structure are fundamental to support the activities of a social movement and keep it focused. But with the modern media involved, these two requirements experience fundamental changes. In fact, modern media allowed a total eradication of the formal organizational structure of the classical movement (hierarchies, formal representation, mobilization plans and costs...).

According to Comunello and Anzera, the modern revolutions starting with colored revolution in Eastern Europe up to the recent Arab Spring, relied on the modern media landscape to keep the movement horizontal. Being free of any organizational structures, modern movements can be both cost efficient and much more practical in going around the state's resistance (Comunello & Anzera, 2012). When the movement does not have obvious leaders, sources or human origins; it becomes harder to find the nodes at which

it articulates its upcoming steps. The latter fact makes it virtually impossible for the government to stop it. This horizontal structure was further developed during the Egyptian uprising, because of the interactive use of social media allowing every single individual to become both a leader and a follower, a source and a channel, further decentralizing the movement.

One of the advantages of social media (as a main component of modern media), is the fact that it is much cheaper than traditional media. Social media can compensate for the disadvantages of large undisciplined groups, through lowering costs. As a result, large uncoordinated groups can become capable of some coordinated actions, such as protest movements and public media campaigns (Sen, 2012). At the most basic level, the modern media landscape including social media gives the masses the possibility to conduct virtual gatherings, and conduct the moves of protests, through processes during which the costs of organization is reduced to basic connection costs.

Besides cutting costs, modern media (whether modern mass media or social media), also has the capacity to raise funds. When we talk about sustaining a revolution, the first thing that comes to mind is "funding"; at least that is the case according to RMT (resource mobilization theory); as formal organization, communications and gathering different resources for the revolution can be costly. And even though communications during protests were free or at least virtually costless, the new media can contribute to funding other aspects of the revolution (Artamurto; 2011). Through the internet and mass media, fund raisers can be called for, and funds can be wired both locally and international through sophisticated e-systems of banking.

Additionally to all the previous advantages, it is important to highlight that the ease of use of social media channels by the end user; and ease of access through any wired connection -virtually anytime-, also means that these tools can be quickly adopted by the average protester. Moreover, social media channels are closely monitored by their respective companies, which allows social media tycoons to intervene directly and facilitate access. Through updating applications and linking them to other sources of uninterrupted connections such as mobile to internet connections and mobile to satellite connections; system administrators have open options to support movements anywhere in the world. These two mere technicalities meant that much of the work accorded to organizational structures, are now in the hands of the average protestor.

Moreover, and due to the earlier policies of the Egyptian government, internet was already cheap; and so were mobile phone connections and satellite subscriptions. The latter fact meant that digital resources were virtually costless in Egypt which helped eradicate many barriers of organization.

The issue of costs is one of the most important instrumental functions of the modern media landscape; for it eliminates a lot of barriers of formal organization. Formal organizational costs, the inner democratic process costs in terms of both time and money, communications costs, processing costs and other secondary types of barriers to entry, are all elements of RMT which can be totally overridden through a flexible and high reaching media landscape, which is also costless to use (Carroll & Hackett, 2006). Mass media and social media together here, bridge the links among different RMT elements, covering many instrumental roles which were previously too costly for the average citizen to provide.

As previously stated, protesters need to be guided step by step, they need to be able to circumvent state security and produce their own version of the story as to counterbalance governmental propaganda. All of these steps are crucial in conducting a successful revolution. As modern protests unfold, if a fair percentage of 20% of protesters are connected, and looking up to the relevant page or events' pages for their next step; they can move themselves and guide their compatriots. This one fifth of connected individual can alone help shaping every next step of any protest happening on the spot. In effect, even if internet connection was cut off, this same fifth can switch to a basic Web 1.0 connection (regular cellular calls and text messages) to carry on, if they were already connected (WDB, 2011).

According to the World Development Book, new technology present several opportunities for challenger to circumvent state security. In effect, challengers during protests, who are now connected through the live effect of internet, can be informed instantly of any escalation of violence and any alternative measures of routes to take. Protestors can also share with other protestors several key measures, such as how to avoid certain weapons, and how to protect one another (World Development Book; 2011). Moreover, digital tycoons who wish to intervene and help the protestors can do so today. Digital companies can now provide extra connections for people who get disconnected by the state, and even connect cellular connections to internet connections as to allow people to post online through their basic mobile phone connection. Alternative IP addresses and connection routes can also be provided anytime, so protests can escape censorship when they need it.

Besides providing step by step guidance and helping protestors circumvent state security, modern media can also help challengers frame their movement according to their own terms, and counterbalance governmental propaganda. In the consumer-producer effect mentioned in chapter -1-, every single connected consumer of media, can become a producer of new content himself. Through spreading live footages of protests, and reporting the revolution step by step and in live time; every challenger becomes a media channel that counterbalances state propaganda. When bigger outlets of mass media such as satellite channels pick up these narratives; they contribute to spreading the alternative challengers' speech to a much wider audience.

### **3.4. Modern Media in the Heat of the Egyptian Revolution**

Challengers in Egypt used modern media in different ways, as an organizational tool during the apex of the January 25 Revolution. In this second part of the chapter, the research will shift to the narrative of the revolution, and the empirical evidence focusing on the use of modern media to organize and guide protesters on the streets.

Mass media and social media, including heavy use of Facebook and Twitter, were at the heart of many researches handling the prime of the revolution in Egypt. These researches did cast some light on the functionality of modern media roles during the Egyptian revolution (Aytac & Khashman, 2014). The aim here, in particular, is to subdivide this organizational role into its different distinct sub-roles, through the empirical narrative of the protests in real time. The sub-themes of the organizational role of modern media during revolution to be addressed are: the initial organization of protests, the role of modern media in the unfolding of one of the first leaderless revolutions, in overriding the traditional costs of the revolution, in shaping the revolution and giving it real terms and numbers, in unifying and consolidating the revolution, in overriding state security and governmental propaganda and in guiding the on-site moves step by step.

#### **3.4.1. Modern Media Calls for Protests**

The awareness role of modern media addressed in the earlier chapter, prepared people for the streets, and motivated them to be a part of the coming change. However, during the second stage of revolution, modern media starts calling for protests by specifying the place and time to take action. It is no longer a vague motivating call, but an actual

invitation to protest at a specific symbolic location (Tahrir Square) and at specific time. The grand scheme was such as Facebook was used to call for events, and Twitter to coordinate them; then Youtube and Facebook again to broadcast live on site. Facebook groups and pages (such as We Are All Khaled Saiid and Days Of Rage different Facebook events) were used to launch specific calls to protests at a certain place and time. The mass media (notably pan-Arab channels such as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera) picked up on all four sources to give them unprecedented credibility through mass live broadcasts (Hamm & Greer, 2011). People at this stage started having specific indications of what to do, when, and where.

However, the link between all these channels and actual activism wasn't direct, but rather intermediated by a process of learning that Egyptian activists imported from the Serbian movement Otpor, on how to invest and empower the media audience and compel it to take it to the streets (Rosenberg, 2011). The link between social media and protest ecology rest on a complex web of organizational schemes, much of which reflect changing dynamics over time (Sergerberg & Bennett, 2011). These same dynamics, are enhanced by our increasingly digitally intermediated geopolitical environment (Etling, Faris & Parfley; 2010). Egyptian activists, empowered by their counterparts in Otpor, learned how to use social media to call for protests, and get people to interact positively with these calls. Activists launch their calls through social media outlets, then leaked them to mass media and different news websites as "Days Of Rage", as a way to establish a defined structure for the movement. Pan-Arab channels picked up these calls and rebroadcasted them as "News" of a coming "Day of Rage", which magnified the call and claimed more participation.

### **3.4.2. Modern Media Supports the Decentralized Leaderless Revolution**

According to O'Connell, the highly connected format of today's society, contributes directly into facilitating revolution through minimizing the role of hierarchically organized apparatuses (O'Connell; 2011). The power of information dispersal in a constantly connected society, cuts through the need for formal organization and allows a leaderless movement to proceed, fueled by a horizontal structure relying on decentralized hubs of command, which are both almost costless and easily replaceable.

To start with, by the time revolution was at the onset on its second stage, Egyptian modern media -specifically social media- had already claimed a huge audience. Facebook groups such as "We Are All Khaled Saïd" and Twitter accounts such as Mohammed Al-Baradei's accounts ,had already claimed hundreds of thousands of followers. Challengers acquired by then the ability to reach for hundreds of thousands of people within moments, and to virtually lead public opinion in live time. Technically speaking, messages and calls were circulating through social media first, then re-circulated on a grand scale through Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and CNN. The modern media landscape through both its components (satellite channels and social media), spread the calls for action along the specific logistics of protests (Lindsey, 2013). The aforementioned multilayered centers of information (whether social media or mass media channels), were able to bridge the lack of personal physical leadership and provide a decentralized, multi-channeled, and dynamic leadership for the revolution; through disintermediating the one on one contacts.

