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Microlevel Movements Matter: Persuasion, Identity Performance, Performative Agency, And Resistance In Egypt On Twitter During The Egyptian Arab Spring

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MICROLEVEL MOVEMENTS MATTER: PERSUASION, IDENTITY PERFORMANCE,
PERFORMATIVE AGENCY, AND RESISTANCE IN EGYPT
ON TWITTER DURING THE EGYPTIAN ARAB SPRING

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Doctoral Program in English Rhetoric and Composition

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Dean of the Graduate School

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2020

Dedication

For my Mother, Beatriz Cisneros.

MICROLEVEL MOVEMENTS MATTER: PERSUASION, IDENTITY PERFORMANCE,
PERFORMATIVE AGENCY, AND RESISTANCE IN EGYPT
ON TWITTER DURING THE EGYPTIAN ARAB SPRING

by

AUDREY FAY CISNEROS, MA, BA

DISSERTATION

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The University of Texas at El Paso
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Chapter 1: Introduction

News of the Egyptian Arab Spring captured the world in 2011. First Al Jazeera News reported on the ground about thousands, and soon thereafter, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians, peacefully demonstrating together in Tahrir Square (Freedom Square) in opposition to the long standing Egyptian authoritarian regime. Within a few short days, Al Jazeera News reports ceased as local headquarters were shut down and journalists were arrested, and yet Facebook and Twitter were full of videos, photos, and posts, many from demonstrators themselves. While the regime was intent upon silencing demonstrations through an aggressive campaign that included the arrests of journalists and popular opposition voices, the use of intimidation tactics enforced by the police and army, and through internet and cell phone blackouts, demonstrators were resourceful and unrelenting in their demands. Demonstrators used new media to report their movements on the ground, successfully appealing to notions of solidarity, human rights, justice, and the concept of a better life to locals, but they soon captured the hearts of the international community. In a song written and performed by both Western and Middle Eastern artists inspired by the uprising in Egypt, “#Jan25” very well captures the sentiment broadcast by demonstrators. For example, these lyrics are particularly telling:

“I heard 'em say the revolution won't be televised
Al-Jazeera proved 'em wrong, Twitter has him paralyzed
80 million strong and ain't no longer gonna be terrorized
Organized, mobilized, vocalized
On the side of Truth...
We've been empowered to speak
And though the future is uncertain

Man, at least it isn't bleak...
Freedom isn't given by oppressors
It's demanded by oppressed
Freedom lovers, freedom fighters
Free to gather and protest
For their God-given rights
For the freedom of the press
We know freedom is the answer
The only question is...
Who's next?"

This song, among many others tells a story of the Egyptian demonstrator on the ground. News outlets told a different story, sometimes contradicting stories regarding the environment, movement, and demonstrations on the ground. While contemporary history records the successful ousting of Mubarak after just 18 days of civilian demonstrations, captured and archived real-time discourse on Twitter among local, regional, and international audiences and stakeholders alike, offers insight towards unpacking the nuances of profoundly persuasive discourse practices in a digital space. Through the lens of performativity, performative agency, resistance and transformance, this study focuses on the conversations and cyberactivism that took place on Twitter during the Egyptian Arab Spring.

In 2012, Grabill and Pigg argued that rhetorical studies must widen its approach to capture both traditional and non-traditional places where rhetoric and discourse takes place (p. 108). They argue that “identity performances create movement... [believed] to be a particularly powerful form of agency in public, online discussions” and thus “it is essential [for rhetorical

studies] to come to terms with how best to understand public interactions in the messy places that characterize most online forums” (Grabill and Pigg, 2012, p. 115). In 2015, Douglas Eyman’s *Digital Rhetoric* called for clearly defining and locating digital rhetorical studies as an emerging field by focusing on theories, methods, and practices that inform and produce digital rhetorical scholarship. Furthermore, Eyman (2015) stated, “narrowing the purview of rhetoric to focus on digital texts and performances also highlights the difficulties of applying traditional rhetorical theories and methods to new media compositions and networked spaces” (p. 18). He argued for an alignment of theories and methods to include both classical and contemporary rhetoric to networked text and new media as objects of study, but stressed for the development of new theories and methods to account for gaps in traditional spaces (Eyman, 2015, p 34).

This study seeks to answer these calls by analyzing how persuasive discourse practices and rhetorical strategies on Twitter helped shaped the ideas and conversations resulting in dissent and resistance in both digital and physical space in Egypt during the 2011 Arab Spring. This research approaches digital activism as rhetorical practice and unpacks the complex nuances of digital authorship and/or production stemming from the nature of dialogical interplay between the author, medium, and audience intended within social networking sites (SNS). It explores the rhetorical concept of audience expanded and complicated by Twitter’s worldwide, multinational- and thus multilingual-platform. It intentionally seeks out ways in which twitter activists have performed language to navigate spaces of identity to engage in persuasive discursive acts and explores the connections of those performances in digital space to performance(s) in physical spaces—i.e. the movement from “performative to transformative.” Koerber (2006) contended that “to understand...acts of resistance, we need to see evidence that they can disrupt disciplinary power even without escaping its grip.” This study applies Koerber’s (2006) assertion to digital

activists who are performing language in digital space through persuasive and resistant dialog. It investigates how Twitter allows for such acts of resistance—serving to both disseminate transnational notions of freedom and democracy from a global pool of Twitter users AND serving to facilitate space for demonstrators to engage with these transnational ideas among themselves in local, regional, and global capacities in order to persuade their audience towards their goals through discursive and/or physically participatory resistance practices. Through the use of both traditional and contemporary theories of rhetoric like audience and persuasion, identity and performance, resistance and mobilization, this study aims to enrich the theorizing of scholarship and practice in Rhetoric and Writing Studies to include new methods of analysis towards the use of Big Data and SNS, while also contributing to the emerging body of scholarship and field development within Digital Rhetoric.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions:

The following research questions provide focus for the study:

1. What can rhetors learn about individuals who employ Twitter as a platform for rhetorical agency and persuasive discourse practices in Egypt during the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring?
2. What can rhetors learn about the productive force of the performative in digital space and its connections to transformative notions of reimagined or refashioned futures?

Methodology

I used a mixed method approach wherein I leaned heavily on Constructivist Data Analysis rooted in Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was developed in the 1960's by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss; together they developed an inductive method in an

effort to challenge traditional deductive approaches. They argue for GTM be an “initial systemic discovery of theory from the data...[which] can help forestall the opportunistic use of theories that have dubious fit and working capacity” (pgs. 3-5). They propose that in theories generated through GTM the data cannot be divorced from the process by which it was generated, specifically stating that “generating a theory from data means that most hypothesis and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of research” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 5-6). Further theorizing GTM, Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe GTM as a methodology for creating theory grounded in the data itself, developed through reflexive and recursive interplay between the data gathered and analysis (p. 273). Charmaz’s (2007) constructivist grounded theory, adherent to the interpretive tradition “places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data” (p. 130). She argues that constructivist grounded theorists “assume that both data and analysis are social constructions that reflect what their production entailed” (Charmaz, 2007, p. 131). Notably, she contends that grounded theory strategies forefront the analysis over argument in order to construct an original theory to best interpret the data. These strategies allow the researcher to follow leads which emerge from the data or collect data in other ways to allow the researcher to pursue their intended research interest (Charmaz, 2007). In this way, grounded theory has allowed the gathering of data through systematic parameters, with particular research interests in mind, while also allowing for those data to speak through emerging themes surfacing through the reflexive yet flexible interplay between data, analysis, and researcher.

DATA SELECTION

Research regarding Twitter's specific use and impact during the Egyptian Arab Spring lend support to the notion that while the number of Twitter users in Egypt was quite small, they had a keen awareness of audience and purpose and were remarkably effective in using this medium to persuade local and international audiences towards their cause (Wilson and Dunn, 2011). Twitter was a crucial component among a larger collection of broad media usage, providing a space for new ideas, dissent, and discourse which contributed to the creation of a large popular base (Wilson and Dunn, 2011; Khamis and Vaughn, 2011). It challenged traditional hierarchies in news media communication and trustworthiness, facilitating dissemination of information from the ground by citizen journalists, which included demonstrators, bloggers, organizers, and activists, to name a few. Tweeting also became relevant for mainstream media and journalists, who often looked towards citizen journalists for trustworthy and factual information during the revolution. Twitter's relevance was not lost upon the regime, prompting a communication blackout, which in turn promoted innovate solutions locally and internationally to ensure revolutionary voices could still be seen/heard on Twitter (Lotan et al., 2011; Howard et al. 2015). Tweets were multilingual, suggesting Twitter users in Egypt were profoundly aware of their rhetorical situation and making thoughtful use of rhetorical devices (Bruns, Highfield, and Burges, 2013). Twitter facilitated a space for persuasive discourse among a global audience, encouraged a pointed awareness of the audience and a strategic use of rhetorical appeals which resulted in millions of tweets, mostly in support of the demonstrators' cause, over the course of Egypt's Arab Spring. Twitter thus facilitated a meaningful avenue for communication and persuasion during the Arab Spring, and served as a deeply meaningful archive, rich with data well suited for theorizing upon persuasive discourse in digital space.

METHODS

Upon IRB approval, I gathered data from Twitter's comprehensive historical archives through DiscoverText. DiscoverText partnered with Twitter to facilitate search and retrieve services on Twitter's comprehensive historical archives. The tweets that were gathered in DiscoverText were made available in human language and included all metadata such as images, links, and numbered retweets and replies, for example. The data aggregation facilitated by DiscoverText added layers of depth to what would otherwise be text-based data, and as a result the data was "detailed, focused, and full" (Charmaz, 2006). Using specific search parameters which included date range and hashtag limiters, the search resulted in a payload of over 300,000 tweets. In order to create a dataset size manageable for a single researcher, I decided to carefully create smaller datasets while maintaining the integrity of the project goals. Through a series of filters available in DiscoverText, the final dataset utilized for the in-depth analysis totaled 5,283 tweets. The data was organized in DiscoverText, wherein tweets and their associated metadata were separated into smaller subsets; this facilitated the coding and annotating of the items, leading to a multiple-angle-based view of the data. As the subsets were worked through, themes emerged and, as a result, new codes as well. After I completed the initial round of coding, the most prominent code categories surfaced. During the phase of recursive revisiting of coding and memo writing it was recognized that several codes outside of the parameters of an established code category did not fit securely, and as a result subcategories had to be created in order to capture the tweets to include them in the analysis. While limited in frequency, these codes identified trends among sentiments shared on a particular day, as a type of thematic undercurrent, often times guiding the conversations in the more prevalent code categories.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a data analysis software was then used to organize, manage, identify and analyze trends across the coded dataset. In brief, the analysis involved using SPSS to obtain a summary of the descriptive statistics of the variables in the dataset by utilizing the created codebook to provide a comprehensive summary of the cases in the data. To gather more detailed information, the “Frequencies” procedure in SPSS was used to explore descriptive statistics for categorical variables. Finally, among the more salient variables in each independent subset, the relationship between several categorical variables using non-parametric statistical techniques was explored, specifically the using Chi-square test in cross-tabulations. The test for independence was used to examine the relationship between two categorical variables. (Pallant, 2001, p. 214-218). Each output is interpreted and discussed in Chapter 5.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I examine these research questions with a framework mostly derived from Pennycook’s (2007) *Performative Constitution of Identity* which allowed me to study the persuasive discourse practices, rhetorical agency(ies), the productive power of the performance and transference by activists on Twitter during the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring.

Performativity, Performative Agency, and Persuasion

Pennycook (2008) defines performativity as “the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity” (p. 69). Butler (2010) argues performativity “First...seeks to counter a certain kind of positivism according to which we might begin with already delimited understandings of what gender, the state, and the economy are. Secondly...works...to counter a certain metaphysical presumption about culturally constructed categories and to draw our attention to the diverse

mechanisms of that construction. Thirdly...describes a set of processes that produce ontological effects...that work to bring into being certain kinds of realities or, fourthly, that lead to certain kinds of socially binding consequences (p. 147). Pennycook (2008) maintains that “in order to have a usable notion of performativity...we need...to avoid the pull towards performance as open-ended free display (we perform whatever identities we want to)...and the pull towards over-sedimentation (we can only perform what has been prescribed): to some extent, the performative is always along lines that have already been laid down, and yet performativity can also be about refashioning futures” (p. 77). Performativity understood through Butler and Pennycook, in the Egyptian context explored in this study, aims to identify and theorize upon the ways demonstrators in Egypt are performing identity through persuasive discursive practices on Twitter, and through performative agency can explore, challenge, and counter notions of traditional habitus and sedimentation with regard to their sociopolitical positions, limitations, and perceived futures.

Foucault’s work on discourse formations and the process of knowledge constitution, the underlying incoherence’s and spaces of dissention, and networked notions of domination and freedom, bring to light the conceived subject-power positions within a perceptually well-regulated disciplinary framework. The disruption of the commonplace and dominant discourse(s) of Truth and ideology through a plurality of epistemic perspectives make visible the spaces of thought, reflection, reinvention, or dissention from the metanarrative (Phillips, 2002). Foucauldian theories surrounding disciplinary regimes frame the shaping notions of resistance within this project. Koerber (2006) argues that “disciplinary power can be understood as not only dictating what subjects should do, but also as producing the very rhetorical situations in which they act by specifying what their bodies can do” (p. 91). However, she argues that the preexisting

subject positions in contextual frameworks can be embodied and translate to performance in a main-stream framework, disrupting disciplinary regimes while still operating in their grid. For Egyptians cyberactivists, it would seem that discourse on Twitter allowed for a disruption of Foucault's preexisting subject position without any meaningful disruption of the existing disciplinary regime. Over time, performances on Twitter, among other digital subaltern counter cultures, disrupted the status quo socio-political fabric in Egypt, resulting in a disruption of the existing disciplinary powers which ostensibly maintained the average Egyptian's citizen's "subject position" was unable to bringing about regime change, limiting any perceived emancipatory thoughts that would yield collective action.

Performative Resistance and Persuasion

Koerber (2006) argues that "resistance might initially involve a form of rhetorical agency in which subjects simply occupy preexisting subject positions, but the effects of this agency—the acts of resistance—can disrupt the sense established by disciplinary rhetoric, exceeding the boundaries of these subject positions in unpredictable ways" (p. 97). Performativity online challenges the stasis of identity, facilitates Fraser's (1987) concept of a "subaltern counter-culture" allowing for reflection and thus rhetorical navigation, agency, and resistance. This display of digital resistance may begin online and thus seemingly remain within the boundaries of Foucauldian notions of preexisting subject positions; but in Egypt it seems that the act of tweeting challenges subject-position boundaries and it appears as though performance and transformance are deeply connected.

Cyberactivism and even simply online communication creates an alternative framework of public engagement, wherein persuasive discursive practices play a foundational role for establishing rhetorical agency, making language-use inseparable from the creation of identity

perceptions and performances. Grabill and Pigg's (2012) and Carolyn Miller's (2003) "Writing in a Culture of Simulation: Ethos Online" argue that "digital rhetorical situations often heighten rhetors' need to use language to establish who they are as people [and in a] culture of simulation, online communicators must use language to establish their position within a crowd of geographically distributed, unknown interlocutors who have limited means for accessing information about those with whom they deliberate" (Grabill and Pigg, p. 102; Miller, p. 60). Persuasive discursive practices and rhetorical agency in online spaces like Twitter are thus deeply connected to author/producer's understanding of their rhetorical situation and their capacity to effectively utilize rhetorical appeals to both create and engage digital identity and performances. In this study, the author/producer was often a civilian activist and/or demonstrator and the notion of audience was complicated and expanded to include a perceived worldwide listener/reader/consumer of tweets on Twitter. While cyberactivism in Egypt was not unknown prior to the events of the 2011 Arab Spring, the rapid growth of the movement and matching government crackdowns required digital activists to become quickly and acutely aware of their agency and tailor their discourse and actions to meet the needs of a dynamic expanding and changing revolutionary movement.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AVENUES FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Acquiring historical Twitter data is available through Twitter's Developer options and through 3rd party data collection companies, but acquisition is costly and/or requires a coding or programming skillsets. While I was able to address these challenges, they required a heavy time investment at the forefront of the project, and once the data was acquired, a heavy time investment in learning and navigating a large payload in new software as an individual researcher. Additionally, this project only explores the stories, experiences, and Twitter acts by

Twitter users communicating in only English Language tweets. The dataset within the study was also limited to tweets gathered from users who added geographical data to identify them as located in Egypt, resulting in most tweets originating from a single geographical area. It is also limited in that it only examines tweets from the 18-day period surrounding the Egyptian revolution which ousted President Mubarak, but does not include the tweets from the following large scale movement that removed President Morsi soon thereafter, or tweets surrounding the election that followed which placed ruling power back in the grip of the Egyptian military. Finally, the study does not consider the pedagogical implications of theorizing the persuasive discourse practices on Twitter in the writing classroom.