In their work on social media in protests, Papic and Noonan confirm that good movements need good leadership, and that new media prevents good leadership from developing on a personal scale, but encourages its decentralization across channels (Papic & Noonan, 2011). The internet and social media outlets in Egypt, made up for the lack of personal leadership through massive distribution of content that gathered people around a cause, instead of the traditional charismatic leader. In organized movements, numbers are smaller but most activists tend to be well trained and ready to take it to the streets. In unorganized movements, such as the Egyptian 25th of January Revolution, calls to participation reached a much higher number of first timers and untrained activist. But this lack of readiness and training was compensated by the instant reach, and the ability to be guided through the instant media messages instead of a center of leadership.

The longevity, energy, and participation levels in the Egyptian mobilizations without any recognizable leader or spokesperson, was due to the rotating, ad hoc, and flexible modern media, which allowed the challengers to communicate instantly with each other, and with hundreds of thousands of followers (Tufekci & Wilson; 2014). With "leaderlessness" having become possible, intermediated by an interactive and flexible media landscape, the Egyptian Revolution presented us with a game changing media role that simplified the whole organizational process within a movement.

### **3.4.3. Modern Media Overrides the Costs of Organization**

Besides modifying the formal organizational structure of a social movement, modern media also plays a closely relevant instrumental role: It overrides the organizational

costs of a movement in many different ways. The new media landscape has the power to compress the timeline of a revolution, cutting the costs of contention, in both material and human areas. In a very short time, protesters were able to share a goal and an identity; which is usually a process that takes up a lot of time, efforts and costs (Welle, 2012). In traditional settings, challengers need to buy traditional media spaces (assuming it is allowed by the state), publish in the print, organize real meetings and invest both time and effort to compel people to participate. But due to the modern media high reach, and social media interactive platforms, this effort had become the matter of a few clicks, cutting both the costs and the time needed to perform this task. Egyptian challenger no longer needed to go through the process of setting up an organized movement. They simply looked up to the few pages they followed for directions, and acted accordingly (Welle, 2014). These direction showing on their screens encompassed: calls for protests, invitations to days of rage, calls to share specific content, calls to perform certain digital or real tasks, calls to adopt specific slogans, and calls to follow specific directions to fight back state security or take alternative routes when on site.

Social media can compensate for the disadvantages of large undisciplined groups, through lowering costs. As a result, large uncoordinated groups can become capable of some coordinated actions, such as protest movements and public media campaigns (Sen, 2012). For starter, over sixteen million Egyptians were reached through social media for a very low cost counted within their regular communications costs. Second these masses were indeed untrained and unprepared to being parts of mass protests against a dictatorship with a full security apparatus. But most importantly, the masses

were still able to act, protest, circumvent the security body, and eventually oust the dictator (Papic & Noonan, 2011).

Moreover, the cost cutting feature of the new media used by Egyptian challengers helped the movement not to depend on external funding. This functionality allowed the perception of a "purely Egyptian" movement, which pulled the rug from under the state's conspiracy theory pretences (Papic & Noonan, 2011). The costless feature of modern media, and its capacity to eradicate organizational costs; contributed not only to the speedy structuring of the movement, but to its national framing as well.

#### **3.4.4. Modern Media Frames and Defines the Revolution**

The modern media landscape allows a movement to take shape, definite numbers, and to start shaping up into a concrete frame of definition vis a vis the world. This framing function means that the modern media allows the challengers in a movement to reflect the images they want to the world. This is also accompanied by giving the movement a relatable human face which boosts empathy and participation while the protests are taking place.

Social media allowed the protesters to stand up (virtually) and be counted through their subscriptions to groups in social media outlets, even before hitting the streets (Roth; 2011). Within the easy ballparks, 90 000 (ninety thousands) Facebook groups were created in the first days of revolution, to each at least a few thousands of followers subscribed. Millions of people were already virtual protestors, at the same time when the revolution was out on the streets of Cairo. Within six days 5 000 000 (five millions) were on board (A Facebook Revolution, 2012). As the number of virtual and real

supporters grew larger, people felt emboldened to participate online and offline in the contention (Roth; 2011). The high numbers of participation that people could see through the real street footages circulating online, and the huge numbers of online subscriptions; framed the movement as a mass youth revolution from its first protests.

The game of numbers doesn't end at the macro level; in effect, researches showed that nine out of each ten Egyptians (who are connected to the internet) participated in some form of online protesting. And even though one out of every nine movements proposed online came to life on the streets; these statistics show us a complete parallel contention in the virtual world, which parts of spilled into the streets as parts of the real protests (Huang; 2011).

The capacity of modern media to project contention in its minutest details on the level of individual challengers, heightened the motivation of participants, the interest of regional mass media especially satellite channels, and the conversion rates from viewer to participant in Tahrir Square. All of this was majorly due to the ability of challengers to impose their own frame of definition of a popular righteous uprising against a dictator, through their alternative media channels.

#### **3.4.5. Modern Media Counterbalances State Propaganda During Revolution**

Two of the most important functional roles of the modern media landscape during contention are overriding traditional media, and counterbalancing state propaganda.

These two functions together allowed protestors to face the state head to head, both in the media and on the streets. From a technical point of view, information was being circulated across many channels of social media, making the very same content

circulate across a much wider audience; only to end up broadcasted by regional mass media as well. Here's an example of such a loop of information:" Most [challengers] rely on Twitter, many pluck segments from YouTube, and there the loop begins and ends and begins: mobile phones recording street battles, the sound of gunfire and folk scrambling for safety and then they are picked up by news disseminators and watched again by those whose mobile phones have become the message." Such user generated loops in Egypt made sure that people or subscribers across different platforms are exposed to the information needed, and that enough people are reached and motivated to support the protests. These loops were often closed, and hard to control by the state; which made them a perfect tool for both organization and diffusion of the Egyptian Revolution on the street. Besides their great functionality as an alternative for state media and traditional media, these internet loops provided a cheap alternative for resource poor actors of the revolution, which in this case were the majority (Hulaimi; 2011). The latter means that yet another communication node is overridden according to resource mobilization theory. In effect, this relatively cheap way of communication through these loops served the instrumentality of cost effectiveness and circumventing state controls during protests, at once.

Disintermediation of the state and the state media took a totally different level when the actual crackdown on the communication sector happened. In effect, having realized what kind of damage is the modern media landscape imposing on the viability of his regime, Husni Mubarak decided to try and contain the uprising. On January 25th and January 26th, the Egyptian government actually limited access to social media websites, then proceeded to completely shut down the internet (Sander, 2011).

However, this crackdown on the internet was very short lived as it turned down to be a state fiasco and backfired on two different levels:

First the social media tycoons (Facebook, Twitter and Youtube) allied together in order to circumvent the state's controls and used foreign IPs as well as mobile to internet connections, in order to provide connectivity to the people on the streets and to keep broadcasting to the world. This without mentioning the mobile to social media networks ad hoc connections, that were made available in Egypt. Also on the international scale, the intervention of the international ethical hackers' group "Anonymous" to take down governmental websites, diluted a lot of the state's efforts to shut down the revolution. Second, the crackdown on the internet itself proved way too costly to the Egyptian economy, and couldn't be maintained. It also forced the radicalization of many moderate parties with major economic interests, and aligned them with the revolution.

Moreover, alternative media channels belonging to the modern media landscape, also went around the unwillingness of state media to cover the events transparently in live time. This gap bridging through modern interactive media, came in handy for both the protesters in action and the world (World Development Book). In effect, after the state-controlled media in Egypt covered conservatively and reluctantly the success of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. The protesters knew it wouldn't cover them because it was classically unwilling to broadcast any news of civil unrest, or opposition to the government. This is why, challengers were frequently posting live updates, and a lot of pictures and videos to social media; as to reach the pan-Arab Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya and make up for the lack of local coverage (Harb, 2011). Modern media

provided an alternative source that was ready to bridge the gap and counterbalance propaganda, as the protests were ongoing in Tahrir Square.

### **3.4.6. Modern Media Sustains, Unites and Consolidates the Revolution on the Streets**

As the events unfolded on the streets, and the cause and messages of the revolution further emboldened protestors; the modern media landscape played a vital role in both unifying and consolidating the revolution. This function of the modern media during the second stage of the revolution is double fold, as the modern media contributed to consolidating the whole body of protestors by keeping it united; and by supporting it with much needed resources.