Future research could take a multilingual dataset, like the comprehensive dataset for this study, and explore tweets in the available languages to compare the rhetorical strategies employed between languages and thus cultures as well. It could look intently at the various moments of popular dissent, resistance, and rebellion in Egypt and other places to trace persuasion and rhetorical appeal within new movements and responding to unique contexts. Twitter studies fit exceptionally well within the emerging boundaries of Digital Rhetoric as a field, and thus could/should be further theorized to include persuasive, multimodal dialog in the writing classroom, as an important element of social justice initiatives, and should enrich the capacity for RWS to engage in interdisciplinary works towards democracy, plurality, and public policy.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two details some of the most salient moments in the Egyptian timeline over the past three centuries in order to offer a necessary contextualization of the people and their experiences behind Egypt's People's Revolution. More specifically, the chapter provides a brief overview of

the last Ottoman rulers, the development of Egyptianism, the British occupation of Egypt, and finally the takeover by the Egyptian military and details the most salient issues throughout the past four presidential terms. Chapter three explores some of the more salient theoretical concepts framing this study, including concepts of the performative constitution of identity, performative agency, transformance, resistance, mobilization, and computer mediated communication. Chapter four details the methodology and specific methods employed while conducting this study, including a brief overview of Grounded Theory to include Constructivist Grounded Theory. The chapter also discusses the methods of data gathering and analysis as well as the positionality of the researcher and reflexivity of the research process. Chapter five discusses the interpretation of the study's various outputs and unpacks the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the data. This chapter examines how Twitter activists utilized persuasive discursive practices to shift and transform notions of identity and circumstance across a complex understanding of audience to reach and in many cases move them towards the demonstrator's goals. Chapter six concludes this project by further situating this work in the realm of Digital Rhetoric, stressing for the continued development for emerging field identity of Digital Rhetoric. It presents several avenues of research, expanding upon pedagogical-, theoretical- and methods-based contributions to the field and pressing for interdisciplinary conversations to advance RWS and Digital Rhetoric in the spaces of public policy, social justice initiatives, and international marketing.

Chapter 2: Egypt: A Brief SocioPolitical History

Osman (2013) describes Egypt in the late 20th century as a beacon for tranquility whose society had never witnessed a civil war in over seven thousand years with cities that dazzled foreigners, seduced visitors, educated the region's elite, bred art and culture, and shaped a highly liberal, open society taking its inspiration from Paris and Rome (pgs. 2-3). Egypt in the 21st century has experienced British colonial rule and Egyptian revolt, a rise in military ruling power, the rejection of the West and the rise of Pan Arabism, Soviet alliance, then American alliance, presidential assassination, decades long dictatorships, growing religious tension, a dramatic shift from a socialist economy to capitalism, civil revolutions, and coup d'etat. Over time, Egypt became the birthplace of religious extremism, has become devoid of cosmopolitanism, and has become an increasingly conservative society with a questionable and sometimes volatile human rights record. Egypt's contemporary history is as tumultuous as it is vivid; it is a continuing story of dramatic shifts in governance and social change in which the Egyptian people have shown their capacity for adaptation, ambition, resilience, and resistance.

Though the 2011 Arab Spring in Egypt has shed new light on the Egyptian story, it was and continues to be a story of extraordinary contemporary political, economic, and social movements rooted in a complex tangle of cosmopolitanism, conservatism, liberalism, and traditional values. While this chapter cannot capture every aspect of contemporary Egyptian history, it will detail some of the most salient moments in the Egyptian timeline over the past three centuries in order to offer a necessary contextualization of the people and their experiences behind Egypt's People's Revolution—a movement that seized international headlines in 2011, 2012, and 2013. More specifically, this chapter will provide a brief overview the last Ottoman rulers, the development of Egyptianism, the British occupation of Egypt, and finally the takeover

by the Egyptian military. It will detail the most salient issues throughout the presidential terms of Abdel Gamal Nasser and the rise of Pan Arabism, Anwar Sadat and the rise of liberal capitalism, Hosni Mubarak's pragmatic yet stagnant military rule until his unseating in February 2011, the post revolution election of President Mohammed Morsi, and the coup d'etat that secured the return of military rule. Finally, this chapter will also discuss the troubling rise in radical Islam and the challenges it posed throughout each presidential term.

THE LAST OTTOMAN RULERS, THE BEGINNING OF EGYPTIANISM, AND BRITISH OCCUPATION

The cyclical rise and fall of a political and military force in Egypt since the early nineteenth century begins with foreign invasion, rule, and influence in native Arab Egypt and would soon prove to have deep and consequential effects continuing into in modern-day Egypt. Foreign rule in Egypt began with Muhammadi Ali, an Albainian solider in the Ottoman army who ruled from 1805-1849 and is regarded as “the founder of modern Egypt’ and the architect of its first developmental project” (Osman, 2013, p. 15, Hashim, 2011a, p. 65). Ali’s time in power would mark the beginning of the Egyptian monarchy and during his rule he overhauled Egypt’s 400 year old irrigation system, introduced new crops (among the most valuable was cotton), reorganized the political system and established strict control over trade, taxation, centralized decision-making which was administered by French and Turkish bureaucrats, and opened up a French-style education system intended to educate engineers, doctors, and teachers among other trades. (Osman, 2013, p. 17-18). Under the leadership of Ali’s son, Ibrahim Pahsa, these rulers succeeded in turning Egypt into the “strongest military power in the Middle East” (Hashim, 2011a, p. 64). Pasha was “determined to make Egypt a part of Europe” and in his determination Egypt’s central railway was built and modern Cairo was built, with buildings, parks, and palaces built with Paris, Rome, and Vienna as architectural inspiration, as well as

opera houses and the National Library. He created municipal services for Cairo and Alexandria and most notably, opened the Suez Canal in 1869 which would soon prove to be an impressive source of international power. (Osman, 2013, pgs. 18-20).

The Egyptian monarchy, beginning with Ali, treated Egypt as a grand developmental project, dynastic in nature and devoid of Egyptians input or Egyptianism which Osman (2013) describes as “the vision of intelligent and ambitious men trying to build an empire based on a rich country that they [Ali and Pasha] had managed to subjugate” (p. 20). This subjugation of Arab Egyptian natives is most visible in the history of land ownership and military conscription. Under Ali land ownership was not extended to native Egyptians for decades. Later, landownership was used to invite native Egyptians in three strategic ways: first, land ownership was given to native men who joined and performed best in their ranks for the developing Egyptian army; secondly, land was awarded for the intermarriage of aspiring Egyptians to Ottoman aristocrats; and finally, circumstantial land lost by the royal family in later years mostly due to debt was quickly bought by native Egyptian nobles. “Egyptianism” began to surface as influential Egyptian landowners began to rise in political and socioeconomic realms, effectively changing the social landscape from 90% poor peasants in 1800, to 25% lower middle or working class (Osman, 2013, pgs. 21-23). The notion of a modern Egyptian identity, or “Egyptianism” grew with the expansion of the Egyptian middle class and eventual detachment from the Ottoman Empire and Turkey all together.

The practice of controlling land ownership was a means of controlling native economic mobility and influence and that same principle was applied to the controlling ranks in the Egyptian army. While Ali and Pasha turned Egypt into an immensely powerful military force, officer ranks were withheld from native born Egyptians, eventually creating tension among the

middle and lower ranking native Egyptians and their foreign European superiors. As with land ownership and the military, similar hierarchies spread throughout many other economic sectors in Egypt, and similar discontent grew among the Egyptian populace in a variety of social classes. (Hashim, 2011a, pgs. 64-65). The beginnings of Egyptianism emerged both as a response to the subjugation of natives across all sectors of Egypt but was also deeply influenced by Ali's determination to modernize and Europeanize the country. Notions of Egyptianism developed which were connected to an independent Egypt with an Egyptian identity as a sovereign country. This is a complex network of consequences rooted in foreign conquest and development, European architectural, economic, political, and social influences, a growing native middle class, and a resentment of foreign aristocracy, particularly in government and economic sectors.

As Egyptianism became an influential socioeconomic and sociopolitical force in Egypt, and the country moved to detach itself from Ottoman and later Turkish influence, Ali and Pasha relied heavily on French and British financial investments. The monarchy and thus those of highest ranks in the military closely aligned itself with their Anglo-French investors and soon the already rising tensions in the Egyptian army among the mostly native middle ranks of the officer corps lead to a military revolt against Pasha's son, Khedive Tawfiq as he, like the monarchy in general, was "regarded as a pawn of the British" (Osman, 2013, p. 24). This revolt significantly threatened the Anglo-French strategic and commercial interests, and prompted the British to intervene in 1882, thus marking the beginning of the British occupation of Egypt for the next 70 years. The British greatly reduced the size and might of the Egyptian military in order to rebuild it according to the new British Western model and maintained ten percent of the officer corps for native born Brits.

In the late 1930's, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty proclaimed Farouk I King of Egypt and the Sudan and granted Egypt control over its own military. Within the same year Egypt's Royal Military Academy opened entrance to the sons of middle and lower classes for the first time. Hashim (2011a) notes a notable shift in perceptions of the military among these new entrants, which "came from a social strata that viewed the monarchy as corrupt and subservient to the British... [and were] politically conscious and neither insulated from nor indifferent to the declining political and socioeconomic fortunes of the country" (p. 66). Egyptianism grew under the new occupation and Egyptians continued to push for independence and full representation which prompted many popular insurgencies against the British. Osman (2013) describes popular political resistance through the "creation of the National Party (an attempt to formulate an Egyptian political interest and rhetoric independent of that of the royal family of Mohammed Ali's descendants)...[which soon] culminated in the 1919 revolution, the largest uprising against the British to date" (p. 25).

Much like the influence Egyptianism placed on the Ottoman-Egyptian monarchy, under British occupation it continued to be a powerful sociopolitical force pressuring the British government to recognize Egypt's independence in 1922, and in 1923 Egyptian political elites drafted the first civic constitution in the Middle East. Within this time frame, Egyptianism manifested itself through the creation of "Al-Wafd" (The Delegation), which was created to represent Egypt's case for independence during the 1919 peace conference in Paris; this would soon grow to represent Egypt's search for identity, eventually becoming the country's most influential political party that spearheaded the movement to reshape Egypt's political system into a Western-liberal democratic model (Osman, 2013, pgs. 25-35). In the 1920s and 1930s Al Wafd championed the "supremacy of the constitution" (Osman, 2013, p. 32) over the influence of the

palace, and brought genuine constitutionalism, civic freedoms, and democratic values to Egypt. During this timeframe, Egypt's civil society grew alongside the growing middle class, leading to the development of a variety of community groups and trade unions. Egypt's free trade and open markets made it a destination for commercial interests and its vibrant social culture made it a destination for immigrants, which helped build a culture of cosmopolitanism and tolerance.

This Egyptian liberal experiment was not without internal and external discord as over time, Al Wafd lagged behind the social changes in the 1940s and 1950's wherein Egypt experienced a large shift from ruralism to urbanism, creating a rift between Egypt's peasants and land owning elites whom made up the backbone of Al Wafd. Egypt's peasants became increasingly aware of their rights and made civic demands to improve their working and living conditions, putting them at odds with some of Al Wafd's key supporters. Al Wafd who once represented Egyptianism—a notion that soon became Nationalism--seemed to forget the country's poor, who still made up more than 80% of the total population. The working class would become the country's social and economic elite while its once-booming growth rate slowed significantly. The Second World War brought extreme economic difficulties, widening the gap between the rich and poor and bringing to light the lack of social mobility along all economic sectors, including the Egyptian military.

This continued separation of classes among foreign European occupiers and Egyptian elite alongside rising Egyptianist/Nationalist sentiments proved to be particularly explosive within the Egyptian military. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the failure of the Egyptian military to prevent the emergence of the Israeli nation devastated military moral, which had long been suffering from ideological divisions among new conscripts and senior officers ; this put Egypt in a “pre-revolutionary situation” (Hashim, 2011a, p. 66). He argues that as a result of “rampant

nepotism and corruption within its senior ranks and [an] appalling mistreatment and poverty of...enlistees” (Hashim, 2011a, p. 66), combined with an evolving political awareness, a number of different conspiratorial groups grew, most notably the Free Officers. In 1952 the Free Officers, made up of conspirators whom despised the regime, from different ideological backgrounds and all nationalistic in orientation, overthrew King Farouk (a descendant of the Ali royal family) in a military coup, and quickly moved to put an end to the monarchy and create an Egyptian republic. Among those leading the Free Officers was Gamel Abdel Nasser, who upon the overthrow of King Farouk, would quickly get voted into office as Egypt’s President, creating a powerful military state, wherein the position of the military in the Egyptian state and society was unquestioned. He was a charismatic, anti-imperialist, socialist leaning leader who championed the call for Pan-Arab unity. He was wildly popular during his early years, and for many Nasser’s early years are a romanticized but powerful memory.

THE NASSER YEARS

President Nasser’s influence in Egypt is such that Osman (2013) states that “the scale of the popular veneration of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, or indeed in the wider Arab World, is arguably greater than that of any other political leader since the Prophet Mohamed” (p. 42). Osman (2013) continues, describing Nasser as “a man of Egyptian soil who had overthrown the Middle East’s most established and sophisticated monarchy in a swift and bloodless move - to the acclaim of the millions of poor, oppressed Egyptians – and ushered in a programme [sic] of ‘social justice’, ‘progress and development’, and ‘dignity’: a nation-centered developmental vision” (43). Indeed, the Nasserite transformation would dismantle the Egyptian monarchy, bring about a socialist socioeconomic restructuring, set Egypt on a trajectory of renewed industrialization, and bring together notions Egyptian Nationalism and Pan-Arabism which

effectively situated Egypt as the most influential Arab country in the Middle East during much of his term.

Nasser's support originated with the Free Officers, who were a small group within the military and soon after Nasser's rise to power, became an isolated, protected, and powerful bureaucratic military elite. Describing their influence in Egypt, Hashim (2011a) states that "the position of the ruling Free Officers and the military at large in the Egyptian state and society was unquestioned...[and] reliance on military men in the top positions reinforced the insulation of the ruling Free Officers from the larger society in whose name they ostensibly ran the country" (p. 68). The Free Officers would soon find themselves in the similar circumstance of their former foreign ruling officers—ideologically and politically removed from the lower echelons of service which created a deeply divided military, with the Free Officers and wealthy technocrats on one side, and the rest of the military on the other. Nasser may have become known as a "man of the people" but it is important to note that his move to nationalize the country's economy, his soviet leanings, and his popular notions of Arabism rather than Islamism, made for a divided people of which he governed with a divided power base.