Facebook, the most popular social media site in 2010, (Twitter was relatively new and Instagram not so popular yet), was officially also the most popular social network in the Middle East. It was also the most popular in Egypt with over 8 000 000 users, the highest percentage of which are between the ages of 15 and 29. According to the Dubai School of Government, Egypt has seen an increased rate of subscriptions to Facebook during the first quarter of 2011: This rate reached an increase of 30%, and six out of ten respondents confirmed that blocking access to social media increased their motivation to participate in the protests (DSG, 2011). These statistics are not to note previously mentioned numbers, but rather to highlight the incremental increases indicating the support challengers were able to gather as the revolution was unfolding. This support is a primary indicator of unity and consolidation, coming from the people towards the challengers and their cause.

Twitter use in Egypt during the revolution didn't exceed 1.1 million users; however the impressive numbers came on the international timeline, originating from Egypt. The heavy use of Twitter by the few Tweeps (twitter users) during the revolution, got the hashtag #Egypt to become one of the most popular worldwide, during the first quarter of 2011 with 1.4 million mentions, and #Jan25th with 1.2 million mentions. What was the most impressive though, was that the growth of Twitter users reached 100% during the revolution. Youtube, a Google related video based social media outlet, also experienced tremendous growth during the revolution. According to the report prepared by Techno Wireless: 8.7 million videos were viewed in Egypt during the revolution, and that number was indeed an all times high. But these rates dropped significantly after the state's blockade from 28th of January until February 2, 2011 (Huang, 2011). And with all that growth, the only hashtags that started trending on the international timeline during the protests were: #Egypt, #Jan25, #Democracy, #Freedom and #MubarakOut. The unity of protesters during the protests was being directly projected in their media content, which carried nothing that could suggest segregation in terms of class, religion or any other variable. Messages that weren't necessarily instrumental in nature were being broadcasted through the modern media landscape (mainly social media). These message contributed to the solidarity of the masses. According to York, one of the most important messages of this sort was that of Christian-Muslim solidarity during revolution, which despite belonging to the awareness type of messages, served the instrumental goal of keeping the masses together and the revolution consolidated (York, 2011).

Funding was also one of the most important organizational roles that helped consolidated the revolution. In effect, a fundraiser event organized on Twitter by the name of "Tweetback", was able to gather two million Egyptian pounds through reaching to hundreds of thousands of followers (York, 2011). Such activities that can gain widespread reach and active participation through social media, help providing additional resources for the revolution through costless activities lead on social media and picked up by mass media. This effect though, according to the same source, becomes weaker and weaker the further the apex of the revolution becomes on the timeline. People are more prone to invest resources or take risks when the revolution is at its peak and feelings of solidarity and rebellion are too.

Funding is one way of sustaining the revolution, but sustaining the revolution also covers its day to day motivation to stay on the streets. In this regard, modern media helped in consolidating the revolution through keeping the collective moral of the protestors up and hopeful. The new mass media kept the momentum of the Egyptian Revolution through broadcasting day to day uncensored developments (Miladi; 2011). These developments were important to protesters, who thought they were held in the dark by the state media outlets, which were busy broadcasting distorted news and governmental propaganda. Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabia, France 24, and other satellite channels sourced back and forth with social media handles of protestors, and broadcasted the revolution "live" helped by the emergence of citizen journalism (Miladi; 2011).

Among the novel ways the modern media -especially social media- functioned as a tool for sustaining revolution, was through the personal use of persecuted activists. Yara

Sallam was one of the Egyptian contenders who experienced being seized and arrested. In effect she even spent her twenty ninth birthday behind bars, after being rounded up while purchasing water from a street vendor (Hackel; 2014). Young activists were able to smuggle messages from behind bars; messages were reaching social media, then the mass media, to be further broadcasted to millions of protestors. In her words, "It's amazing how these young people in prison are writing statements to keep us hopeful, to keep us fighting, and to keep us maintaining our momentum". The modern media this time, not only carried information, but also very personal messages from the people experiencing the darkest side of rebellion. These messages had a lot of emotional appeal to the people in streets and behind screens, further fueling the revolution, and uniting the challengers. Personal social media use by the people actually experiencing the brutality of the state, was one powerful tool to keep the protestors on the street protesting for their rights, and the freedom of their compatriots.

#### **3.4.7. Modern Media Guides the Protesters Step by Step**

On a more micro level, instrumental roles of the modern media landscape went as close as guiding the protesters on the streets step by step. In fact, media was not only used to call and organize protests during the Egyptian Revolution, but also to instruct contenders hour by hour on where and how to move. People looked up to social media channels to understand what to do, and how to act when they found themselves head to head with security forces.

Mubarak's regime committed a lot of violations during the revolution. These violations ranged from beating up the protesters, to assaults against the international media

representatives. Cameramen were beaten up and their gear seized, cameras were crashed, and journalists' access to Tahrir square was being impeded. Social media and the mass media both covered these assaults, in order to warn both the protesters and the media personnel covering the revolution. Yet the state security was able to impede, but not silence, the acting media whether generated by citizens or reporters (Herd; 2011). People on the streets were kept informed of the assaults in real time, which allowed them to escape or face them in large groups. This has helped the protests on the streets remain flexible and fast paced. And these daily episodes of cat and mouse were broadcasted live by the pan Arab mass media.

During these daily episodes, short phrases of information, such as "live ammunition is being fired at the protestors", were being circulated live from the streets, to social media sites up to mass media. These user generated "mini coverages" were tipping off the mass media where it couldn't cover. Egypt is a large country, and in some places such as Suez, the level of violence didn't allow for a formal media presence (Lister, 2011). A steady stream of blog posts, Facebook posts, tweets, Youtube and cellphone videos, covered within the gaps and completed the story, all while guiding the coming steps. Besides the security blocks that prevented traditional media from covering certain spots, the internet and mobile networks were cut off in certain places. Social media at that point tried bridging the gap through broadcasting any information activists could get from those areas (York; 2011).

*"Spit, blow your nose, rinse out your mouth, gargle. Do eyewash from inside to outside with your head tilted to side".* Such were some of the instructions delivered on social media by the activists from the protests warning, guiding and helping their compatriots

against tear gas and other security threats (Lister; 2011). *“Do you see this girl? She is going to demonstrate.”* Negm [an Egyptian activist] motivated people to invite friends or other Egyptians they would meet to join them on the streets. At one point, she wrote: *“Walk . . . Walk in the street. Walk walk walk . . . And talk talk talk . . . And sing sing national songs, sing Beladi Beladi [my country my country]”*. Negm also wrote: *“If you can take pictures, take pictures . . . if you can use Twitter, send tweets . . . If you can blog, blog from the street”*. Such social media entries, coming in a sensational and natural format, helped redirecting the media's attention towards the loudest actions which boosted the revolution's visibility (El Tantawi & Wiest; 2011).

Updates on social media, which mass media such as The Guardian, CNN, Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya re-broadcasted on a much larger scale, weren't only originating from Egypt. In fact, former activists from Tunisia made it a point to help guiding their Egyptian friends, through both motivational message and detailed instructions and advices based on the lessons learned (El Tantawi & Wiest; 2011). This functional exchange between Tunisian and Egyptian contenders during the revolution, is proof that the instrumental roles of social media can cross borders, and that the learning that happens in one revolution can help guiding other revolutions, remotely and in real time. Different kinds of messages, shared instantly on social media and mass media, helped keeping the contenders ahead of the state security, helped them circumvent blocks, and kept their morals up all while redirecting their next steps in real time. The modern media not only carried the day, but also the hour and sometimes the minute.

### **3.4.8. Modern Media Circumvents Government Controls**

Back in the stage where the role of media was merely confined to raising awareness and propagating ideals of democracy, most social media tycoons as well as multinational media and pan-Arab media channels were functioning normally in Egypt. Social media channels and mass media channels were undisturbed except by a few censorship measures which are typical and expected regionally. However, once these means became a crucial tool for the organization of protests, the Egyptian government had to censor or shut them down completely, in order to seize back control over the streets. What was the most dangerous for the government, was the loop format these channels were using. Instead of keeping the data and distributing it through one channel, mass media and social media channels were operating in such a way that data was circulating through multiple channels at once. For instance: videos taken by mobile phones go straight to Youtube channels, and from there were shared on Facebook and Twitter simultaneously. After that mass media channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya would pick them up and broadcast them through the 24/7 coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. These actions on behalf of regional pan-Arab mass media was giving them validation and credibility, hence empowering the originating source by many folds (Hulaimi; 2011). The response from Egyptian authorities was qualitatively unprecedented, for the government ordered first the shut down of Facebook and Twitter, but then proceeded to order all telecommunications providers to stop internet access; all providers complied. 93% of Egypt's connections were cut off, except the European-Asian fiber optics, which were left intact in order to keep the economy running. However this wasn't enough, for the economy suffered, and Egypt's credit

rating went down anyway. The losses in the Egyptian economy proved more costly than the advantages of regaining information control (Stepanova, 2011).

During the governmental crackdown on the internet, and as websites were being censored one after another; ad hoc collaborations between Facebook and mobile phones providers, then Google and Twitter, took place in order to allow the protesters to keep planning their next steps and informing the world of what's going on in real time (Suarez; 2011). System administrators at Facebook, Youtube and Twitter built direct connections from mobile phones to social media channels. Technically, these connections are basic and can go unaffected by internet connections. Protesters started posting to Twitter and Facebook by text messaging, and uploading to Youtube by classical multimedia messaging. These connections allowed contenders to go around the internet blockade imposed by the Egyptian government, especially that some telecommunications providers didn't comply with the blockade. Moreover, the use of social media by mass media as a credible source of data and live coverage, lifted anonymity, and allowed these collaboration to stand legitimate and enjoy wide reach worldwide (Vanity Fair; 2011). All of these complex technologies were introduced by social media system administrators, to support contenders on the Egyptian streets so they can carry on their organizational efforts.

### 3.5. Conclusion

In general, all main social media channels experienced a spike in use during the revolution, comparing to the pre-revolution stage. That was because social media was being used for on-site coordination, in addition to being a tool for awareness and propagation of news. In a more aggregated form, Facebook use swelled between January and April 2011, the number of users went up by 30%, and timeline usage more than doubled (Huang; 2011). Similar results were found for Twitter. During the apex of the Egyptian Revolution, governmental disruption did nothing but motivated activists to use social media more creatively: *'The authorities efforts to block out information, the report said, ended up "spurring people to be more active, decisive and to find ways to be more creative about communicating and organizing"'* (Suarez, 2011).

Modern media enjoys a set of technical and social criteria that allow it to play an organizational role during the apex of the revolution. These characteristics are: credibility, reach, impact, cost efficiencies, speed, ease of use, the ability to raise funds, the ability to go international in live time and the ability to connect contenders with modern media tycoons. Due to these characteristics, the modern media landscape can play several instrumental roles during the apex of the revolution. Social media and mass media help planning and organizing protests through connecting activists; and through these same connections, support a decentralized leaderless pattern of revolutions to evolve. The new media can eradicate a lot of barriers facing challengers through cutting through the costs of many sources needed to shape a movement: mainly formal organization and communication costs. The media landscape also helps framing a revolution as it unfolds on the street, while helping to keep it united and consolidated.

It also allows the challengers to disintermediate the state's propaganda, override security measures, and stay informed step by step.

While the instrumental roles of the modern media landscape are at play during the apex of the revolution; awareness content keeps on circulating through media outlets.

However, the awareness role of media takes a back seat to allow most channels of social media to function as tools of organization of protests in real time, leaving reporting to mass media channels. As revolution unfolds and approaches its conclusion; organizational roles of modern media start giving way to diffusive roles.

## Chapter Four

### Modern Media Guards and Diffuses the Revolution

The third phase of revolution, is the one where the movement reaches its conclusion, regardless of the outcome. The energy of the movement starts subsiding, and the fog in the streets starts settling down, as outcomes become obvious. Modern media doesn't withdraw from the political scene, but rather assumes yet a new role which is that of watching over the new change, and diffusing contention to new episodes or countries.

According to our background framework of Tilly & Tarrow, the following themes are highlighted during this last stage: Protests in the streets start calming down. Signs of change become obvious; these signs can be positive or negative. Some political agents pull out of the movement, or become disillusioned and demotivated. Other agents become institutionalized, and move from irregular activism to formal activism. A new repertoire of contention becomes validated through successful use, and new tools of contention become classics. At this stage too, cross border diffusion comes into play. This stage of contention is complicated, because unlike previous stages, it exposes us to a variety of options and outcomes; as well as different narratives corresponding to many potential conclusions of the revolution.

At this post-revolution stage, modern media plays two simultaneous roles: It acts as the watchdog of the change, and works on diffusing the revolution across borders. The role of the media as watchdog of change is a local role, while its diffusive role is international; reason for which the diffusive role captures more attention and is more

documented in international press. Both empirical narratives and content studies of the media at this stage, carry clear evidence of the two roles of modern media at the last stage of revolution.

In this chapter, the roles of the media in the third stage of revolution will be addressed. The study will take off from a clear definition of diffusion. Then, will highlight the social and technical characteristics of the modern media, that allow it to successfully support the role of a watchdog of change and the diffusive role. The rest of the chapter, will be dedicated to empirical and content studies that explain how the previously mentioned two roles of the media post revolution are carried.

## 4.1. Diffusion

Before proceeding with the core part of the post-revolution media roles' study, it is worthy to stop and explain diffusion as it will be a recurring concept throughout the remainder of the chapter.

*"Diffusion can be defined as a process wherein new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behavior spread geographically from a core site to other sites, whether within a given state (as when the movement of new policies invented in one political subunit spreads to other subunits within a federal polity) or across states (as the spread, for example, of public sector downsizing or nongovernmental organizations)" (Bunce & Wolchik, 2006).*

For the purposes of this chapter, both local diffusion (within the state) and transnational diffusion (the cross borders spill over of contention to different countries), will be used to highlight the role of media post-revolution.

Diffusion can be total, or incremental: Total diffusion comes in the form of "exporting the revolution", which manifests in the rise of a new revolution in another country (the periphery) as influenced by the original country of contention (the core). Incremental diffusion manifests itself through the adoption of specific modalities of contentious behaviors, without recreating the whole contentious episode. Both concepts of total and incremental diffusion will be highlighted throughout the chapter.

Classical theories of diffusion were no longer an option once diffusion from the Egyptian core was thought to have reached peripheries such as Bangladesh, which experienced the activism of the Shahbag Movement (Zamir, 2014). Suddenly the scale and the scope of the domino effect had become too fast, and unbounded by geographical limitations. At this point, serious studies started taking place as the furthest regimes from Egypt started worrying about their own existence.

New studies on diffusion confirmed it has many modalities. Communicative connectedness -especially through the internet- "facilitates" diffusion, rather than creates it. However, more important connections between countries, such as supranational structures, can be credited for a lot of the process of contentious diffusion (Sepp, 2013). Another important factor in diffusion, is the economy: Countries experiencing a similar economic shock are more prone to diffusion of revolt, than countries that are financially well off. In such countries, the government has the option to buy off the opposition (Houle, Kayser & Xiang, 2013). Other factors of a different nature are also very relevant to the process of diffusion. International system-wide transformations, and the distribution of hegemonic power affect diffusion. Geographic proximity, as well as regional linkages, also affect diffusion as sub-systemic factors. And finally neighborhood spillovers, and internal triggers also have a role in making the masses more prone to be affected by contentious waves (Gunitsky, 2014).

## **4.2. The Modern Media Landscape Post-Revolution**

Modern media plays a pivotal role in being the watchdog of change in a post revolutionary phase, and in accelerating contentious diffusion. The two simultaneous roles are made possible through the many social and technical characteristics of the networked format of the modern media landscape. Besides instant and international reach, credibility, twenty four seven alert coverage, ease of use and the multitude of interconnected channels; the modern media landscape also enjoys a set of capabilities that allow it to watch over the gains of a revolution and support diffusion of contention at the same time.

Modern media -whether it is mass media or online news media- is omnipresent and sleepless. It operates around the clock and broadcasts in live time, through satellite channels and the internet. This high alert state and twenty four seven readiness of the media landscape to go live, means that any and every government is being watched and scrutinized by the minute. Satellite channels make sure they have representatives covering shifts all throughout the twenty four hours of a day, and the online media is live around the clock. These two facts mean that the modern media landscape has the capacity to act as a watchdog of any political or economic agent, at virtually anytime, providing the freedom of expression is relatively provided and censorship is not high.

The citizen-journalist phenomenon observed with the rise of social media channels, means that the media landscape enjoys today a labor force that counts as many interested citizens as can be found. With every citizen having the ability to broadcast anything at anytime, the modern media landscape -specifically online media- acquires a

heightened level of omnipresence. Citizen journalism means that not only media reporters and representatives, but also citizens, are now capable of becoming a watchdog of the government.