Even so, the Nasserite transformation of the country was nothing short of remarkable and made him a national hero early in his presidency, an image that he would later struggle to maintain. The Nasserite transformation began with massive landownership reforms which created a ceiling of landownership holdings, a rent capping on leased lands, and engaged in swift distribution of reclaimed fertile lands from massive landowners to millions of poor landless peasants. He soon nationalized all of Egypt's sizable businesses, brought in a new era of industrialization, and undertook a major expansion of civic services which expanded to most of the country (Osman, 2013, pgs. 45-47). Together Nasser's land reform initiatives and the

creation of the public sector “resulted in around 75 percent of Egypt’s gross domestic product (GDP) being transferred from the hands of the country’s rich either to the state or to millions of small owners” (Osman, 2013, pg. 47). The peak of the Nasserite transformation culminated in his nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, which was never securely held by an Egyptian or any Arab before then. The failure of the French, British, and Israeli forces who intervened and attempted to provoke war with Nasser’s regime and regain the canal only launched Nasser’s image into nothing short of the Egyptian and Arab hero for which is remembered today.

The Nasserite transformation was civic oriented and intended to create an inclusive national appeal aimed at all Egyptians. His socialist leaning philosophies underpinning the social welfare of the poor and a distinct and purposeful lack of Islamic political messages fell in sync with existing Pan-Arab notions circulating in the Arab world and would help extend his influence far beyond Egypt. While Pan-Arabism was not Nasser’s brainchild, Nasser certainly catapulted Pan-Arabism into popularity. Osman (2013) describes Nasser’s Pan-Arab approach, “Nasser’s embrace of Islam (as a civilization) and repudiation of Islam (as a government, political movement, or governing framework) was arguably one of his most brilliant balancing acts; the one that endeared him to Egyptian Christians without antagonizing the vast majority of Egyptian Muslims, and defined his project in purely national hues” (pgs. 52-53). As the appeal of the liberal experiment of the 1920’s and 1930’s faded, Nasser’s Pan-Arab influence took hold and was rooted in the inclusivity of identifying as Arabs and not only Muslims, and thereby found mass appeal across many Arab nations and soon became an influential part of the call for Arab nationalism and a united Arab world.

As Arab Nationalist sentiments gained support across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Egypt’s revolutionary anti-imperialist stance against Western influence

became remarkably popular, Egypt soon found itself at odds with the United States. Due to Israel's occupation of Palestine, Nasser's Pan-Arabism categorically excluded Israel and went so far as to label Israel as a strategic enemy of the Arab Nation (Osman, 2013, p. 62). Nasser's exclusion of Islam in government also put Egypt at odds with Saudi Arabia whose Wahabi interpretation of Islam would soon find traction in Egypt and would greatly influence the Salafi movement there. The Nasserite project was indeed popular in much of the MENA region and though a profitable arms deal, found some support among the Soviets; but he also alienated Egypt from any alliance in the West or with its Saudi neighbors.

Nasser's government was without a doubt a military government and as such, he sought to increase Egypt's military strength through weapons and training which he acquired through a 20 year arms relationship with the Soviet Union (Hashim, 2011a, p. 70). Nasser's military engaged in a tremendous propaganda campaign that championed Egypt's military might and while new weapons were purchased and new training was underway, existing tensions among Nasser's elite military supporters and the rest of the military remained, and new tensions among their new Soviet compatriots arose, further threatening the unity of the military. The Egyptian military also found itself tangled in long and costly conflicts—the five-year conflict in Yemen, in particular, weakened the military both physically and morally. Moreover, the Egyptian military was in fact unable to contain the Israeli threat to the region and “Egypt's delusions of military power were shattered in June 1967 by the six-day Israeli rout of Egypt, Jordan and Syria” (Hashim, 2011a, p. 70) wherein Israel “obliterated three-quarters of the Egyptian air force and crushed the backbone of the Egyptian and Syrian armies...[and] effectively marked the end of the Nasserite project” (Osman, 2013, p. 64). The defeat in the Six Day War proved to be a humiliating defeat from which Nasser himself would never recover. The propaganda that

elevated him and his military to “hero status” was lost. The Nasserite project failed not only in its military capacity, of which Nasser relied upon heavily, but his removal from European and Western influence altogether isolated the country both economically and socially, resulting in a loss of international markets and its former cosmopolitan appeal. Nasser’s politicization of the military resulted in a “suffocating military bureaucratic system...that halted the potential progress towards a genuine liberal democracy in the country” (Osman, 2013, p. 67). His government devolved into a police state and many credit the institutionalization of police cohesion and torture to the Nasser era. He frequently silenced the Egyptian media apparatus and collectively imprisoned suspected communists and tortured members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a group he abolished in 1954 which resulted in the resettling of many members in a sympathetic Saudi Arabia whose Wahabi influence would have a lasting and significant change on the Brotherhood’s ideology, and steer defectors to the Salafis, a far more conservative and militant group that would emerge in strength under Sadat in the 1970’s.

During Nasser’s final years demonstrations among university students and factory workers emerged, leading Nasser to make significant, if not late coming political reforms meant to give greater parliamentary independence, appoint more civilian cabinet seats, redirect Egyptian military intelligence service from domestic to foreign threats, and finally attempt to address government corruption. While it remains true that Nasser’s presidency is not free of errors, at the height of his term, he will always be remembered for his Pan-Arab movement which freed Egypt from British influence, aimed to create Egypt’s first modern democratic political system, and brought about social justice and welfare for ordinary Egyptians. He suffered a heart attack and died in September of 1970 and at least five million mourners attended his

funeral. In October of the same year, through popular vote Vice President Sadat was appointed president and would serve until his assassination by radical Islamists in October of 1981.

THE SADAT YEARS

Upon Nasser's untimely death, Vice President Anwar Sadat, a far less charismatic figure, not only faced a deeply splintered military and divided deep state, but also an economy in a steady downward spiral due in part to military defense spending. Sadat faced military opposition from Nasser's Free Officers loyalists and the Soviet-leaning Arab Socialist Union who all conspired against him in his first years as president. Hashim (2011a) describes a notable demonstration led by a junior officer who delivered a "vitriolic attack on the government's inability to wipe out the humiliation of 1967" (p. 72) wherein junior officers joined civilian demonstrators, signaling the discontent within the Egyptian military that later proved fatal for Sadat. Nasser's loyalists were both the military and political elite; they were a powerful bloc within the regime which Sadat set out to control. He limited their power with a reduction in size, limiting all appointments of military officers in ministries, effectively changing the face of the regime through this de-politicalization.

Under his leadership, however, the Egyptian military was surprisingly creative and effective, garnering a strategic victory against Israeli occupation of the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. Sadat's launch of the October War in 1973 gave him the "political capital and the courage to break with Nasserism and preach a whole new political strategy to Egyptians" (Osman, 2013, p. 117); this was known as "al-intifah," which translates to "the opening up." According to Hashim (2011a) and Osman (2013) Sadat's vision for Al Intifah was a movement towards a Western-oriented and capitalist Egypt meant to bring the country into a global economic system. In theory, Al Intifah was meant to "disseminate power from the state, the government, the military

establishment, and the public sector to a newly emerging private sector” (Osman, 2013, p. 118). Implementation of these reforms, however, were extreme and not without public resistance and in response to reduced subsidies there were widespread riots across the nation. While the Egyptian government restored subsidies at the time, they made reductions quietly over the next 30 years which inevitably contributed to public sector strikes within that timeframe, with a growing worker’s movement coming out of the late 1990s. (Beinin 1994; 2001, 142-69; 2011b; El Shafei 1995, 22-36; Posusney 1997, 142). The culture of protest in Egypt flared at the end of Nasser’s term and exploded during Sadat’s; many demonstrations were in response to the social impact that Al Intifah had on the public sector and middle class.

Sadat’s reforms produced two major changes: “the rise of the private sector and foreign investments, and the corresponding decline in the role (and status) of the public sector in the 1970’s and 1980’s [which] led to substantial gaps between both workers of both sectors” (Osman, 2013, p. 121). The shift to capitalism and its corresponding shift to the private sector meant that many of Egypt’s most educated moved to the much higher paying private sector, leaving the current middle class feeling stuck, marginalized, and drastically underpaid. Moreover, this corresponded with the oil boom in the Gulf States and over 3 million Egyptian migrated to the region between 1974 and 1985 (Osman, 2013, p. 122). Additionally, those entering the newly emerging upper class and elite were those who were loyal to the regime itself and together ushered in an era of crony capitalism, merging the lines between power and wealth in Egypt for over a decade.

As Sadat was shifting Egypt towards the West, it meant there was a strategic reorientation in foreign policy and national security which inevitably lead to the collapse of the long-standing Soviet-Egyptian relationship.” (Hashim, 2011a, p. 74). Sadat inherited a

demoralized and divided military whose dichotomous relationship among elite loyalist and middle- and lower-class echelons deepened, particularly under the social impacts brought forth by the policies of Al Intifah. Sadat's reorientation to the West sharply ended the Soviet's supply of arms to Egypt before he successfully negotiated another significant arms deal, leaving him to begin a "frantic search for arms in such disparate places as the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and Yugoslavia...[and] by the late 1970s, Egyptian national security capabilities were in dire straits" (Hashim, 2011a, p. 74). Moreover, Western reorientation also forced Egypt to reconsider its relationship with Israel, leading Sadat to move towards a peace process with them, most notably through the Camp David accords signed in 1978. Sadat's visit to Israel and the David accords proved to be incredibly divisive within the military as "for some, peace with Israel was not worth alienation from the Arab world...Egypt, it seemed, was not making peace with honor. This sentiment was particularly rampant among the junior and middle-ranking officers, among whom Pan-Arab, nationalist and mainstream Islamist sentiment was common" (Hashim, 2011a, p. 76). The Islamist element in Egypt took root under Sadat, capitalizing on the growing economic and social failures of Al Intifah, particularly among Egypt's poor, and provided for them in many ways when the regime did not.

The Muslim Brotherhood was persecuted and forcibly exiled under Nasser; many members took up residence in a sympathetic Wahabi Saudi Arabia for a decade and returned to Egypt under Sadat, reemerging as highly influential and far more conservative organization. Sadat not only ended their exile, he "embraced religion as the main source of his regime's legitimacy" earning him the nickname "al-ra'is al-mu'mim" or the pious president (Belen Soage & Fuentelsaz Franganillo, 2010, p. 42). The shortcomings of Al Intifah facilitated the space which the Muslim Brothers quickly filled, providing "highly efficient services

infrastructure...[including] a range of provisions targeted at the poor and needy [such as] healthcare in the form of ‘Islamic hospitals’, ‘non-corrupt’ food distribution centers in poor neighbourhoods [sic], practical assistance in finding jobs...welfare benefits...[and] humanitarian activities in some of Egypt’s most deprived areas...[effectively] positioning itself to the majority of Egyptians as the ‘provider’, a role the regime was incapable of fulfilling.” (Osman, 2013, p. 84). Their social services soon gained them influence in civic arenas as well, leading to political gains in the form of majority seats in student unions at influential universities along with many professional unions. The takeover of unions had a profound social impact, extending their influence beyond the poor, and attracting middle class educated Egyptians as well. Their expanding power base soon translated into political influence, and the Brotherhood now had a platform to publicly criticize Sadat’s most contentious policies like Al Intifah and the Camp David Peace Accords. Moreover, by the late 1970’s Egyptian’s were disenfranchised with the foreign experiments of their contemporary past, beginning with the Ottoman Monarchy, then the British Occupation, followed by the euphoria of the Nasserite Project and its devastating failure, and now Sadat’s Western facing, corrupt crony capitalist policies of Al Intifah. The Egyptian psyche was splintered and the regime ripe with decades of multifaceted corruption and self-enrichment; alongside the astounding marginalization of the public sector and poor living conditions, the Muslim Brotherhood found a constituency among Egypt’s marginalized, poor, and angry.

Islamic groups including the Brotherhood had both non-violent and violent dispositions; nonviolence positioned the Brotherhood to become a leading civil organization earning the support of Egypt’s unions, for example. However, the Brotherhood returned to a disenfranchised population and yielded a Wahabi conservative influenced message. Many of the Islamic

movements in Egypt were shifting away from the “liberal and creative Islamic thinking that...shaped the Islamic movement in the first half of the twentieth century” (Osman, 2013, p. 87) and found inspiration among radical Islamic theorists—namely Sayyid Qutb, a total rejectionist whose writings called for militancy and violence to impose an alarmingly conservative interpretation of Islamic law to create an Islamic State. Belen Soage & Fuentelsaz Franganillo (2010) elaborate, stating that “Qutb’s writings eventually caused a split within the Islamist movement. In the 1970’s, many young Muslim Brothers started to criticize the older generation for their passivity in the face of government aggression. They left to set up militant groups inspired by Qutb’s ideas. Most of the members, and especially the older ones, remained loyal to the moderate and strategic line” (p. 42). Among the many failures of Al Intifah, the depravity of Sadat’s regime and the resulting social despair made for fertile territory for the Islamic extremism, leading to his assassination by an Islamist junior officer during a military parade on October 6, 1981, which gave rise to sitting vice president Hosni Mubarak, who would rule until 2011.

THE MUBARAK YEARS

After the assassination of President Sadat in 1981, Vice President Hosni Mubarak quickly assumed power and maintained a strong grip on his presidency for 30 years until he stepped down in February 2011, yielding to the demands of millions of Egyptians participating in the revolution—the Egyptian Arab Spring. Having lived in Cairo during the early 1980’s and having experienced Cairo’s streets, people, politics, and historic events, David Ottaway, former Bureau Chief of the Washington Post in Cairo and currently a Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, describes Mubarak as a “highly cautious, unimaginative leader, maddeningly reactive rather than pro-active in dealing with the social and economic problems

overwhelming his nation” (p. 1). Post-Nasser’s Egypt “was a mess” as Mubarak inherited a country experiencing extraordinary economic instability, explosive population growth, and incredible poverty. Egypt continued to be highly criticized and shunned in the Arab world after signing the 1979 peace treaty with Israel, and thus it seemed Mubarak and Egypt at the time were facing a bleak future (Ottaway, 2011, p. 1-4). Mubarak’s pragmatism was overshadowed by his disabling cautiousness which directly resulted in a lack of economic reform after Sadat’s devastating Al Intifah policies and his “style became associated with lethargy, stillness, and lack of imagination” (Osman, 2013, p. 168).

Henderson and Ganguly (2015) discuss the regime’s declining legitimacy as the Mubarak regime’s ruling tactics, aimed at acquiring and maintaining legitimacy slowly, had an adverse effect which instead exposed growing illicit power. Over time Egyptians from a wide swath of backgrounds and classes witnessed the blatant rigging of elections, the slow movement towards a hereditary dictatorship, violent censorship of popular opposition voices, brutal treatment and relentless persecution of various segments of the Egyptian populace, a deteriorating infrastructure, endemic corruption among the ruling elite, abject poverty, a popular perception of a non-performing regime, and a disappearing social safety net which effected many. This would eventually contribute to the creation of an opposition message which would prove to unify many Egyptians in 2011.

Upon assuming power President Mubarak’s principle concern was the radicalization of middle ranking military conscripts, as it was a radicalized junior officer who assassinated his predecessor. Like Sadat, he set out to depoliticize the military and deradicalize the thread of militancy among conscripts who generally came from the urban and rural poor who had suffered greatly from the economic restructuring under Sadat and spent many years engaged in harsh

military training without receiving any form of promised rewards for their service. While the Mubarak government enacted a multitude of measures to help deal with radicalization, the regime ultimately failed to adequately address the social and economic issues underlying extremist ideologies growing in Egypt (Osman, 2013). He argues that the “real potency of militant Islam lay...in the thousands of young Egyptian Muslims who embraced the violent doctrine of its radical groups” (Osman, 2013, p. 96).

The most common trend, termed “neo-Salafiyya,” emerged in the 1970’s and resulted in three major Salafi movements, two non-violent movements in Alexandria and Cairo, and a violence-prone movement in Southern Egypt (Hoiguil & Nome, 2014, p. 37-38). These movements would make up the political parties post Arab Spring, with the non-violent Alexandria movement “al-Da’wa al-Salafia” being the most influential and most closely aligned with the largest Salafi party currently in Egypt—Hizb al-Nur. Through a network of 70-80 preachers, a long history of “cassette preachers,” satellite TV preachers, and an considerable measure of freedom from Mubarak not shared by other religious parties, “the neo-Salafis have had a significant impact on Egyptian social life, which has in many respects become steadily more conservative” (Hoiguil & Nome, 2014, p. 39). The Muslim Brotherhood rose in political prominence as at the same time the generation involved in the takeover of unions under Sadat entered the workforce and helped solidify the Brotherhood’s impact and influence in professional unions. In several elections during the mid-1980’s the Muslim Brothers created an “Islamic Alliance” with several less ideologically defined political parties in order to garner seats and secure its presence in parliament. As an organization, they set out to ensure a distinction from the militant Islamic groups who “portrayed their struggle with the regime as “war against Islam’...[and instead] extended its social reach and infrastructure [and built] a much more

developed political platform” that soon advanced into a viable and contentious opposition party to the regime by the early 2000’s. (Osman, 2013, pgs. 99-100). The Mubarak regime faced a variety of both violent and non-violent multifaceted Islamic oriented opposition groups which held considerable social and political power.

As such, Mubarak’s regime fell away from democratic practices and in order to secure his grip on the presidency, the regime fell into a stifling authoritarianism. Moreover, as Hashim (2011b) states, “one of the oddest characteristics of Egyptian authoritarianism was the inefficiency of its large coercive apparatus...[as] time and time again it failed to deal with low morale, poor training, and dismal pay that festered will into the twenty-first century” (p. 107). In an effort to ensure the Military’s loyalty, Mubarak granted an enormous amount of autonomy to officers to create and run Egypt’s lucrative military-industrial-business-commercial complex (MIBCC), and thereby also greatly expanding MIBCC in size and power. Even still the Egyptian military elite and the nouveaux riches of the liberal class maintained a severe disconnect from the rest of Egyptian society, which bred popular resentment and fueled antigovernment demonstrations and riots. The everyday Egyptian experienced new kinds of economic troubles created by high inflation, serious industrial unrest and worsening social inequality resulting in an enormous rise in worker strikes—600 in 2009, all demanding higher wages and/or job security (Ottaway, 2010, p. 7). The new Egyptian economy facilitated prosperity for the upper class alone, absent of any “trickle down’ to the bottom of society. In fact, the opposite had happened: the proportion of Egyptians living below the poverty line had increased, and 44 percent of the population was now trying to survive on less than \$2 a day...[and] one quarter of Egypt’s 80 million people had become dependent on charity for survival...another 40 percent hovered just above the poverty line” (Ottaway, 2010, p. 7).

The culture of protest in Egypt flared among Egyptian workers, both male and female. Beinin (2012) argues that the prominent participation of Egyptian workers through demonstrations is due to their “outrage...over daily humiliation, abuse, and torture by police and other internal security forces; massive corruption in all spheres of public administration...; inflation and the rising cost of living; unemployment concentrated among youth; declining standards of public social services; and foreign policies subservient to the interests of the United States and Israel” (p. 323). As demonstrations intensified greatly under Mubarak, Egyptians everywhere “accused him of being the cause of ‘our [Egyptian] backwardness’ and the ‘protector of the powerful and corrupt’” (Osman, 2013, p. 186). According to Beinin (2012) from 1998 to 2010 there were 3,400 to 4,000 strikes and other forms of collective action with up to 4 million Egyptian workers in participation (p. 326). More specifically, a series of mandates created to accelerate the neoliberal transformation of the Egyptian economy, the sell-off of the public sector, and a still stagnant private sector, prompted a spike in collective actions after 2004, and by 2007 the workers movement encompassed nearly every industrial sector (Beinin, 2012, p. 326). Significant to this movement were women workers, “who previously...participated in collective actions mainly in an auxiliary capacity, become increasingly assertive and in cases become prominent activists and even spokespersons” (Ricciardone 2008; Beinin 2010, 71-27 as cited in Beinin, 2012, p. 327). The military’s role in any counterinsurgency campaign was limited as was their role in domestic intervention. This became primarily the role of Egypt’s ruthless security and intelligence apparatus, the General Directorate for State Security Investigations (GDSSI), whose modus operandi was ““bludgeoning the opponents of the state to death”” (Hashim, 2011b, p.110). This was a group whose actions were notorious and only helped justify resentment and extremist ideologies. As Egypt entered the twenty-first century, despite

the regime's efforts to brutally maintain control of its own citizens and buy military loyalty, the economic and social problems overwhelmed Mubarak's struggle for stability. Furthermore, as demonstrations in some instances brought about substantial economic gains to meet the demands of demonstrators, even if those gains remained industry specific, as Bein (2012) argues "the lesson that the workers could organize themselves independently...strike with relative impunity, and win was established...[and] emboldened the workers movement" (p. 330). The movement facilitated occasions for exercise in participatory democracy, and it played a large role in the emergent culture of protest in Egypt, which contributed greatly to the eroding legitimacy of the Mubarak regime. As this culture of protest reached and influenced various sectors of Egyptian industry, many strikes began to connect wage and industry specific demands to a wider calls of political resistance, and when industry specific demands were met, those victories were tied to the idea of new political possibilities.

The worker's movement also presents a telling narrative of changes in the performance of gender roles in the Egyptian economy as there was a dramatic increase in the number of women in industrial manufacturing jobs in the 2000's. Also, as the participation of women during the workers movement expanded, the demands for better wages and fair treatment that comprised the major themes within the workers movement contributed to a shift in the perception of women's rights, emboldening many women to demand their rights, and in some instances, give their lives in process. Furthermore, many women, like Esraa Abdel Fattah and the April 6th Youth movement, and Asmaa Mafouz and her call to action via Youtube, have been credited with immense contributory roles in several of the movements directly linked to the protests spearheading the fall of the Mubarak regime. The April 6th youth movement in 2008 was the first

Egyptian attempt at Facebook politics. The resulting demonstrations grew and were met with violent repression by regime-hired thugs.

In January of 2011, emboldened by the successes of the social movement and revolution in Tunisia, Cairenes gathered in Tahrir Square, demanding “an end to the incumbent regime and the promotion of freedom, justice, responsive civilian government, and effective management of state resources” (Hashim, 2011b, p. 115). In an effort to survive the uprisings, the regime offered cosmetic changes to the existing political system but did not concede to democratization. Invigorated by the power in their numbers, protestors remained steadfast in their demand for a total removal of the system and through appealing to the moral stature of the military, they successfully persuaded the armed forces to stand with their demands and forced Mubarak to step down from office and formally hand over power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) on February 11, 2011. Egyptian armed forces earned praise for the relatively quick and mostly bloodless transition of power and their promise to give Egyptians a country under civilian rule. The defection of the Egyptian military from the Mubarak regime, whether in support of popular civilian demands, or for self-preservation, was a pivotal moment in the uprisings and significantly contributed to Mubarak’s ouster. During the demonstrations both the military and police were called upon to restore order but instead defected from Mubarak, some resigning from service during the protests, and others resigning all together. Without the military Mubarak lost his most powerful internal ally and it is thought that the generals were the final persuading voice demanding his step down. The formation of a broad-based unified opposition wherein religious and political differences were set aside in favor of anti-Mubarak Egyptian patriotism made for a uniquely indivisible protesting force. Moreover, these movements were peaceful and non-violent, and protestors organized neighborhood watches to ensure looting and violence would not

disrupt their presence or corrupt their message. The decision to remain nonviolent helped cement the military's decision to defect, as they felt that violence against masses of peaceful protestors would delegitimize the military entirely ushering in a civil war (Henderson and Ganguly, 2015, p. 49-53). Mubarak's ouster after 18 days of relatively peaceful civilian protests and after nearly three decades of authoritarian rule created a new hope for a democratized Egypt; however this has not yet transpired because of continued rampant corruption, violent censorship, and human rights abuses that continue to plague Egyptian politics.

POST MUBARAK, PRESIDENT MORSI, & PRESIDENT SISI

After Mubarak's ouster in 2011, Egyptian hopes of democratic rule were high as the military ruling elite promised to usher in a new era of representative governance. While the revolution in Tahrir square that forcibly removed Mubarak from power was a broad based and unified movement, fissures among many of Egypt's most significant voices in the opposition began to arise quickly after his removal. Specifically, Selim (2015) argues "that the United States, the SCAF, and the Muslim Brotherhood emerged in post-Mubarak Egypt as a triangle of counter-revolution that sought to abort the newly emerging revolutionary aspirations in order to protect their interests, in turn leading to the rise of a new form of authoritarianism characterized by changes in state structure, coalitions, policies, and legitimation" (p. 178). The Mubarak regime was among the most important regional allies for the US, largely based on the regime's support of the US invasion of Iraq, the US policy to isolate Iran, as well as its endorsement of the American-Israeli approach to regional politics by significant policies benefiting Israel and isolating Palestine. As such, the US first stood by Mubarak during the January uprisings but like the Egyptian military itself, quickly defected and endorsed the regime change, effectively sacrificing Mubarak in the hopes of retaining influence within the region soon after (Selim, 2015,

p. 178; Henderson and Ganguly, 2015, p. 50). Selim (2015) explains that the American strategy enacted to maintain significant regional influence needed to protect American interests through the creation of a “tacit alliance with anti-revolutionary local forces [which] included (i) the military...and (ii) the Muslim Brotherhood” (p. 179). The US quickly endorsed SCAF once it took power, maintaining the level of annual military aid under the new power structure; this financial persuasion would prove to be detrimental to any real transformation of Egyptian foreign policy since SCAF’s interests to remain in power overshadowed and consciously thwarted any real transition towards a genuine democracy.

At the onset of this transition, SCAF created a short-lived sociopolitical partnership with the Muslim Brotherhood in order to capitalize upon the Islamic group’s popularity for the country’s first democratic election. This partnership resulted in the passage of many amendments solidifying power for both parties and effectively discriminating against the interests of the youth movements behind the uprising. According to Roll (2015) “instead of creating a broad revolutionary front with other political forces and mobilized youth to implement an entirely new political framework, the Muslim Brothers as well as other Islamist groups opted for quick elections, counting on their organizational strength to win substantial shares of the vote” (p. 27). Consequently, during Egypt’s national election Islamists secured 70% the vote, and more than 80% of seats in council elections (Selim, 2015, p. 182). Only under severe pressure from Cairenes did SCAF make certain, limited concessions in governance and resorted to repressive measures to suppress revolutionary, civil society groups, and labor movements. Citing Human Rights Watch, Selim (2015) states that SCAF “repressed more than the number who faced military trials during the 30-year rule of Mubarak” (p. 184). As a result of the the power-sharing arrangement between SCAF and the Brotherhood the Brotherhood was used to pass policies,

elect officials, hold seats, boycott anti-SCAF movements, and denounce Tahrir Square protesters in a bid for power that bolstered a divide from left revolutionary and liberal forces. Similarly while the Brotherhood won considerable representation in parliament, through deft political maneuvering SCAF ensured the resulting political system would help ensure the military could maintain and expand institutional control by steering economic policy to benefit their own operations and ensuring that major political parties participating in the new electoral regime would support the military's immunity from budgetary oversight (Marshall, 2015, p. 6).

In 2012, this arrangement began to fall apart as each side became suspicious of the other and the Brotherhood began to rebrand itself as an "alternative, yet reliable US ally" (Selim, 2015, p. 187), distancing itself from SCAF, and prompting its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) at home and in Washington, to promise to uphold the maintenance of US interests. This move was essential in garnering international support and legitimacy when Mohammed Morsi, the FJP candidate, eventually won the national vote for Egypt's first democratically elected presidency in June 2012, despite various allegations of voter fraud. The US-Brotherhood alliance proved to be detrimental to any genuine democratic transition, since the US immediately backed the Morsi regime, which soon proved to be loyal to the US, and loyal to Egypt's authoritarian state structure, which Selim (2015) terms "Brotherhoodization," keeping the power structure, replacing key posts, and engaging in similar repressive practices. Because of a series of policy changes which attempted to steer power away from SCAF and secure the Brotherhood and Morsi's grip on power, large protests ignited, which included revolutionaries who felt that the Brotherhood hijacked their movement, labor forces, and a number of other opposition parties. The months following the Morsi regime were troublesome, violent, and alarming, as it became clear basic democratic freedoms were unimproved at best, absent at worst.

Under Morsi there were a series of large-scale demonstrations calling for his removal from office and large scale demonstrations in support of his presidency, which truly highlighted the divisions among political parties as well as ideological divisions among everyday Egyptians. In a troubling series of demonstrations in favor of Morsi's removal from office, and counter demonstrations in favor of the elected President culminated in what Human Rights Watch described as one of the most bloody incidents of mass unlawful killings of largely peaceful protesters in recent history during the raids on the protest camps established by Mursi [sic] supporters in central Cairo and Giza (Roll, 2015, p. 33). This use of state violence against Morsi supporters, known as the Rabaa Massacre, foretold the depth and gravity of the political divide among Morsi, the FJP, and SCAF. Less than one month after the Rabaa Massacre, SCAF under the leadership of Defense Minister General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, lead a military coup' which ended Morsi's presidency, suspended the current constitution, and placed Egypt's High Constitutional Court in charge of leading the country until new presidential elections took place. Morsi, other senior members of the FJP and Brotherhood were arrested, as were thousands of other individuals, all for political reasons. Soon Sisi would resign from the army to undertake a successful bid for presidency, and in May 2014, he was officially sworn into office, resulting in another era of military rule in Egypt.

CONCLUSION

From foreign rule by the Ottomans and Turks and occupation by the British, to the rise of Military rule after Nasser, the Egyptian story is full of rampant corruption from the privileged ruling elite whose principle interests remain self-preservation above all else. Each regime has an astounding history of human right abuses, violent repression of opposition voices, and with the exception of Nasser's early years, a failure to encompass Egypt's poor in its own attempted

success story. Since Nasser's overthrow of the British in 1952, Egypt's military establishment has ensured its prominence within the deep state and all major economic sectors, and by this means has endured the many decades of regime and ideological changes. The military establishment is without a doubt Egypt's most influential and longstanding institution of which every leader has relied upon to maintain power.

Nasser's Pan Arab project was Egypt's grandest and most encompassing project in its contemporary history. It was a project which freed Egypt from British influence, brought about hope for democratic governance, and ushered in the remarkable shifting of wealth which took millions of Egyptians out of abject landless poverty. At the same time, Nasser's grandiose projects could not be sustained without substantial foreign investments and allies from a Western facing global economy, of which Nasser had none. Moreover, his failure to contain a Western backed Israel shattered his image and thus his vision for Egypt. Finally, Nasser's brutal silencing of Egypt's moderate Islamic organizations proved to have tremendous adverse effects on a core element of the Egyptian psyche, shifting liberal and enlightened Islamic thinking to rejectionist and literal extremist thinking.

Sadat's swift movement towards capitalism reoriented Egypt to the West and showed promise as he could have seized an opportunity to welcome global influence, democratic values, and reopen society to liberal thinking. Sadat initially allowed opposition voices and political debate, and the rescinding of Nasser's forcible exile of the Muslim Brotherhood showed promise. His regime, however, soon engaged in state violence to silence serious opposition and any real democratic shift in governance was quickly overshadowed by crony capitalism. Sadat's Al Intifah policies favored Egypt's ruling elite which resulted in the marginalization of public

sector and mounting poor living conditions which, coupled with state violence, only invigorated the violent Islamic sentiment whose influence came during the years of exile in Saudi Arabia.

Mubarak's lack of vision and stagnant leadership meant more of the same for the Egypt's middle class and poor. Mubarak's lack of foresight made for a slow and unadapting regime which failed to keep up with the global influences changing its own constituency. Mubarak was removed by popular voice, only to have his regime come full circle and reenter political rule less than three years later, through President Sisi. Former President Morsi remains detained in Egyptian prison and his term was so short lived that it remains difficult to know what impact the FJP may have had on the country. Unfortunately, the FJP's few months in office seemed to follow a similar path of human rights violations, crony capitalist alliances, and the same deep state power structures. It remains unknown as to whether the FJP would have made sociopolitical reforms or concessions in the direction of the original demands of the 2011 revolution.