Besides round the clock coverage and omnipresence, the modern media landscape in conflict prone areas and countries emerging from contention, falls under the pressure of the scrutinizing eye of the world. This world attention, especially immediately after wars and revolutions, motivates modern media outlets in the relevant country to stand true to their responsibility as the shadow watchdog of authority. This is particularly facilitated as the international media tends to support local media the most, during this phase.

International mass media and social media both capitalize on sensationalism and dramatization in order to increase their ratings. Content that stirs emotions on the part of people, contribute in increasing a channel's or website's respective audience. Consequently, revolutions that are based on righteous causes of human rights, oppression and years lived under tyrannical dictatorships, often constitute perfect content for the international mass media and online media, to broadcast in high reach times. This self interest motive of international media behind broadcasting contentious episodes all over the world, contributes to giving these episodes a much higher exposure than what they could usually get. The latter exposure encourages diffusions to the areas where national grounds are fertile for similar movements.

Technically speaking, the modern media (as mass and social media) is borderless and limitless. Different forms of mass media and social media exist wherever a satellite or

internet connection can reach. This latter fact means that international mass media channels, as well as social media websites are not nationally bound. They only depend on the technical availability of the relevant connection; which gives them huge reach and coverage capabilities. These international networked channels with huge audience reach often engage, internationally, in information cascades. Information cascading is the process by which different media channels use each other as a source of information, which contributes to stories cascading from one media channel to another, and from satellite sources to online sources back and forth. This whole process contributes to spreading the contention's stories far and wide across the globe, allowing a considerable potential for diffusion. At the same time, this network of connectedness also means that local modern media enjoys more leverage and weight, in terms of its role as the watchdog of democracy and rights.

Besides information cascades, social media outlets also have their own capacities to contribute to the cross borders diffusion of contention. First, all social media channels are international and permit supra-national connections to happen within minutes. The latter fact guarantees the transmission of news in live time, raising sympathy and encouraging contention in remote places of the world. Second, cycles of journalistic sourcing previously mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, guarantee the news shared on social media, air space on mass media, as mass media channels use smaller alternative social media channels as sources of information. These cycles of journalistic sourcing allow social media channels as well, to contribute to both roles of the modern media post-revolution.

In Sydney Tarrow's classical model of social movements, "Power in Movement"; cross border spill over of contention is probable, even expected due to geographical proximity and furthered by a similarity in language (Tarrow, 1994). However, the modern media of today overrides barriers of geography and language, taking the classical concept of diffusion to a much wider dimension. Cross border spill over is no longer limited by geographical barriers, but rather as limitless as satellite connections are. Language barriers also no longer stand in a mostly English speaking world, or alternatively a media world where top mass media channels cater to each group of nations using their language.

An additional factor that allows modern media to play an important role post-revolution, is that it can be guided and technically supported remotely. This fact makes the processes of watching the government and diffusion through media, an easy and safe process. Media production today, happens in designated areas, whereas media reach can be borderless and limitless. At the same time, administrators of mass media channels and social media channels are able to provide technical support worldwide. Remote support overrides any technical difficulties hurdling freedom of expression and diffusion, and circumvents any attempts of censorship by threatened regimes.

Finally, the capacity of modern media, especially online media to keep most of its archive online and live for retrieval at all times, boosts both functions of the media. On one hand, this available online archive means that the media can scrutinize authority for consistency and faithful execution of its claims. On the other hand, the available archive of live reports constitutes a valuable library of information for the learning experience, which is a main modality of diffusion. Throughout its several technical and

social characteristics then, the modern media landscape has the capacity to support the roles of the watchdog of authority and the local/transnational diffusive role.

### **4.3. The Modern Media Post Revolution**

Once the revolution starts subsiding, and outcomes becoming clear; modern media gradually moves from its organizational role, in order to fulfill other functional roles that are crucial at this stage. In effect, at this point in the timeline where total or incremental changes happens; modern media who contributed to change becomes responsible of protecting it, as much as it can afford. Modern media also assumes a parallel role, which is diffusing the revolution locally and internationally.

The first role of the modern media landscape post revolution, is to act as a watchdog of the new authority in place. Agents of change are collectively responsible of assuring its completion, and of protecting the new freedoms and rights acquired. And as one of the agents of change, modern media too, stands as a watchdog of change, through its previously mentioned technical and social capabilities. This role of the media is initiated and followed up by the same group of initial challengers, who stood behind the revolution in its early phases. But also supported by the late comers and the international media landscape.

The second role of the modern media, which is diffusion, carries both intentional and unintentional elements. When it comes to the intentional elements, they are often manifested by the concrete attempts of challengers to connect with the world and raise support, to get the world to support their new system, to magnify their success and share it with the world, and to provide the learning experience to other challengers beyond the national borders (just like the OTPOR activists and the Occupy activists did). The unintentional part of diffusion, happens simultaneously as the revolution is

being organized under the watchful eyes of the world, reported live, broadcasted in real time and analyzed by media agents all over the world. Then again when the revolution brings about change and successes are celebrated.

#### **4.3.1. Keeping the New Regime or the Transitional Authorities Under Check**

Once change is brought about by a movement or a revolution, all agents of this movement or revolution move into ensuring their new gains are protected. Media, as an agent or medium of revolution, also moves in order to keep the new authority in check, as to ensure the values of freedom of expression and human rights are respected. In Egypt, the military council known as the SCAF, assumed authority after the ousting of Mubarak, to ensure a smooth transition of power until the June 2011 elections. During this phase, a plethora of modern media outlets were "relatively" exercising their new acquired freedom of expression: Rassd, Amgad, Sinai Media Center, Ahrar, Freedom & Justice Gate, and Ahrar 25 websites among others, were watching the SCAF closely. Their main mission was to ensure the military rule was only executive rather than political. And their content was focused on three main points: The continuous and meticulous reporting of the SCAF's actions, the immediate reporting of any breach, and the close watching of the previous' regimes personnel (Mansour, 2015).

While watching over the new transition of power post revolution, modern media also makes sure the values of the revolution are kept as intact as possible, and its gains independent from the political agents. In Egypt, modern media especially online media started using the vocabulary of "hijacking the revolution" to indicate the strong influence of the Brotherhood in the post revolution phase. Closely watched media

outlets such as "Mada Masr" and "Al-Ahrar" among others, were using the specific wording "hijacking the revolution" over thirteen times per day per outlet -on average-, to alert seculars that their revolution might go places they never intended (Hellyer, 2014).

Despite the fact that this specific role of media tends to be more local, international media also plays a role in watching new and transitional regimes, which puts even more pressure on both authorities and other agents of the revolutions. In the case of Egypt, the SCAF being a military council, didn't remain completely comfortable with the private media for long, and new regulations started being issued as of April 2011. The new media, especially websites, were exercising their role as a shadow government, at their own peril (Abdulla, 2014). The same thing happened after June 2013, where the vocabulary of "fighting terrorism" became prominent in the state run media content; to signal to the local private media not try and side with the Brotherhood. At this stage, in both years, only the Pan-Arab and international mass media (especially Al-Arabiya, AlJazeera, CNN and BBC), with their relevant social media channels and websites, remained standing (Hersh, 2013).

#### **4.3.2. The Modern Media Archives the Revolution and Supports the Learning Experience**

Another node in watching over the revolution, is archiving it and providing it as a model for the learning experience, so it can be revived or reproduced in case the values of the revolution weren't upheld by the new system. Archiving the revolution happens through the processes of mass media and digital media, online and offline, whereas any

news or reports of any nature can be retrieved at any time by the public. In Egypt, and despite all measures of censorship imposed by both the SCAF and The Brotherhood, all archives of both revolutions can be retrieved until now, from international media websites such as Al-Arabiya's; and local ones such as Amgad. The social media archives are also available through the relevant social media channels such as the "We Are All Khaled Said" Facebook page and its relevant Twitter account. The modern media archives of the revolution serve as both a reference for the new authority, and as a learning experience.

The learning experience, which is also an element of diffusion, is a process of adaptation of the repertoire and the organizational skills of activists; one that equally needs time, sources (of which the archives of the revolution) and proven methods of action (also preserved within these archives). The learning experience drawn from the Egyptian Revolution of 2010-2011 resonated far and wide in the Middle East.

Empirically speaking, both Syrian and Lybian activists used the Egyptian Revolution media archives in order to assess the costs and gains of each move to take. Websites analysis showed an increase in views on the street videos of the Egyptian Revolution, from Lybia in February 2011 and Syria in March 2011 (Bamert Gilardi & Wasserfallen, 2015). Particularly, activists in both countries were replaying episodes of sit ins, clashes with security forces and organized marches.

The learning experience that is essential to diffusion is also a lengthy process that needs two conditions: The material learned to be readily available, efficient and validated, and some time for adaptation and training. The modern media here not only provides what

can be learned as content and tactics; but also speeds up the process by transferring it online, and cutting through the costs of travel through virtual training.