Everyday Egyptians in Egypt's contemporary sociopolitical history have had a tremendous impact on their own story, even if oftentimes regime changes take the headline. The nostalgia that surrounds Nasser's rule is due to the minds and voices of the everyday Egyptian that loved or hated him. He was Egypt's first Egyptian ruler and for that, people rallied behind him like no other leader in modern Egyptian history. Sadat's rule was ended by a violent yet clearly relevant popular sentiment growing among the Egypt populace. Violent Islamic notions crept its way into moderate Islamic thought at the grassroots level and took root in the despair experienced among many Egyptians. Mubarak's removal from office is a quintessential illustration of the everyday Egyptian's voice surfacing with great power. Egypt's people have demonstrated in large numbers for decades, and they have mobilized movements and forced regime change despite a long history of suppression and state violence. While the military

institution in Egypt remains in power, it is also clear that Egyptians themselves can and do become active and have considerable agency. As the Egyptian story has revealed, in a globalized and digital world, silencing a *woke* people can result in significant consequences for the ruling elite, who cannot rule in isolation of its own people.

Chapter 3: Literature Review and Theoretical Background

INTRODUCTION

This project is largely influenced and shaped after Grabill and Pigg's (2012) "Messy Rhetoric: Identity Performance as Rhetorical Agency in Online Public Forums." While seemingly far afield from the topic of this dissertation, the theoretical framework of disciplinary regimes set forth within Koerber's (2009) "Rhetorical Agency, Resistance, and the Disciplinary Rhetorics of Breastfeeding" was also largely influential. Grabill and Pigg's (2012) article analyzes rhetorical activity in Science Buzz, a large, online public forum. Their research centers upon identity performances and the resulting rhetorical agency and argues that in the "context of open forums like Science Buzz...identity performances are crucial as rhetorical agencies, creating space as they function to move discussion" (99). Along the same vein, this project has investigated the identity performances of Egyptian demonstrators as found on Twitter over the course of 18 days during the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring which ousted President Mubarak.

The political movements surrounding oppression under dictatorial or theocratic rule have facilitated an outlet for various threads of sociopolitical resistance, many of which are digital. Observing identity performances in this space has brought to light an understanding of the cultural and sociopolitical framework of the Egyptian resistance movements both online, and to some capacity, offline as well. Twitter has allowed for a deepened understanding of the rhetorical choices these demonstrators have made and continue to make online which, at the time, transcended religious and class differences resulting in an "Egyptian" sense of solidarity. In turn, this may lead to addressing the link between the performative and the transformative—essentially, performativity realized within the Egyptian context.

Koerber (2006) discusses the rhetorical agency found in the negotiation of alternative discourses, like those facilitated by online spaces for example. She argues that access to alternative information or alternative discourses, presents a sense of new or alternative options to mainstream discourse. People presented with alternative options thus have some sense of agency through the ability to choose and reimagine new outcomes. Furthermore, while this form of rhetorical agency “grants individuals some ability to reject discursive elements that they find problematic...this type of rhetorical agency does not necessarily allow subjects to escape the ideological force of institutional discourses” (94). She argues for an application of Foucauldian notions of disciplinary regimes, present and governing in contextual circumstance, but transferred outside of context, thus creating resistance. Resistance, theorized through this lens, applied to the acts of digital performance, performative agency and resistance of the demonstrators in Egypt, has provided a framework for inquiry into the movement from performative to transformative, directly linked to concepts of transgressive performances. Moreover, she states “to understand...acts of resistance, we need to see evidence that they [women] can disrupt disciplinary power even without escaping its grip” (Koerber, 2006, p. 96). The affordances of online communication facilitate varied performances within the existing normative structure without any obvious disruption. Theorized under Butler’s conception of performativity, however, reveals that perhaps these performances in digital space can become transformative, and can result in performativity realized.

THE ARAB SPRING, EGYPT IN FOCUS

As contemporary history records, Egypt’s demonstrators took to the streets and after 18 days, Mubarak was ousted. For the first time in over three decades Egyptians experienced a monumental change in government which brought with it the hope for new possibilities.

Egyptian demonstrators' use of new media, particularly social media was savvy and extraordinarily persuasive in a multitude of ways for a wide swath of perceived audiences. While Egypt has a long rich history of people's resistance, the popularity of this movement took the regime and the world by surprise, and soon social media was flooding with hashtags and posts reporting and chronicling the movement. This dissertation project is focused upon the conversations within these spaces, on Twitter specifically, where people engaged in discourse amongst locals, amongst others in the wider MENA region, and amongst westerners. Overtime, digital discourse engaged new ideas and dissenting socio-political thoughts, crafted shifting identities individually and collectively, refashioned new possibilities and futures community wide, and resulted in a remarkably successful large-scale mobilization campaign. This research asks the following questions:

What can rhetors learn about the rhetorical functions of identity performance and its role in understanding rhetorical agency through the rhetoric and resistance of the digital discourses on Twitter by demonstrators during Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring?

What can rhetors learn about the productive force of the performative in digital space, and its connections to transformative notions of reimagined or refashioned identities and futures?

The following literature review will provide demographic information regarding Egypt's population and new media penetration, followed by a comprehensive overview of current themes regarding the use of various new and social media and its influence during revolution as theorized. The use and impact of Twitter is of particular focus as Tweets are the data source for this dissertation and blogging and microblogging are theorized to have been important spaces for dissenting discourse. A brief overview spotlighting women and their contributions follows, as

research would indicate that women played a valuable role in utilizing social media to participate digitally or engage in cyberactivism, which is explored at length in the following section.

Finally, this review concludes with theories of identity and performance.

Information Communication Technologies, Social Networking Sites, and Resistance

The introduction and use of new or digital media in relation to the Arab Spring has been studied to varying extents. Findings are insightful but the details of usage remain broadly inconclusive. Some authors have focused on the introduction and use of a wide range of media, while others have approached the topic with a more narrow focus (i.e., social media usage). The most prominent sentiment found across the large majority of the research indicates that social media facilitated a “safe-space” for discussion, offering perspectives and furthering knowledge, disseminating messages and plans for organization, but it was not the igniting force nor the sustaining force of their movement, but rather is was a necessary and useful tool. When theorizing upon the role of the internet in the Arab Spring, Khamis and Vaugh (2011), citing Pauluseen (2008) add, “it is not realistic to exaggerate the power of new media technologies in a way that reflects —technological determinism, which —falls short in considering the social, cultural and economic contextual factors (para 25; p. 28).” Moreover, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) argue “by repeatedly putting the Internet corporations—Facebook, Twitter, and the like—at the center, it seemed as if particular Western characteristics were artificially being inserted into a genuine popular Arab revolution. Such an approach also ignores the decades-long history of social and political protest in Egypt...” (p. 1346). On that note, it is especially important to understand the revolution for which new technology was both relevant and impactful within the context of the Egyptian people, who have a very long history of foreign and domestic

dictatorship and resistance under oppression. The many facets of resistance utilized during the uprisings of 2011 are a testament to a revolutionary spirit long cultivated prior their Arab Spring.

The penetration of internet use in the broader Arab region and in Egypt specifically may have once lagged Western use; however, lower cost of internet access and mobile technology have helped boost usage overall. Some authors have provided a more specific technological profile, like Ghannam (2011) who outlined the importance of social media usage and citizen engagement on the Internet and forecasted a following of 100 million Arab users by 2015. The author argues that “to peruse the Arab social media sites, blogs, online videos, and other digital platforms is to witness what is arguably the most dramatic and unprecedented improvement in freedom of expression, association, and access to information in contemporary Arab history” (Ghannam, 2011). Some key findings concerning the surge in social media usage included the following:

- As of 2011, nearly 17 million people in the Arab region use Facebook.
- Five million Egyptians are on Facebook
- Over 50% of the population in Egypt is under the age of 25 and is of the “net generation”
(p.6)
- Governments are developing the infrastructure to meet the demands of the digital economies and youth, who make up about half of the regional population.
- Increased governmental efforts to control use form part of the changing environment, including the passing of laws intended to regulate the Internet.
- Some Arab government officials and politicians are using the technological platforms to engage with constituents in a positive, proactive manner.
- Online news popularity is increasing and expected to grow.

- There is a drive to provide quality news, video stories, forums, and art/culture centered information using social media platforms.

At the time of writing this chapter current and accurate data was hard to find. With that said however, using the data available and referencing the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) note Egypt has 23 million broadband Internet users and 9 million mobile-phone Internet users. Roughly 80% of households have mobile phones and 30% of households have access to the Internet. The authors estimate that within a decade, the majority of the population will be internet users (p.1347). Howard et al. (2105) adds, “in Egypt...the median age is 24, 33 percent of the country’s 83 million inhabitants is under the age of 14. Cell use is widespread...[with] 67 mobile phones for every 100 people in Egypt” (p. 5). The author also notes that “10 percent of the population has used the internet at least once” (p. 6). Citing the Dubai School of Government (2012), Klischewski (2014) states, “the number of active Twitter users in the whole Arab region was estimated just above 2 million at the end of June 2012...with Egypt having reported more than 100,000 Twitter users” (p. 329). Moreover, according to Howard et al. (2015) “in Egypt, democracy advocates benefited from the fact that Cairo is not only a cultural hub, it is also a media center with a reasonably robust information infrastructure. This has enabled the city’s politically disaffected, but still active, youth and others to build a vibrant public sphere online” (p. 6). Egypt’s “net generation” is young, has more access to the internet and wide access to mobile technology, is technologically savvy, and as evident in the uprisings, politically interested.

Before theorizing upon the roles of social media during the Arab Spring, much of the research has pointedly differentiated between traditional media and social media. For instance, Klischewski (2014) argues “social media are different to preexisting media types as they support

not only content consumption but also content provision and relationship building through massively decentralized usage” (p. 360). Similarly, Howard and Parks (2012) state that “design choices and infrastructure both shape and are shaped by users’ social activities in ways that far transcend the traditional categories of users and gratification theories” (p. 362). Continuing, the authors offer a structural definition of social media which includes: “(a) the information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content; (b) the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products; and (c) the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content” (Howard & Parks, p. 362). If social media is to be understood along these definitions, namely that social media is both created and consumed by its users, and thus users are both shaped by and shape social media, then it is important to not only understand the way social media was used by demonstrators and audiences alike, but to understand how this has changed ways of thinking and being in both online and offline spaces. It is important to try and understand the roles of social media in terms of physical use and physical consequences as the Egyptian revolution is an event of international consequential grandeur, but it is equally important to try and understand the ways the spaces facilitated via the internet, social networking sites (SNS), has allowed people to navigate and negotiate notions of identity, actions, possible outcomes, and perceived futures.

Klischewski’s (2014) four categories of research show some common trends regarding the roles attributed to social media during the Arab Spring, namely: “Cause,” “Catalyst,” “Tool or tactics,” and “Just as any media” meaning “the history of revolutions and all other uprisings show that activists always utilize the media of their time” (p. 360). These categories do not imply isolation from each other, but rather integration with each other or, as Klischewski (2014) states “social activists and influencer tend to act across all media, whatever fits best the circumstances

at hand...[and] the integration across media itself adds new potentials” (p.360). The following section borrows and expands upon Klischewski’s (2014) four categories.

Cause: Klischewski (2014) uses this term to indicate a trend in the research which suggests a causal relationship between protestors and political awareness and/or mobilization, or the capacity of social media to humanize the people and ideas behind the movement. Howard et al. (2015) argue “...technologies have helped people interested in democracy build extensive networks, create social capital, and organize political action” (p. 5). These technologies not only expedited civic organization and political action, but were also crucial in creating a trustworthy narrative which would soon become visible at home and abroad, and also became an important source of morale serving to garner support in unprecedented numbers.

Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) set out to understand the various aspects and impacts of reporting outlets, namely Egypt’s semiofficial newspapers, independent newspapers, and social media and how they interpreted the events of the uprisings in order to create information for public consumption to influence public opinion (p. 195-196). Their findings show that the semiofficial newspapers predominantly framed the uprising as a conflict, and the demonstrators as “unemployed thugs, foreign conspirators, and delinquent and violent youth who did not have the national good at heart” (p. 198). Independent newspapers were more mixed, with 40% using a conflict frame, 40% used a human-interest frame, but also “neither treated the event as a revolution nor did they overtly support the regime” (p. 200). Notably however, social media used an overwhelmingly predominate human interest frame (80%), displaying language in favor of the demonstrators, giving weight to loss of life and human suffering, and calling for the police forces to be held responsible (p. 201). Social media humanized the revolution in Egypt for Egyptians, ensuring a narrative favoring demonstrators would exist and counter the narrative deployed by

the regime. As social media creation and consumption portrayed the struggle as Egyptian for Egyptians, it gained immense popularity at home and “it became evident that social media (despite a 5-day shutdown of Egypt’s Internet access) function as a news and analysis source for many Egyptians in the absence of dependable mainstream sources. Trust in social media appeared to soar during the crisis” (Hamdy and Gomaa, 2012, p. 203). Social media mainly framed the cause of the uprisings as a result of dictatorial and oppressive rule and corruption of the state, with injustice and oppression mentioned somewhat less frequently. The single most common solution called for the resignation of Mubarak, followed by the elimination of state security, and the end of state controls on communication and the internet as well (p. 204-206).

Moreover, as demonstrators experienced violence by the regime in an effort to deter further gathering, the narrative created via social media served to help keep morale high; as Wilson and Dunn (2011) note, “Twitter was widely viewed...as a key resource for getting information to the outside world, perpetuating the feeling that the world was watching, which was an important factor for morale and coordination on the ground” (pgs. 1251-1252). Social media reporting and storytelling reinforced the rising humanized narrative of the demonstrators at home and to an international audience; it helped ensure local and international awareness; and it promoted morale and helped maintain numbers and improved recruitments.

Catalyst: Klischewski (2014) uses this term to identify the trends which indicate social media served as a catalyst, helping to accelerate the revolution. Specifically, the author states that “this capability is mainly attributed to social media being more socially embedded and difficult to control compared to preexisting media” (p. 360). While Egypt has a long history of state controlled media Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) state that a more pluralistic media scene developed under Mubarak, and Egypt saw the “appearance of private satellite television stations,

the emergency of media privatization, [and] the birth of independent newspapers” (p. 195) and access to the internet consequently resulted in amplifying the voices of Egyptian activists.

Howard et al. (2015) found that social media played a central role in shaping the political debates in the Arab Spring; revolutionary conversations spiked preceding major events on the ground; and social media helped spread democratic ideas across international borders (pgs. 1-3). Identifying the value of the spaces facilitated online, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) argue “that for an important layer of activists and participants in the January 25 uprising, internet spaces served a crucial function as spheres of dissidence where collective critiques of the existing political and social order were articulated in the immediate prerevolutionary period” (p. 1344). For example, Schroder, Everton, and Shepard (2012) suggest cyberactivists on Twitter were able to successfully frame grievances “in such a way that people recognize they share them with others, and that together they can do something about them,” essentially creating an “insurgent consciousness” contributing to a sense of unity and urgency online needed for collective action offline. Internet spaces not only facilitated a place for public dissent, but research suggest the networks formed in these spaces served to expedite the revolution on the ground; as Stepanova (2011) argues, “information and communication networks can serve as powerful accelerators of social transformation” (p. 2).

Interestingly, once the Mubarak regime truly grasped the power and value of the internet and mobile technologies among demonstrators, in a move to control communication, they shut down cell phone and internet service for five consecutive days. This act of restriction served to further accelerate civic participation online and on the streets. According to Khamis and Vaughn (2011) the blackout served to further mobilize Egyptians as they felt empowered that their voices were indeed threatening the regime for such severe action to be warranted. It also helped many

transition from digital participation to physical participation, and as the digital venue was no longer and easy option for political participation, they joined the demonstrations physically. Along the same vein, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) state that “it infuriated many who felt it was time to take a stand or force some who had so far at most been involved in cyberspace but now were prompted to join the street protests, adding to the growing numbers of protesters. And as most activists mentioned, it sent an important signal about the balance of power: namely that the regime was threatened. Unexpected opportunities were also noticed, as being offline allowed one to focus” (1350).

Once service returned, there was a surge in mobile uploads and online participation (Hamamsy, 2011, p. 461). More specifically, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) note that “Egypt gained more than 600,000 new Facebook users between January and February 2011 alone. On the day the Internet switched back on (February 2), 100,000 users joined this social networking space and it became the most accessed website in the country (followed by YouTube and Google)” (p.1348). Internet spaces, and participatory spaces like social media, became “sphere[s] of dissidence” (Aouragh & Alexander, 2011, p. 1348), and Axford (2011), who borrows Nancy Fraser’s (1987) concept of “subaltern counter cultures” (p. 124), views these “counter cultures as ‘parallel discursive arenas’ where members of marginalized, or previously silent, social groups invoke and circulate oppositional discourses (1987, p. 123)” (p. 682). For Egypt, subaltern counter cultures were fostered via online participatory spaces and in “social networking sites in particular [there] formed an online public space for political discussion where opinions were shaped and at times decision were taken. The collective nature of dissent was highly visible in online environments” (Aouragh & Alexander, 2011, p. 1348). Khamis and Vaughn (2011) state that the missing link between political dissatisfaction and public mobilization was “political

action in the real world, aided by cyberactivism in the virtual world” (p. 10). Research suggests then, that participatory spaces online facilitated civic discussions online, which impacted civic participation offline both directly and indirectly. These spaces served as a catalyst among Egypt’s voices of dissent prior the revolution and during the revolution, but particularly sticking is the impact felt during the internet and cell phone service blackout wherein the ideas and momentum shaped in these spaces not only continued to exist, but grew outside of digital sphere.

Tools or tactics: Klischewski (2014) use this theme to describe the vein of research which argues that “that social media have been a decisive tool for information sharing, opinion building, mobilization, and coordination of action (Khondker 2011; Youmans & York, 2012)” (p. 360). This theme is the most prevalent among researchers and is closely connected to the all of Klischewski’s (2014) categories and especially within the concept of citizen journalism, or the capacity for ordinary citizens to use digital media tools to report on events on the ground themselves, via Internet upload and sharing capacities (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011), which will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

Khondker (2011) is cautious about the overestimation of social media’s impact, emphasizing a more conservative view of its role as a tool used by demonstrators. However, Khondker (2011) also states that the role of new media was invaluable in the Arab Spring as the new media’s globalization provided for horizontal connectivity in social mobilization and signaling. The author defines globalization as the “complex social, economic, and technological process [that] can be viewed in terms of the spread and wider availability of communications technology which intensifies connectivity” (p. 675) and argues that globalization is often facilitated by the government and corporate interests who, paradoxically, end up facilitating civic activism. Stepanova (2011) also cautions against any overestimation regarding the role of social media, but

also suggests that in Egypt, where bloggers numbered 160,000 with 30 percent of blogs focusing on politics (p. 2), social media served to encourage less violent forms of mass protest and was “effective as a grassroots tool to bring down an authoritarian regime” (p. 6) Specifically, the author found that “the input of the social media networks was critical in performing two overlapping functions: (a) organizing the protests and (b) disseminating information about them, including publicizing protesters’ demands internationally...” (Stepanova, 2011, p. 2). Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) argue that social media was a driving force in successful anti-government protests and as exemplified in the case of Egypt, served as a tool for debating, organizing, and planning—a critical and innovative resource used for collective action. Similarly, El Hamamsy (2011) states that social media played an unprecedented role through mobilization, enlistment, circulation and dissemination of information (p. 445).

More specifically, Khamis and Vaughn (2011) focus on the use of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube by demonstrators, arguing that “these new types of media acted as effective tools for promoting civic engagement, through supporting the capabilities of the democratic activists by allowing forums for free speech and political networking opportunities; providing a virtual space for assembly; and supporting the capability of the protestors to plan, organize, and execute peaceful protests” (para. 1). According to Howard et al. (2015) “Facebook became a political tool because people found it useful for amassing content and building links to like-minded individuals” (p. 7). Furthermore, these authors connect the use of social media online as a tool used to create a call to action offline, stating “they found social media, and then used their mobile phones to call their social networks into the street” (Howard et al., 2015, p. 16). Along this vein, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) state “during the early stages, Twitter in particular provided a mechanism by which contacts could be made between activists and journalists... (p.

1352). Khamis and Vaughn (2011) argue technology was a powerful tool, describing it as a “technological weapon” which can be used to continue to exercise their agency and capabilities, empower themselves, and mobilize their public will” (para 29).

While the Mubarak regime was slow to recognize the threat and impact of mobile technologies and social media use, the regime attempted to operationalize their message and create divisions among Egyptians through the same technologies. Hamamsy (2011) details the use of SMS by powerful regime loyalists through mass texts, even when cell phone services were limited at best, calling for support of Mubarak through demonstrations and protection against “Egypt’s traitors,” seemingly attempting to place Egyptians in two camps, Mubarak supporters in the “Egypt Lovers” camp and everyone else in the “traitors” camp (p. 461-462). Regarding the use of social media, Howard et al. (2015) notes that “the Egyptian security services began using Facebook and Twitter as a source of information for a counter-insurgency strategy. They used social media alerts to anticipate the movement of individual activists” (p. 16). The value of mobile technologies and social media use would soon find recognition among the very forces in which it was utilized to effectively oust.

Just as any media: Klischewski (2014) states this vein of research cautions against attributing any “unique influence to social media” during the revolution and cautions against the assumption of “a direct relationship of causality between social media and political change” (p. 360). Instead, the theme of this research highlights the value of context and the depths of time and environment. Aouragh and Alexander (2011) argue that “if our objective is to challenge power, then platitudes do not help us understand the dual character of the Internet: It empowers and disempowers. What seems to be a paradox is actually the normal contradiction of capitalist society, precisely because the Internet is not a subject with independent characteristics but an

object shaped by the social environment in which it is embedded”(p. 1352). Similarly, Stepanova (2011) acknowledges the impact of social media use in Egypt and Tunisia, for example, but also cautions against any inherent attributes, stating that the “impact is as not universal or unconditional” but rather proposes that “the mobilizing effect of new information and social media networks as catalysts of broad sociopolitical protest will vary significantly from region to region and from one political context to another. The presence of multiple underlying causes for sociopolitical protest will not suffice for new information and communication networks to become a major catalyst” (p. 3). Research here then implores an understanding of revolutionary movements and technology as deeply contextual, arguing that the consequences of civic participation cannot be solely attributed to access to the internet, mobile technologies, or social media alone, even in light of large scale political discord in any particular country.

In addition to Klischewski’s (2014) categories, the concept of the “citizen journalist” appears frequently throughout much of the research both indirectly and directly. Social media facilitated the capacity for ordinary citizens to use digital media tools to report on events on the ground themselves, via Internet upload and sharing capacities. Tufeki and Wilson (2012) state that “one of the most striking consequences of the new system of political communication has been the emergence of the citizen journalist, a person who may or may not have a history of activism, but suddenly appears to convey critical information to the public at a crucial moment” (p. 373). Along this vein, Hansen (2012) asserts “Facebook [was] used to organize collective actions, and Twitter [was] used to broadcast events as they happen making the actor a citizen journalist” (p. 9). More specifically, Tufeki and Wilson (2012) surveyed roughly 1200 demonstrators in Egypt, and their findings indicate that “almost half (48.2%) the respondents had produced and disseminated video or pictures from political protest in the streets” (p. 373).

Research suggests that new media was especially important as it enabled cyberactivism, encouraged civic engagement, and promoted citizen journalism through which trustworthy and timely information was available.

Khamis and Vaughn (2011) argue that access to digital media and the internet gave citizen journalists a voice and thus power. Through digital media tools, citizens are not only afforded some capacity to participate, but are thought to be “capable of intelligent judgement, mature understanding, and rational choices if offered the opportunity” (pg.7; Rosen, 1994, p. 18). Moreover, citizen journalism became a primary source for factual information on the ground as state run news reporting, which was already perceived with a great deal of distrust, was no longer the only source of information. The value of SNS and citizen journalism was not lost upon activists, wherein again, research shows that they went to great lengths to be online and to report to both domestic and international audiences. Citizen journalism helped ensure that there was an alternative narrative, oriented in the filming, streaming, blogging, and tweeting of events both large and small while in the thick of the protests, to challenge the narrative broadcast by the regime.

Insights from Twitter

This section will provide more pointed insight regarding the use and impact of Twitter use among demonstrators in Egypt during the 2011 uprisings. Prior to the Arab Spring, Twitter use in Egypt, albeit small, was not politicized in the same way as Facebook, but rather was used by networks of family and friends casually to share topics surrounding humor and life (Howard et al., 2015, p. 7). Even during the revolutions research suggests that in country Twitter use was limited, as only .001% of the Egyptian population is a Twitter user (Wilson and Dunn, 2011, pgs. 1250-1251). However, these authors also note that Twitter use by Egyptians coordinating protest

communications was “deliberate and well considered. This was evident in the days before the protests erupted, as coordinators debated via tweets which hashtags should be attached to protest-related tweets” (Wilson and Dunn, 2011, pgs. 1250-1251). Wael Ghonmin, one of the principle moderators behind the infamous “We are all Khaled Said” Facebook page, created in honor of Khaled Said, a 28 year old man who Egyptian police brutally beat and killed for a video he posted which allegedly showed Egyptian police sharing the contents of their seizure among themselves, soon became a rallying point for political dissent. According to Howard et al. (2015) “Ghonmin also fast became the country’s most prominent Tweeter, linking a massive Egyptian social network writing in Arabic to networks of interested English-speaking observers abroad” (p. 15). Twitter served local audiences in the form of organization and coordination of demonstrators, but also served to spread awareness of the issues to an international audience in a variety of languages which eventually resulted in international attention and support, mostly favoring Egypt’s demonstrators.

Wilson and Dunn (2011) engaged in descriptively analyzing Tahrir data sets to evaluate digital media use by three groups: protestors, coordinators, and transnational audiences. The three data sets were compiled between January and February 2011. Findings suggested that social media was not widely used in demonstrations, but may have played a more prominent role in the connection and motivation of protestors. The authors evaluated a wide variety of media, including SMS, phone, TV, radio, print, Twitter, Facebook, blogs, email, and live communication. Findings suggested that social media was an especially integral component of broader media usage. According to Khamis and Vaughn (2011) Twitter served to disseminate conversations, images, videos, and other multimodal artifacts. It popularized themes among demonstrators via retweet and hashtags, creating a “meritocracy’ of ideas and information

(Maher, 2011)” (para 11). Like Wilson and Dunn (2011), Khamis and Vaughn (2011) suggest that Twitter was a part of broader media usage such as a combined use of SNS, mobile technology, and face to face conversations that played an integral role in creating a large popular base. Due to internet surveillance, much of the planning happened face to face, and while those who were engaged in the use of SNS participated digitally, they coupled their use with physical movement and conversations to gather support, speaking to people door to door while posting the need to engage in physical communication and the growing movements online.

Some researchers have explored Twitter use both in country and outside of Egypt, in an attempt to better understand its role by identifying the users, their audience, and purpose of tweeting. Lotan et al. (2011) focused on the importance of media outlets, namely, Twitter, on the production and dissemination of key information around the world. The sample consisted of tweets made by 12 distinct actor types. Some of these types include the following: activists, bloggers, journalists, mainstream media outlets (msm) and other engaged participants. Findings suggested that Twitter aided in the co-creation of news by bloggers, activists, and journalists who proved to be predominantly present among all 12 actor types (p. 1385). This lends support to the claim that news emerges from an intricately dynamic information network but most notable, the article provided substantiation for the notion that information is flowing among different actor types during major revolutionary events. More specifically, Lotan et al. (2011) found that individual accounts made up over 70% of all Twitter accounts in Egypt yet msm and organization accounts maintained a much higher retweet rate of between 13% and 28% (p. 1386 and 1388), suggesting that these actor-types elicited retweets at a higher rate than the individual. However, these authors note, “when looking at the Egypt data, there are very clear distinctions: msm, journalists, and activists...[served] as the main sources of flows” (p. 1389). Interestingly,

Howard et al. (2015) found “Egypt’s major political actors often linked to social networking and news services. In fact, major Egyptian political websites were far more likely to link to Facebook or Western media like CNN than they were to each other” (p. 18). While msm accounts may have elicited more retweets, as an organization they tweet information from other users of social media and to out of country news outlets, suggesting the high number of retweets an msm accounts elicits does not necessarily indicate trustworthiness *because* they are an msm account, since research also indicates social media reporting was perceived to be among the most trusted forms of information by demonstrators, but rather that msm accounts also looked outwards for trustworthy information and in doing so, were able to disseminate information to their networks which tend to be larger than individual accounts.

Ranking high on the list of most common subflows, or flows of shared communication among actor types in Egypt, Lotan et al. (2015) found that the communication flowed between journalist to activist, journalist to blogger, and activist to activist among the top five ranked in their data set, meaning that “journalists and activist serve primarily as key information sources, while bloggers and activists...serve as key information routers” (p. 1390). This finding is important to understand where information was perceived as trustworthy, and who was essential in disseminating trustworthy information. In essence, Loten et al. (2011) found “Twitter served both as a common medium for professional journalism and citizen journalism, and as a site of global information flow” (p. 1377).

As Twitter served to disseminate information flows within Egypt and internationally, local and international attention swelled, prompting the internet and cell phone blackout by the regime. While research suggests that the blackout encouraged a shift from cyberactivism to physical demonstration, the blackout was confirmation on the impact of social media and

prompted Google and Twitter to launch “Speak2tweet” which enabled Egyptians to call an international number and record a voice message that would then be tweeted from the Twitter account through this service (York, 2011, p. 1; Singh & Mardini, 2011). This then gave Egyptians with access to a telephone a voice in the Twittersphere during the height of the revolution. Additionally, some Twitter users in the international community used the service to voice their opinion regarding the Egyptian protests. Despite the blackout, some demonstrators found that the impact of Twitter was deeply meaningful and thus used Tweet2speak in order to ensure their voices were not completely silenced. Some of these messages are a part of the data analysis in this project.

Twitter propelled the conversation beyond Egypt’s borders. Howard et al. (2015) noted that there was a sharp increase in tweets concerning political change during the time leading up to Mubarak’s resignation, and on the February 11th, the day he left office, there were more than 225,000 tweets from outside Egypt that spread the news of his departure. (p. 4). Some research findings suggest that the international attention and more widespread use of Twitter outside of the country can overwhelm local conversations on Twitter. Freelon (2011) for example, provides some empirical data from Twitter using the query #egypt to limit the data set, and found that major spikes in data were driven by Twitter users outside of the country and outside of the broader MENA region, and “only after outside attention lessens, do regional voice begin to achieve parity with their international peers” (para. 7). At the same time, while research shows a small number of Egypt’s total population are Twitter users, Howard et al. (2015) argues “...in-country Twitter traffic peaked on the day street protests reached into the thousands and then peaked again during the last days of Mubarak’s hold on power. Over time the number of Egyptians Tweeting about politics surpassed the number Tweeting from elsewhere in the region”

(p. 17). Moreover, in their analysis of the use of hashtags, Bruns, Highfield, and Burges (2013) argue “the substantial level of Arabic tweets in the case of #egypt certainly points to the fact that Twitter—and, by extension, other online media—did play a role in informing, organizing, and reporting protest activities in the country” (p. 895). Remarkably, a small percentage of in country Twitter users were able to strategically use Twitter to recruit, organize, and inform locals and also capture the attention and appeal for support both in the broader MENA region and to the West.