#### **4.3.3. Modern Media Diffuses Revolution While Acting as its Guardian**

The roles of modern media in furthering diffusion and transferring contention from one site to another have many facets, and their own timeline. Before diffusing contention itself, the modern media diffuses many of the pre-conditions of contention; then moves into diffusing the revolutionary speech, and later on the repertoire of contention.

Diffusing all of these modalities of content also depends in a large part on the online archive of the revolution, kept most faithfully by the local modern media of the core country.

The first thing that was diffused from Egypt to the rest of the Arab world, was the contentious mindset. This mindset allowed people to override themselves, and adopt a larger view of the common good (Mainwaring, 2011). In an Arab specific context, Andersen compared this shared mindset to the Arab Nationalist mindset of the early 1900s, when Arab nationalist revolutions also swept across the Middle East after World War I (Andersen, 2011). Connections on the supranational level should be present between the countries subject to diffusion. Modern media allows for these supranational connections to happen from the ground up (starting from the people, up to institutions then governments), which prepares the grounds for a much higher possibility of diffusion, should anything happen (Della Porta & Mattoni, 2014).

Concretely speaking, three specific mindsets circulating in the media in Egypt -and diffused through Pan-Arab media- found their way to Lybia only one month later in

February 2011 and Syria two months later in March 2011. These three mindsets were: the "we" mindset replacing the I, the "I can" mindset replacing demotivation by long standing dictatorships, and finally the "the people want to change the regime" mindset. The Egyptian media carried these mindsets through content that was shortly being mirrored by challengers in Syria and Lybia. Less than two months after the success of the January 25 Revolution in Egypt, both Syrian and Lybian contenders and their relevant media were broadcasting the same slogans of the Egyptian Revolution over 10 000 times per day (Della Porta, 2014).

Besides diffusing the appropriate mindset for revolution, the modern media also diffuses the revolution through diffusing its components; mainly the motivating thoughts on democracy and human rights, and the actual repertoire of contention. Diffusion starts on the level of democratic thought; for in the first beginning, the people witness what other people in other countries are getting, and start wanting the same for themselves. Research on the waves of democracies by the Michigan university, confirm that people living under autocracies start observing their neighbors in democracies, and demanding the same type of conditions and reforms. The modern media allows them to observe more, hence to compare more, and have more back up for their claims (Houle, Kayser & Xiang, 2014). All this makes the grounds fertile for the diffusion of revolution, and the people more willing to act.

Then comes the diffusion of the repertoire of contention. Diffusion of a repertoire of contention is a complicated process, that goes through many episodes of adoption and repetitions (Biggs, 2013). This is exactly what the Middle East went through with the wide adoption of the modern media-intermediated repertoire of contention, emanating

first from Tunisia and Egypt then to the rest of the world (Allam, 2014). In fact, diffusion of a modern model of contention encompasses several elements: The common grievances, the common aspirations, the very same repertoire of contention which is centered around the idea of occupying a central square, and then imposing change by not retreating at all and calling out the state on its mistakes publicly, as the mass media and social media broadcast the pictures to the whole world to witness. Patel calls this model "the Tahrir Square model", which was diffused to the rest of the Arab world with a lot of its modalities: relentlessly occupying public spaces, calling each day of protests by its own motivating title, and escalating the level of demands with the increase of participation levels (Patel, 2013).

After the success of the Egyptian Revolution of January 2011, then fast forward two years to June 2013, a clear observation of the "Tahrir Square Model" as broadcasted by the media, was observed in the contentious manifestations of both The Brotherhood's defenders of legitimacy, and their new challengers. In effect, the Anti-Islamists supported by the military, occupied the same "Tahrir Square" and the "Abbasiyya Square" near the ministry of defense, and carried the same slogans, which they also re-broadcasted through the online and Pan-Arab media. They were demanding the departure of then Islamist president Mohammed Morsi. On the other hand, the Islamic Brotherhood also used the very same model by occupying the "Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square" and broadcasting their pro-legitimacy rhetoric online, through their own channels. Pictures, slogans and counter-slogans, and video footages started circulating online in the same fashion as in 2011; this time divided between Islamic and secular. The model of the first revolution was being diffused, online and offline (Ketchley,

2014). What was even more noticeable in the second episode of 2013, is that challengers were so confident of their new repertoire that they didn't attempt to hide their moves. Facebook events assigned clear dates and assembly points, and clear plans of actions. The June 30 2013 revolution was completely planned ahead as the world sat and waited for it since April (Ketchley, 2014).

Two important components of modern contention are the electronic repertoire of contention, and the phenomenon of virtual dissidence, that started to evolve in the Middle East (Breit, 2015). Virtual dissidence, is a process fashioned by activists in Egypt and Tunisia. It is heavily intermediated by social media outlets and covered by mass media (as explained previously in the preceding two chapters), and is also the unit being diffused (Allam, 2014). This unit, besides being the new modality of contention that's easy to travel cross borders, also functions as a perfect tool to disintermediate the concept of location. The concept of location and distance no longer constitute a serious problem for contenders at home, and for potential contenders abroad; which totally caught regimes off-guard and contributed a good part of the revolution's success ("Cyber Dialogue 2012", 2012). The phenomenon of virtual dissidence was observed in Libya and Syria, right after the success of the January 2011 Revolution in Egypt. Challengers in both countries started using websites and social media channels, the same way their Egyptian counterparts were using them only a few weeks earlier. The slogan "The People Want to Change the Regime" was being constantly tweeted from both locations over 20 000 times a day. Blogs and forum posts started unusually highlighting the atrocity of the ruling regimes. Syrian challengers specifically, relied a lot on their expats to support them online and make their connections with the

international media. In the Syrian case, 55% of the media content relevant to the revolution was originated from outside of the country. Virtual dissidence fashioned after Egypt, was being upgraded and managed from multiple centers (Khamis Gold & Vaughn, 2012).

#### **4.3.4. Modern Media Shortens the Timeline of Diffusion**

The timeline of the consecutive revolutions, then the timeline of the diffusion processes themselves, constitute an important factor defining the temporal limits of the process of diffusion, intermediated by the modern media (Lamer, 2012). According to the two steps theory of democratic waves, democratic diffusion (diffusion of the democratic thought) alone, does not mean revolution will be diffused. Other modalities of diffusion combined with local factors are necessary for diffusion. Diffusion is a phenomenon that takes up many stages to cause the spark of a new revolution. These stages are: Diffusion of democratic thought, diffusion of the contentious mindset, and diffusion of a successful repertoire of contention (Houle, Kayser & Xiang, 2014). As previously mentioned earlier in this part of the chapter, modern media contributes to an instant diffusion of all of these factors; contributing directly to the compression of the timeline of general diffusion.

Empirically, we can conclude a lot by comparing the timeline of diffusion from the colored revolutions of Europe to Egypt, to the diffusion from Egypt to the subsequent episodes of contention in Syria and Libya. In order to make the link, it is crucial to highlight that Egyptian contenders used the colored revolution as a source, and imported learning from the OTPOR activists of Serbia. On the other hand, Syrian and

Libyan contenders used the media archives of the Egyptian revolution as a source for their activism. The latter link can be made through over 300 000 clicks and Google searches per day spotted from both countries on Egyptian related keywords, right after the success of the Egyptian revolution (Ketchley, 2014). When it comes to specific media content used, activists in Cairo were trying to download the footages taken on mobile phones in Kiev during the Orange Revolution of Ukraine. These footages taught them how to move and how to organize themselves and handle protests' tactics on site. The very same process was taking place during the Syrian and Libyan protests, where over 100 000 high speed downloads of Egyptian related content was recorded per day (Ketchley, 2014). Diffusion from East Europe to Egypt took over 5 years, while that from Egypt to Libya and Syria took less than two months.

#### **4.3.5. Modern Media Uses Informational Cascades to Override Language and Geography**

Diffusion becomes increasingly intense the closer two countries are in size and geographical proximity. It also increases with similarities in languages and cultures (Zhukov & Stewart, 2013). Modern media here plays a very important role, which is eliminating these correlations and preconditions facing diffusion. Space and time exist today in an express capsule formula, making all such theories almost obsolete due to instant connections and the live effect of our modern media landscape. Language, which is a factor of diffusion as well is also directly handled through bilingual mass and social media outlets. The Egyptian Revolution was broadcasted for Arabs in Arabic through Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and Egyptian local media; and for the world in English through Al-Jazeera English, Al-Arabiya English, CNN, and BBC. News websites were

broadcasting each in its relevant language, and social media channels presented features of instant translation to any language powered by Google (Barake, 2013).