Upon compiling a data set using #egypt and a few other hashtags, Bruns, Highfield, and Burges (2013) examine user interactions among Latin, non-Latin language, and mixed language based tweets from January to November 2011, capturing roughly 7.48 million tweets from more than 445,000 unique users (p. 879). Their data revealed that, throughout most of February, “Twitter activity is characterized by a relatively high number of users (many from the less engaged groups) tweeting in Latin characters” (p. 886) but after March, however, the authors notice a sharp decline in the use of Latin based characters in tweets. They propose that this shift in language use suggests that during the onset and peak of the revolutions, users aimed to capture the ear of the international community and used English as a lingua franca in order to reach a wide audience. After Mubarak stepped down, however, tweets in Arabic retained the majority, suggesting that conversations were focused on the nuances of long-term change in Egypt and the stakeholders were Egyptians themselves. Bruns, Highfield, and Burges (2013) categorized users into three groups, namely, least active users, highly engaged users, and top 1% of users. They found that in January and February, highly engaged users and the Top 1% of users tweeted in mixed languages in far more substantial numbers than English or Latin only character users, suggesting that “Arabic-speaking Twitter users are prepared to participate significantly more in

depth” (p. 888) in order to “disseminate both mainstream and eyewitness accounts of the uprising to local and international followers of these hashtags” (p. 895). The authors suggest the mixed-languages group are native Arabic speakers with English as a second language who have an understanding of audience and thus are making strategic linguistic choices to appeal to, engage, and persuade accordingly.

Insights from this research regarding Twitter’s specific use and impact during the Egyptian Arab Spring lend support to the notion that while the number of Twitter users in Egypt was quite small, they had a keen awareness of audience and purpose and were remarkably effective in using this medium to persuade local and international audiences towards their cause. Twitter was a crucial component among a larger collection of broad media usage, providing a space for new ideas, dissent, and discourse which contributed to the creation of large popular base. It challenged traditional hierarchies in news media communication and trustworthiness, facilitating dissemination of information from the ground by citizen journalists, which included demonstrators, bloggers, organizers, and activists to name a few. Tweeting also became relevant for mainstream media and journalists, who often looked towards citizen journalists for trustworthy and factual information during the revolution. Twitter’s relevance was not lost upon the regime, prompting the communication blackout, which in turn promoted innovate solutions locally and internationally to ensure revolutionary voices could still be seen/heard on Twitter. Tweets were multilingual, suggesting Twitter users in Egypt were profoundly aware of their rhetorical situation and making thoughtful use of rhetorical devices. Twitter facilitated a space for persuasive discourse among a global audience, encouraged a pointed awareness of audience and a strategic use of rhetorical appeals which resulted in millions of tweets, mostly in support of the demonstrators cause, over the course of Egypt’s Arab Spring.

Women and the Egyptian Uprising

Women's roles in the Arab world are diverse, and despite many misconceptions found in western media representations and widespread Western perceptions, women in the region have been and continue to be active members of trade unions, political opposition parties, informal networks, and organizations (Al-Ali, 2012). Women from various countries in the MENA region, including Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria, have all found ways of actively engaging in the democratization process to varying degrees. Moreover, many have made certain to voice their gender-specific demands. Oftentimes during demonstrations, women formed part of the masses physically partaking in the act of demonstrating. In many instances, women have made use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to engage in dissenting discourse in higher numbers than men. These social media sites allow women to politically engage and provide a space for more active female participation in the revolution. Asma Mahfouz, for example, became known as the “leader of the revolutions” after posting a video online which called for large scale protests which led to the Egyptian uprisings that eventually ousted President Mubarak (Al-Ali, 2012).

However, women in the region have also experienced fierce fronts of dissent and limited representation. Grievous violations of women's rights and sidelining of women's issues have also routinely taken place throughout history. Disparate treatment between female and male protestors is commonplace, as harassment and brutalization take a heavy toll on female participants, yet research indicates that women in Egypt were present online and physically present among their male counterparts during demonstrations.

al-Natour (2012) states that digital spaces like that offered by Twitter, Facebook, and blogging sites, provide the most “pervasive, extensive, and accurate description of women's

roles in the revolution” (p. 59). Radsch (2012) argues that “social media blurs the line between the social and the political, enabling the activation of latent networks and varying levels of engagement in a cause” (p. 9) Speaking of her own use of social media and that of other women in her circles, Shima’a Helmy, a 21-year old activist from Cairo states, “we [women] were using social media to establish a virtual place, a virtual world, where we could all come together and discuss ideas and do the stuff that we’re not able to do in public” (Helmy 2012:Simmons College)” (Hansen, 2012, p. 41). To this point, Khamis and Vaughn (2011) argue “social media’s horizontal and non-hierarchical structure was empowering for women, who not only engaged in online activism and citizen journalism through social media, but also effectively and courageously participated in demonstrations and protests” (para 21). Research suggests that social media facilitated a space for women to engage in meaningful discourse with considerable freedoms that over time, may have influenced ideological shifts online and possibly influenced participation on the ground in Egypt.

Offering some demographic specifics, Tufeki and Wilson (2012) surveyed roughly 1200 demonstrators in Egypt; their research findings indicate the mean age was 26 and there was a female presence of 24.6%. Furthermore, protestors tended to be relatively well educated with 60.3% holding college or university degrees, and female protestors were somewhat better educated than male protestors, and women were more likely to have Internet access on their phones and in their homes (p. 369). Providing data among male and female respondents, Tufeki and Wilson (2012) found that about 92% used phones in general, whereas 82% used phones to communicate about the protests. Additionally, 52% had Facebook, virtually 100% used it to communicate about the protests, and Twitter was used in general by 16%, and used to communicate about the protests by 13% (p. 369). In their data set, Tufeki and Wilson (2012)

note significant difference among genders regarding the use of Facebook and Twitter, finding females reported using Facebook more than males in general and for communicating about the protests. They found that women were also somewhat more likely to use Twitter in general and significantly more likely to use it for communicating about the protests (pgs. 369-370). Howard et al. (2015) adds “women made up 33 percent of the people actively Tweeting inside Egypt during the revolution” (p. 6). Pointedly, Radsch (2012) argues “the primary role of women was bridging the digital divide by providing information and coverage as citizen journalist to the mainstream media covering the uprising, ensuring the revolution was televised, and Youtubed, and tweeted” (p. 16). Thus, this research indicates that women were using Facebook and Twitter more than male counterparts to communicate about the protests in meaningful ways, and were a significant and impactful presence in digital spaces.

The digital presence of women leading up to the Arab Spring lends support to the notion that women along with their male peers, experienced a shift from digital performance to physical transformance, essentially participating online and overtime, demonstrating physically as well. In Tahrir Square, for example, women made up about one-quarter of the population among demonstrators according to Hansen (2012) (p. 32). Radsch (2012) on the other hand, found that during the eighteen days of demonstrations leading to the removal of Mubarak, women made up approximately 40 to 50 of the population of demonstrators. (Hansen, 2012, pgs. 36-37; Radsch, 2012, p. 19). Women in Egypt showed up in significant numbers and physically participated during demonstrations in numerous ways.

In his coverage of the uprisings in Tahrir Square, El Dahshan (2011) a journalist for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, interviewed women participating in the demonstrations. Many women said their participation was widespread, effective and organized. A few said their

husbands did not know they were there and some were there with their families. One woman spoke towards the violence the police directed at women, stating “the police are particularly vicious to women” (El Dahshan, 2011, p. 2) forcibly removing the niqab or hijab and threatening rape. Other women spoke of a strong solidarity among women of any religion and walk of life, participating in a variety of capacities from the traditional gendered roles like providing food and cleaning while other women participated in the strategizing and physical protection of demonstrators, with some stating “traditional roles were no longer in place” (El Dahshan, 2011, p. 4). Referring to Hassan Osman from Karama (a regional NGO dedicated to the improvement of women’s rights) Hansen (2012) writes “women brought blankets, food and were twittering the developments to the outside world. That was a total breakdown of the cliché image of the ‘passive Arab women’” (p. 233). Furthermore, Radsch (2012) argues that women in the MENA region participated on the ground, physically present during social movements in unprecedented numbers. Her suggests many did so because of their participation in online spaces of dissent, stating women are “translating digital advocacy and organization into physical mobilization and occupation of public spaces in a dialectic of online and offline activism that is particular to this era...[using] citizen journalism and social networking to counter the state-dominated media in their countries and influence mainstream media around the world” (Radsch, 2012, p. 4). Women have carved out a space online to engage sociopolitical discussions in meaningful ways, and research suggests that for some women, digital engagement or digital performances can lead to physical performances as well.

SPACES OF DISSENT: FROM DIGITAL DISCOURSE TO CYBERACTIVISM

While this data is extraordinarily useful in understanding various elements of the “Social media-Arab Spring” paradigm, very little exists in terms of the theorization of identity, and

identity performance in these digital spaces. There is a space for research to investigate how these spaces impacted the ways people think. While it is clear that much of the research argues that the internet and social media served demonstrators in a variety of capacities, the notion that they served as a space for multifaceted discussion, knowledge or opinion sharing and dissent for both men and women may have led to mental shifts that may challenge ideas about the self, a culture, and perceived outcomes or futures. To this end, Hofheinz (2011) studied the impacts of the internet and mobile phone use on conceptions of the individual and its role in the construction of knowledge and values. Of particular interest were the resulting dynamics and their impact on long-term historical developments. The author proposed that evolutions, rather than revolutions, take time but may be aided by the use of the new media technologies. More importantly Hofheinz (2011) brings to light the question of long-term consequences surrounding new media and the impact on new knowledge in the MENA region. He argues there simply is not enough systematic research and analysis regarding SNS and the long term effect on the individual(s) willingness to engage in political action, mitigate or exacerbate group conflict, facilitate collection action, garner international attention, and/or aid a regime in the spying or control of their citizens. (p. 1423). Furthermore, Hofheinz (2011) and Lynch (2007) argue “rather than focus on whether blogs alone can deliver democracy or a political revolution, analysts should explore the variety of ways in which blogs might transform the dynamics of Arab public opinion and political activism.” (p. 1423). In line with this notion, Radsch (2012) suggests that this sort of transformation is of particular relevance to women in the region, whose presence online has been significant and for some, that has transformed into physical participation, arguing that in the process women are “reconfiguring the public sphere in their

countries, as well as the expectations of the public about the role women can and should play in the political lives of their countries” (p. 4).

To this, referencing data from The Arab Social Media Report produced by the Dubai School of Government Klischewski (2012) notes that between one third and one half of survey respondents support the statement “social media played a role in empowering me to influence change in my community/country” and roughly one half of respondents stated that they are “more open to tolerating different points of view” (p. 361-362). This shift in thought is the real impact of these spaces of dissent which Hofheinz’s (2011) refers, arguing “it is the attitude that changes, the attitude of the individual users towards authority, a disregard for the long chain of authority, for established hierarchies that used to structure decision making” (Hofheinz, 2011, p. 1426). Similarly, speaking towards cyberactivism, empowerment, and new thought, Radsch (2012) states “cyberactivism is both reflexive and reactive...[it] was a form of empowerment, a way to exert control over one’s personhood and identity, while gaining a sense of being able to *do* something in the face of patriarchal hierarchy and an authoritarian state” (p. 31). In Egypt, the shift in thoughts, in ideas of the self, and ideas of possibilities or the capacity for change are profoundly connected to the conversations happening in digital spaces. Here again, research suggests these conversations may have shifted ideological perceptions, facilitating performance of such identities through discursive acts in digital spaces like Twitter and may have been influential in any physical participation on the ground, either through endorsement statements online, in person, or through physical presence.

Subaltern spaces

Online spaces, particularly SNS which fostered the spaces where a plurality of ideas and opinions were discussed with relative freedom are theorized to have been a crucial forerunner to

meaningful digital participation/cyberactivism, which in turn was an equally crucial forerunner to the physical demonstrations at the heart of the Egyptian uprisings. The spaces for new knowledge and dissenting thought formation which eventually lead to a collective challenge to authoritarianism are intrinsically connected to SNS within the Egyptian context and the two forces of resistance within this paradigm are the activists themselves and the technologies serving them. While SNS like Twitter are not tools inherently intended to create a large scale civilian resistance campaign, opposition activists used the space to serve their activism, thus engaging in cyberactivism, despite any political or technological determination attached to the technology and its intended use.

The subaltern resistance movements in Egypt experienced significant growth in numbers in digital spaces resulting in a large popular base resistance movement ripe with a multiplicity of dissenting ideas and new appeals. Howard (2011) defines cyberactivism as “the act of using the internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline” (p. 145; Khondker, 2011, p. 678; Khamis and Vaughn, 2011, p. 5). Elaborating, the author adds “cyberactivism is often used to create intellectually and emotionally compelling digital artifacts that tell stories of injustice, interpret history, and advocate for particular political outcomes” (Howard, 2011, p. 145; Khamis and Vaughn, 2011, p. 5; Hansen, 2012, p. 34). Along this vein, Radsch (2012) maintains “cyberactivism refers to the use of digital media technologies and social media platforms for sociopolitical contestation...[and] is better understood as a mode of contentious politics that relies on new media technologies for information dissemination, networking, and the construction of collective identities and joint grievances, organization, and mobilization” (pgs. 5-6).

Returning to the concept of Fraser's (1987) 'subaltern counter cultures' (p. 124), Axford (2011) states that "the upshot is a growing number of competing publics...boosts...the quality of democratic discourse" (p. 682). In authoritarian states, even with some media or social space for oppositional voices like that found in Egypt, the use of SNS as a critical space for dissent and/or democratic discourse developed as a result of the loss of trust in the regime as much as it came as a loss in trust of other information sources. Democratic discourse in Egypt, while better tolerated than in other MENA regions, under Mubarak was still stifled at best, and violently suppressed at worse. Jamali (2015) suggests "that society which is poor in political culture is more eager to find access to training sources and join social media. A critical element of the political behavior and actions of people in a society is their political culture, as it may influence people – political actors- by indirectly imposing values and models" (p. 25). The author argues that social media is a form of "participation training" in a society wherein learning is the outcome of mutual and continuous interactions and influences between the individual and the social environment, and these influences are amplified by the social media" (Jamali, 2015, p. 24). Accordingly, it seems as though in Egypt the general populace lost trust in the state run information outlets, witnessed and/or experienced intimidation through the suppression of oppositional or dissenting voices, and thus made use of SNS as a space for dissenting discourse. Continuing along this line, Jamali (2015) suggests overtime, the networks created among social media users in a community create social capital through their relations and ties wherein resources and support are available. Oppositional voices engaged in dissenting democratic discourse via SNS and overtime, networks emerged creating subaltern counter cultures where new ideas and new knowledge emerged through a plurality of ideas, creating new notions of social capital which challenge the status quo. Cyberactivism can only gain support if the communities engaged trust the information

behind the message, and in this case the information emerged from the communities collectively, creating a different culture of participatory discourse; and it would seem that participation in these digital spaces provided training for participation on the streets.

Khamis and Vaughn (2011) describe the Egyptian uprising as a leaderless revolution, as it was “characterized by collective and effective processes of group mobilization, both online and offline, rather than individual acts of leadership by one or more charismatic persons” (para 23). Collectively and overtime, the ideas created within Egypt’s subaltern counter cultures began to transcend digital boundaries and emerged in ways and places beyond the digital spaces in which they grew. Radsch (2012) quotes Yemeni activist Maria al-Masani, who explained “cyberactivism has made activism on the street more acceptable” (p. 28). Radsch (2012) elaborates, stating that the virtual performances of demonstrators, particularly female demonstrators, created “collective action frames like that of Asmaa Mahfouz” (p. 29) and over time those collective action frames helped traverse the divide from cyberactivism to physical activism (p. 30). It is the capacity of SNS which creates a reciprocal exchange for users to consume and create with relative ease in communities both local and/foreign, that allows a view of alternative perspectives and facilitates the space for building upon discourse. For some, the exposure to new ideas and the capacity to exchange, discuss, and debate new perspectives has created a shift in the notion of normal, acceptable, and possible for themselves both as individuals, and collectively among their communities.