The technical mechanism at play that allows modern media to override language and geography is known as "informational cascade". Informational cascades are defined by the tendency of modern media outlets to mimic each other in times of crisis (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffny, Pearce & Boyd, 2011). This behavior of the modern networked media, means that local news instantly become international news, furthering diffusion wherever there's fertile grounds (Faris, 2010). During the Egyptian Revolution, notably during the major protest that took place on January 25th 2011, all the Pan-Arab channels were broadcasting Al-Arabiya's live coverage, including its main competitor Al-Jazeera. On social media channels, pages of major news channels such as CNN, BBC and the Pan-Arab giants; were sharing and retweeting individual activists. Hashtags launched by challengers on site such as #FreeMona, #Camels and #Jan25 were picked up by mass media and shared again Overall, the same texts and images were circulating across all the body of modern media covering Egypt. This body of informational cascades was made possible, particularly because Pan-Arab and international satellite channels were using the Egyptian revolution as premium content. During the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution at its apex, Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya were dedicating 67% of their live coverage time for it (Tohme, 2012).

#### **4.3.6. Supporting the Three Phases of Diffusion: Validation, adaptation, adoption**

Diffusion does not happen in a straight fashion; but is rather divided into a three nodes process that need to happen separately before full diffusion happens from a core

country into a receiving country. Diffusion of revolution and revolutionary tactics isn't a simple process; but rather a multi-layered one, due to many factors: First, the transmission of frames and repertoires between countries is usually slow due to a need for validation. Second, the mechanisms of cultural adaptation then adoption are different and specific to each country. And finally the dynamics of cultural translation and domestication take some time in peripheries (Bickham, Bashir , Gray , Seawright , El-Cadi , Hodges & Jehangir , 2014). The latter three steps process means that the revolution in the core country needed to be somehow validated, in terms of its tools and tactics, before being completely diffused. This validation happens only at the last stage of revolution where outcomes or partial outcomes start becoming clear.

Modern media supports this process of validation, adaptation and adoption, to make it easier and faster, in modern revolutions. When it comes to validation, modern media transfers stories of success to validate used repertoires instantly. Adaptation is made easier through the learning process that can be lead online, as previously explained in this section. And adoption follows from the learning and observation experience, motivated by previous successes.

Empirically speaking, validation and adoption can be observed through the reproduction of the contentious model of Egypt, specifically of its repertoire of contention, during different episodes of contention. Within less than two months of the ousting of Mubarak, protests broke out in nearby Syria; protests that were distinguished by a visible similarity to the recent Egyptian Revolution. The similarities were centered mainly around the images most broadcasted by satellite channels and the online media. As of mid-March 2011, the Syrian opposition attempted to seize public squares

unarmed. Protestor tried to present a civic, non-sectarian and non-Islamist face in front of local and international media. Many Syrians expressed their desire for Bashar Al-Asad's regime to succumb to a similar destiny as that of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. In fact, 35 to 45% of the social media content produced in Syria early in its uprising, mentioned "Egypt", "Husni Mubarak" and the "Egyptian Revolution" along with Syrian keywords such as "Syria", "the Syrian opposition" and "Bashar Al-Assad". Moreover, slogans from the Egyptian Revolution were directly imported and adapted for the Syrian Revolution. The main slogans mirroring the Egyptian slogans were: "Assad Out", "The People Want" and "Free Syria" (Lynch Freelon & Aday, 2014).

Moreover, three months into the revolution, Syrian rebels started emulating the specific modalities of the Egyptian Revolution in handling virtual dissidence. Protesters on the streets started taking videos and uploading them to Youtube, Facebook and Twitter. They also started feeding satellite channels (Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya specifically) the footages directly, as the regime denied these channels direct representation and live coverage. Syrian contenders also imported the ways to dominate the attention of the international online world, by launching their own popular hashtags through all social media channels, supported by their diasporas. Soon #FreeSyria, #Assad, #Syria and #SyrianRevo were dominated international online timelines, hours after their launch. Sharing graphic images and accounts of regime brutality was also mimicked after the Egyptian Revolution, where sensational pictures of victimized children started moving the international online and satellite world by the day (Khamis Gold & Vaughn, 2012). Even in their ways of handling the regime's censorship, Syrian rebels emulated Egyptian contenders. When measures of censorship became too tight on formal media,

Syrian rebels turned to social media to compensate, and when social media websites were brought down by the regime, the rebels turned to proxy servers and alternative connections (Khamis Gold & Vaughn, 2012).

Strategies of campaigning online around a specific title and specific slogans was particularly successful in the media, that the Egyptian themselves used it again two years down the line. When new Egyptian challengers decided to oust president Morsi in June 2013; they modeled their campaign after the "The People Want" campaign and called it "Tamarod". They also launched the #June30 international title as to emulate the #Jan25's one (Childress, 2013).

#### **4.3.7. The Modern Media Diffuses Revolution Through Magnifying its Successes**

The success of a revolution in bringing about partial or total change in the core country, is what compels and consolidates the diffusion towards the receiving countries.

Diffusion is not a random process but rather a conditional one. Diffusion, is a function of positive or negative feedback emanating from the core country. Positive outcomes boost diffusion, whereas negative outcomes hinder it (Gunitsky, 2013).

*" Words for contentious interaction survive and diffuse because new actors adopt words that are associated with past successes"* (Tarrow, 2013). In this claim, there are three important concepts that help us locating media intermediated diffusion. The first is "words" which after images, are the most powerful tools of the modern media. The second is "adoption" which is a concept explained earlier in this chapter about receiving countries adapting "then" adopting the new contentious repertoire. And the third is "past successes", which is the most important key word that directly implies that

diffusion depends a lot on the perception of a past success; a factor that modern media can control. The modern media then, through its tendency to over celebrate and magnify the successes of a revolution, diffuses this revolution to subsequent episodes or different countries.

From an empirical point of view, the case of Syria stands evidence to the power of modern media in diffusion. In fact, over 75 percent of Syrian contenders and protesters claimed that if Egypt can do it, they can do it too. The emotional appeal of the Egyptian success in ousting Mubarak, diffused on Pan-Arab TVs and online, motivated a lot of Syrian youth to take it to the streets with the hope they can oust Bashar Al-Assad. Live testimonials from the Syrian streets, related this emotional appeal clearly after the far and wide media sharing of the Egyptian success: " When the events happened in Tunisia and Ben Ali fled, it looked so easy. Then Egypt happened – only 17 days! Our path was open in front of us. Freedom and dignity were going to come. I predicted 30-60 days. Tunisia took one day. Egypt took 17 days. Let Syria take 60 days" responded one man. "When the revolution began in Egypt, we lived it day by day. We were on Facebook giving Egyptians advice and sharing revolutionary songs, and things like that. We felt like we were in the Square with them" added another. "I told myself that it was shameful that I was sharing stuff to support revolution in Egypt, but when the same things were happening in my country, I was too afraid to do anything. So I finally did" added yet another Syrian activist (Pearlman, 2016).

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

Protecting a revolution and diffusing it are very important parts of contentious politics. The two processes, that have become easy and speedy due to modern media, can determine whether the new change brought about will last, and where the next episode of contention is to happen. Both processes today, are supported by the modern media, which is borderless and limitless. Modern media technologies support diffusion so revolution can become a global process, unhindered by any type of limitations.

Addressing the role of the modern media in diffusion, is not necessarily saying that the modern media landscape is the only infrastructure carrying diffusion; but rather that it is one "important" element that increases the rate and speed of diffusion. Mass media and social media both hasten and fortify the process, as they magnify the ability to communicate ideas to higher numbers of people in a much shorter time. Where traditional media is usually subject to censorship and other gate keeping processes, modern media especially in its online component is decentralized and virtually totally free. This freedom allows uncensored data to cross borders at the speed of light, increasing both the speed and the whole potential for a spillover of contention (Rocke, 2013).

From overriding geography and language barriers, to supporting the different modalities of diffusion; modern media provides challengers all over the world with chances they never had before: A chance for making their voice heard, a chance for making their cause global, a chance to motivate all those who feel oppressed around the world, to take it to the streets, and a chance for change.

## Chapter Five

### A Modern Media Pattern in Egyptian Revolution

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Media is the day's most powerful medium. Not only it is a multi-billion dollars industry, but it is also a powerful political, economic and even military tool.

Understanding the technical and social characteristics of the modern media landscape is crucial, to be able to assess its effects on the various areas of life. Modern media assumes important roles in co-managing the economy, the myriad of international transactions, states, security, and even international conflicts. Moreover, in times of conflict and political unrest, roles of modern media become even more crucial, due to their effects on political mobilization, power shifts, and the outcomes of conflicts (regardless of their degrees of intensity).

In this thesis study, the aim was to highlight the different roles of the modern media landscape in modern revolutions. The methodology was to combine media theory and social movement theory with content analysis and empirical narratives, in order to prove that the modern media landscape plays many roles during the different stages of a revolution. One of those main roles is dominant in each of the different stages of revolution. As a background, the social movements framework of Tilly & Tarrow is used in order to divide the revolution into its main three stages.

"Content is king" is an expression often used by authors, journalists and media professionals to indicate that content is the main element of media. In this study too

"content is king", for content studies and analytics served as the main empirical evidence, followed by reach and media analytics, as well as other types of consequential correlations.

## **5.2. Modern Media in Revolution**

Revolutions start with an idea, the idea of change, that stems from the many differences between people's aspirations and their reality. A few emboldened individuals such as Wael Ghoneim of Egypt and the many dissenting bloggers around him, decide to bridge the gap between expectations and reality by raising awareness and calling for change. The challenging youth starts a revolutionary cycle, starting with spreading the word. This stage, in terms of revolutionary themes is characterized by: becoming aware of the collective claims, the consolidation of collective claims and grievances, the polarization of the masses according to this newly found collective consciousness, the shaping of a new political identity, the shifting and forming of alliances, the first moves of the early challengers, and the increase in the popular will to take it to the streets, accompanied with a cascade of this participation mentality among different social classes and political agents.

At this stage, the modern media landscape plays the main role of raising awareness. This role comes under different manifestations and sub-roles that meet under the same umbrella. Raising awareness in general, diffusing democratic thought and boosting democratization, creating and consolidating a shared identity, socializing politicizing and polarizing the masses, and stimulating the will to participate; are all media roles that take place mainly in the beginning of the revolution and that fall under the umbrella of awareness. In order to play this role, modern media and the challengers behind it rely mainly on the vast reach of modern and social media, as well as its credibility and interactivity. Challengers capitalize on their ability to diffuse focused

content, and to affect their audiences through multi-channels, sensationalism, credibility and persistence.

In Egypt, challengers were faced with authorities that handled media through the iron fist of an emergency law, so they had to creatively put to use alternative sources. These were mainly different social media channels, that were used to highlight abuses of the regime as well as the different grievances of the Egyptian people. Slowly but surely, the awareness loaded content was gaining acceptance and motivating the masses in Egypt to react in face of the dictatorship.

Once the grounds were ripe, and emboldened by the success of the Jasmine Revolution of their neighbors in Tunisia, Egyptian challengers started calling for actual protests and the masses broke into the streets. In fact, this is the phase where the true actions of a revolution happen: protests break out, people start joining the revolution en masse, the state starts reacting, the direct interactions between the state and contenders heightens, levels of violence might increase, new methods and repertoires get tested and adopted, levels of violence increasingly escalate, and change is brought about more or less successfully.

At this stage, the dominant role of the modern media, is its organizational role. Several functional roles of the modern media especially social media, fall under the organizational role: the general planning and calls for participation, the development of a leaderless model, the disintermediation of the costs of communication , the replacement of formal organization, the shaping of the revolution in size and numbers, the counterbalancing of the state media, the consolidation and funding of the

movement, the overriding of security forces, and finally the step by step instruction of the protesters. Modern media relies mainly on its live effects, connections with mass media, alternative technologies and flexibility in order to fulfill its organizational functions. Challengers at this stage, make it a point to communicate instructive content to plan and guide the protesters' steps along the way.

During the apex of the Egyptian revolution, technical creativity merged with the challengers' strong will to succeed, and showed us new ways of using media in face of dictatorships trying their best to censor it and impose blackouts. Social media channels, alternative IP addresses, direct connections with pan-Arab and international mass media, and alternative cellular to internet connections; became new tools in the Egyptian repertoire of contention.

By late January 2011, the Egyptian masses were able to oust their dictator; and with this massive change brought about by the success of a revolution, media roles too change. This stage of the revolution is the one where outcomes become fairly clear, and activism decreases substantially. At this stage, the streets calm down as a lot of activists pull out of direct activism, signs of change become obvious, a lot of agents become institutionalized and move from being loose to becoming organized agents, the new repertoire of contention gets validated through successful use and new tools are added to the old repertoire, but most importantly, cross borders diffusion starts building on the success of the movement, and its communicative infrastructure.

The dominant role of the media in the last stage of revolution, is dual: On one hand, modern media works along with the other agents of revolution to protect its new gains.

And on the other, modern media diffuses the revolution along with its functional modalities, across national borders. As a watchdog of change, the modern media by keeping the regime under public check, archiving the revolution and publicizing any breaches by the new authorities. The diffusive role of the media comes under different sub-themes: diffusing the pre-conditions of rebellion, diffusion of the contentious repertoires, , supporting the learning experience, supporting the three phases of diffusion (validation, adaptation, adoption), and finally magnifying successes as to motivate rebellion abroad.

The Egyptian episode was characterized by the same censorship pressure over the media as a watchdog of change, yet, voice here and there kept connecting with the international media and eventually led in collaboration with other agents, to the overthrow of Morsi's regime two years later. But when it comes to diffusion, modern media was able to carry the revolution in all its modalities to Syria and Lybia in less than two months.

To support these functions, the modern media draws on its omnipresence in today's world, its connections with international media and on the new individual capacities to produce consumable content instantly. Challengers acting as watchdogs of change broadcast content that reports and evaluates the performance of new authorities. Those focusing on diffusion focus more on broadcasting content that archives the different modalities of the successful revolution, and facilitates the learning experience stemming from it.

### **5.3. Media Pattern in the Egyptian Revolution**

In sum, and after studying the roles of the modern media landscape in different stages of the revolution empirically, based on the Egyptian case; the conclusion is that the modern media plays different roles in different stages of the revolution, based on the immediate needs of contenders.

In the first stage of the revolution, right before protests start happening, the modern media plays mainly an awareness raising role. In the second stage of the revolution, during the apex of the protests, the modern media plays a highly functional and organizational role. And in the third stage of the revolution, after the subsiding of protests, the modern media plays a watchdog and a diffusive role.

These roles of the modern media during revolution are not exclusive nor exhaustive, but rather arranged in terms of the most dominant role per stage. Studying further modern revolutions, will help confirming how general or specific is the pattern.

## 5.4. Limitations

The study of modern media roles in recent revolutions, is one that is very novel hence naturally has a few limitations imposed by the facts relevant to its novelty and uncertainty.

For starter, the conceptual lines are slightly blurred, because it is hard to make a microscopically accurate liaison between causes and effects when it comes to the media roles. Going through all three chapters handling the different media roles, there's always different circumstances (whether national or supranational), and agents (whether the people or the government), contributing different types of efforts towards the same effect the media is trying to intermedate. The topic is also multi-leveled , which means *ceteris paribus* situations are hard to build and observe singularly. This means that it will always be hard to single out the different cause to effect relations, which will lead us to speak more in terms of correlations.

Moreover, the matter of agency dealt with before, comes up in every single chapter, and within every individual role of the modern media in revolution. However the question in certain cases is not only who makes revolution possible, but also what circumstance contribute to it. For instance, when it comes to the awareness role, there are the activists. When it comes to the organizational role, there are mechanisms of internal diffusion as per Tilly & Tarrow's framework, that are not necessarily media intermedated. And when it comes to the last diffusive role, there are different regional and supranational factors that can boost or impede diffusion. Hence, a lot of the case is left open for subjective interpretations. The roles of the media are empirically validated;

but how much credit can go to the modern media landscape, is a matter directly relevant to the issue of shared agency.

Finally, the issue of exclusivity and exhaustiveness addressed earlier, is also to be taken into consideration while assimilating the general framework of this study. The truth is, most roles of the media are at play at every stage of the revolution. However, there is one main role at play while the others stay on the back burner, in each stage of the revolution.

## **5.5. Future Perspectives**

The accurate understanding of the different media roles during revolution, is key to political analysis in today's world. It is crucial to understand political dynamics, and the recent waves of contention hitting the world with their massive domino effect.

Understanding how media affects revolution is important on many levels: It is important to future contenders for it will help them bring forth their desired change. It is important to states, for it will help them formulate correct public policies taking into consideration an aware, empowered and capable youth. It is important to the media outlets themselves, whether mass media or social media, for it will help them develop features that will empower them and their users. And finally it is important for academia as its effects eventually materialize in political, economic and even social change.

The media today, is a force to reckon with; and the only way to tame it, is to understand it.

The giant mutant's potentials are yet to be revealed.

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