PERFORMATIVE IDENTITIES

Hawhee (2006), refers to a rhetorical sense of identity as “more of a formative, reformative, and performative process rather than a fixed, easily knowable label (p.136).” Along a similar vein, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) theorize upon the notion of “identity-in-use” and argue

“identity is understood as an ‘emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices (p. 588). Grabill and Pig (2012) thus argue, “identity-in-use, then, not only corresponds to broad social categories like race, class, and gender, but is shaped at the micro level through discursive negotiations and interactions that happen in conversation” (pgs. 101-102). These notions of identity are closely aligned with Pennycook (2008) and Butler’s (1997/2010) theories of identity and performativity, which are explored later in this section. Koerber (2006) argues, “resistance might initially involve a form of rhetorical agency in which subjects simply occupy preexisting subject positions, but the effects of this agency—the acts of resistance—can disrupt the sense established by disciplinary rhetoric, exceeding the boundaries of these subject positions in unpredictable ways” (p. 97). Theories of performativity have deep implications for exploring notions of identity and performative agency, and discursive resistance. Identity thus, viewed through the lens “of a formative, reformative, and performative process” and as “identity-in-use” has offered insight into the rhetorical choices Egyptian demonstrators have made which seem to have allowed them to enter and move conversations that have challenged the regime’s status quo to discuss, display, and participate in conversations of resistance while in country. The digital space highly utilized during the Egyptian uprisings allows for the theorization of “identity-in-use” or performative agency through fleeting but significant discursive negotiations. Performativity online challenges the stasis of identity, facilitates a form of “third space” or, to return to Fraser’s (1987) concept, creates a space which serves as “subaltern counter culture” for reflection and thus rhetorical navigation, agency, and resistance. This display of digital resistance may begin online and thus seemingly remain within the boundaries of Foucault’s notion of preexisting subject positions; but in Egypt it seems that

the act of tweeting challenges subject-position boundaries and it appears as though performance and transformance are deeply connected.

Cyberactivism and even simply online communication creates an alternative framework of public engagement, wherein discourse plays a foundational role in establishing the digital self, making language-use inseparable from the creation of identity perceptions. Grabill and Pigg's (2012) and Carolyn Miller's (2003) "Writing in a Culture of Simulation: Ethos Online" argue that "digital rhetorical situations often heighten rhetors' need to use language to establish who they are as people [and in a] culture of simulation, online communicators must use language to establish their position within a crowd of geographically distributed, unknown interlocutors who have limited means for accessing information about those with whom they deliberate" (Grabill and Pigg, p. 102; Miller, p. 60). Tweets present a highly diverse digital venue wherein participation is in many instances, high in volume and thus Twitter offers a salient opportunity to engage in rhetorical theorization surrounding identity performances in digital space, and understanding how they speak towards forms resistance.

The relevance of cyberactivism within Egypt's current political unrest is undeniable. As research indicates, social media usage in Egypt has been widely theorized and thought to have been a platform for voicing discord among Egyptians and their governmental leadership which seemingly brought political discourse to the forefront of public conversation. Twitter was used not only as a place for discussion and debate, but Twitter was also a platform for rallying and organizing public Egyptian participation. Egyptian values, both traditional and contemporary were publically called into question and much of the discourse reflects the complexities of the Egyptian uprisings from the citizenry itself.

Alternative rhetorics, like the discourse found in digital space such as Twitter present both theoretical and methodological challenges of which Rhetoric and Writing Studies can and should engage. Grabill and Pigg (2012) argue that the approach to rhetorical inquiry must widen to capture both the traditional and nontraditional places where rhetoric and discourse take place and identity is thus constituted; citing Johnstone and Eisenhart (2008), they state “now we are asking not just about the rhetoric of politics, but also about the rhetoric of history and the rhetoric of popular culture; not just about the rhetoric of the public sphere but about rhetoric on the street, in the hair salon, or online; not just about the rhetoricity of formal argument but also about the rhetoricity of personal identity” (p. 106). The structure of this study lends itself to inquiry into the rhetorics of politics and techo-culture in contemporary Egypt through a framework that intrinsically links these elements to inquiry into rhetoric of identity and resistance in online spaces, with an aim of understanding how identity is performed and the performative agency displayed through discursive negations. Essentially, Grabill and Pigg (2012) suggest that “identity performances create movement... [believed] to be a particularly powerful form of agency in public, online discussions” and thus “it is essential [for rhetorical studies] to come to terms with how best to understand public interactions in the messy places that characterize most online forums” (p. 115). This lens is particularly relevant for theorizing upon the online discourse surrounding sociopolitical resistance in Egypt since 2011, as this discourse has been credited to igniting sociopolitical resistance, especially among its young techno-savvy constituency, and large scale political and sociopolitical shifts in the region.

PERFORMATIVE AGENCY AND TRANSFORMANCE

This research is based within the theoretical framework of Pennycook (2008) and Butler’s (1997/2010) notion of performativity and performative agency; and finally, Foucault’s

therories of power, knowledge, and disciplinary rhetorics. Pennycook (2008) defines performativity as “the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity” (p. 69). As this investigates performative agency in discourse, concepts of performance and linguistic value are necessary. Performativity, first coined by J.L. Austin, asks “how is it that language can function as a form of social activity, achieving different effects, causing people to act, bringing multiple reactions?” (Pennycook, 2008, p. 65). Pennycook (2008) continues this vein of thought, arguing that Austin’s question is more than linguistic, but rather asks how language has effects. Butler (1997) follows this line of inquiry as well, asking “when we claim to have been injured by language, what kind of claim do we make? We ascribe an agency to language, a power to injure and position ourselves as the objects of its injurious trajectory” (p. 1). The productive power of language, of the speech act, is essential for this study, for it is within the discursive choices that performativity is understood.

Butler (1997) is critical of any static understanding of “language and the social” arguing against the notion that “performative utterances are only effective when they are spoken by those who are already in a position of social power to exercise words as deeds” (p. 156). Butler (1997) and Pennycook (2008) argue against the seemingly fixed concept of social position and thus perception of social power by positing a theories of the performative as holding transformative properties, asking what forms of “the performative can be enacted by those who are not socially sanction to do so” (Pennycook, 2008, p. 69). Concerned then with the traditionally marginalized or disempowered, the author argues performativity must not “foreclose on the possibility of an agency that emerges from the margins of power” (2008, p. 69). Butler (1997) claims the performative “is one of the powerful and insidious ways in which subjects are called into social

being, inaugurated into sociality by a variety of diffuse and powerful interpellations” (p. 175) and performativity thus, must be understood outside the framework of a priori subject positions, but rather as “social performatives, ritualized and sedimented through time” (Pennycook, 2008, p. 71). Butler (1997) maintains that performativity “provides a way of thinking about relationships between language and identity that emphasize the productive force of language in constituting identity rather than identity being a pre-given construct that is reflected in language use” (Pennycook, 2008, p. 70). Butler (2010) summarizes performativity:

First, that...[it] seeks to counter a certain kind of positivism according to which we might begin with already delimited understandings of what gender, the state, and the economy are. Secondly...[it] works...to counter a certain metaphysical presumption about culturally constructed categories and to draw our attention to the diverse mechanisms of that construction. Thirdly...[it] describes a set of processes that produce ontological effects...that work to bring into being certain kinds of realities or, fourthly, that lead to certain kinds of socially binding consequences (p. 147).

Pennycook (2008) stresses that “in order to have a usable notion of performativity...we need...to avoid the pull towards performance as open-ended free display (we perform whatever identities we want to)...and the pull towards over-sedimentation (we can only perform what has been prescribed): to some extent, the performative is always along lines that have already been laid down, and yet performativity can also be about refashioning futures” (p. 77). Performativity understood through Butler and Pennycook, in the Egyptian context explored within this project, aims to identify and theorize upon the ways demonstrators in Egypt are performing identity through digital discourse, and through performative agency can explore, challenge, and counter

notions of traditional habitus and sedimentation with regard to their sociopolitical positions, limitations, and perceived futures.

Foucault's (1982) notions of identity, subjectification, and power relationships are at the forefront of addressing theories of totalization and hegemony. Foucauldian theories surrounding networked knowledge, power, and subjectivity in discourse are fundamental components of this framework. Notions surrounding sociopolitical hegemony through discourse as a form of knowledge, constitution, and thus social control is a guiding force in understanding the undercurrents of power and thus making visible the operationalization of discourse. Foucault's work on discourse formations and the process of knowledge constitution, the underlying incoherence's and spaces of dissent, and networked notions of domination and freedom, bring to light the conceived subject-power positions within a perceptually well-regulated disciplinary framework. The disruption of the commonplace and dominant discourse(s) of Truth and ideology through a plurality of epistemic perspectives make visible the spaces of thought, reflection, reinvention, or dissent from the metanarrative (Phillips, 2002). Foucauldian theories surrounding disciplinary regimes frame the shaping notions of resistance within this project. Mills (2003) describes Foucault's disciplinary regime stating it "is one where one's comportment is overseen and subjected to a series of rules and regulations relating to control of appetite, movement, and emotion" (p. 93). Elaborating, Koerber (2006) argues, "disciplinary power can be understood as not only dictating what subjects should do, but also as producing the very rhetorical situations in which they act by specifying what their bodies can do" (p. 91). However, she argues that the preexisting subject positions in contextual frameworks can be embodied and translate to performance in a mainstream framework, disrupting disciplinary regimes while still operating in their grid. For Egyptians cyberactivists, it would seem that discourse on Twitter

allowed for a disruption of Foucault's preexisting subject position without any meaningful disruption of the existing disciplinary regime. Overtime, performances on Twitter, among other digital subaltern counter cultures disrupted the status quo socio-political fabric in Egypt, resulting in a disruption of the existing disciplinary powers which ostensibly maintained the average Egyptian's citizen's "subject position" was unable to bring about regime change, limiting any perceived emancipatory thoughts that would yield collective action. Phillips (2002) states "power establishes a set of relations that enable social interaction and understanding. Thus, the very act of articulating a political agenda, to the extent that that agenda is intelligible, becomes enmeshed within relations of power. Resistance, then, cannot be generated within these relations of intelligibility but emanates from gaps within the lines of intelligibility. These gaps become the spaces from which resistant acts emerge to disturb relations of power" (p. 331). Research has established that cyberactivism emerged from the performances in digital spaces which created a wider culture of activism leading to the acceptance and some would argue, necessity of physical demonstration to strive towards a new reality of possible emancipation. This shift from cyberactivism to physical demonstrations brings to light not only a manifestation of the theories of performance to transformance, but if we are to understand Foucault's discursive formation, wherein meaning and meaningful practice is therefore constructed within discourse (Hall, 2001, p. 73), collective acts of discursive resistance in online spaces would conceivably create intelligible gaps in the relations of power in offline, "real-world" spaces as well. On Twitter, activism was acceptable and even necessary, bringing with it the emergence of new thoughts, shifting identities, and new possibilities which soon traversed digital spaces into physical spaces, where physical demonstration was not only also acceptable, but now yielded perceptions of new possibilities and real world change.

Chapter 4: Methods

While totally not adherent to Grounded theory, I did lean heavily on Constructivist Data Analysis which is rooted deeply rooted in Constructivist Grounded there. Therefore, this chapter will trace the origins of Grounded Theory to the development of Constructivist Grounded Theory that guided my analysis. Next, I will detail my data collection process in which I gathered tweets from Twitter's comprehensive historical archives through DiscoverText during the revolutionary period from Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring. I elaborate upon my decision-making process which created a manageable dataset while maintaining the integrity of the project goals. I will then discuss my coding practices within DiscoverText and my continued exploration of the data through SPSS, descriptive statistics and non-parametric statistical techniques. I discuss the value of Gee's (2011) five theoretical tools for conducting Discourse Analysis in my project and its correlating relevance to the Aristotelean notion of rhetoric as persuasion which emerged as the focal point of inquiry throughout my analysis. Finally, I discuss the value of recognizing my positionality as a grounded theorist through engaging in reflexivity throughout the many stages of my research processes.

GROUNDING THEORY

Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was developed in the 1960's by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss and emanated from a "profound dissatisfaction with the prevailing approach of university-based social research in the USA" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p. 43). The authors argue that Glaser and Strauss took issue with the following features of the institutional orthodoxy: "(1) the primacy accorded to verification of existing theories; and (2) what they term 'theory generated by a priori assumptions' (1967:3)" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p. 43). Together, they developed an inductive method in an effort to challenge traditional deductive

approaches. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested GTM towards the development of theory which derived from the data in order to forestall the superimposing use of theories to with uncertain fit or working capacity (pgs. 3-5). They propose that in theories generated through GTM the data cannot be divorced from the process by which it was generated, specifically stating “generating a theory from data means that most hypothesis and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of research” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 5-6). Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe GTM as a general methodology for developing theory which is grounded in the data and analyzed through a continuous and recursive exchange between the data collection and analysis (p. 273).

Bryant and Charmaz (2007) also categorize GTM as an inductive method, defining induction as “a type of reasoning that begins with the study of a range of individual cases and extrapolates from them to form a conceptual category...it implies moving from the detailed descriptive to the more abstract, conceptual level” (p. 15). Creswell (2009) defines GTM as “a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract, theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants...involving multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information” (p. 13). Furthering GTM, Charmaz’s (2007) constructivist theory adheres to the interpretive tradition, placing priority on the emerging findings from the data itself. It recognizes the shared and contextual realities of the participants and its relationship to other sources of data and allows for the interplay between data and analysis to create the framework for continued analysis (p. 130). Elaborating, she states “a constructivist approach does not adhere to positivist notions of variable analysis or a finding of a single basic process or core category in the studied phenomena. The constructivist view assumes an obdurate, yet ever-changing world but recognizes diverse local worlds and multiple realities,

and addresses how people's actions affect their local and larger worlds" (Charmaz, 2007, p. 132). This approach best fits my study as the tweets in my dataset are interpreted as a part of a larger, more comprehensive whole wherein the contextual nuances of the world and experiences surrounding the tweet are all a part of the emerging analysis.

In a movement divergent from Glaser and Strauss, Chamraz (2007) argues "a constructivist approach means more than looking at how individuals view their situations. It not only theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation...the resulting theory *depends* on the researchers view; it does not and cannot stand without it" (p. 130, emphasis in original). Furthermore constructivist grounded theorists engage in reflexivity during the research process to consider how their theories evolve and assume that data and analysis are social construction wherein meaning and actions are interpreted by both researchers and participants (Charmaz, 2007, p. 131). Through this mutual interplay between research subject and researcher, Constructivist data analysis has allowed me to recognize my own world view but through my own self reflexive stance, I am able to analysis the data in a way that allows the theory to emerge from my dataset that is already rich in sociopolicial human realities. Throughout my analysis, together the data and the emerging theoretical lens serve as "points of departure for developing ideas" which contribute to this project's "interpretive portrayal of the studied world" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7 and 10). Along a similar vein, the non-linear, recursive interplay facilitates the organic emergence of trends found within data, ensuring that the findings from the tweets themselves are the guiding factor in the creation of research categories.

Finally, GTM assumes humans are active agents and thus recognizes and values "human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings...and the open-ended study of

action” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). Charmaz (2006) contends research processes must “consists of unfolding temporal sequences that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in between. The temporal sequences are linked in a process and lead to change. Thus, single events may become linked as a part of a larger whole” (p. 10). Within this framework the social actors interacting within social units are understood in a relationship of reciprocity; social “units” or actors are inseparable from the context and temporality of their interactions. These interactions then are the temporal sequences, capable of being linked to a process and thus change, thereby making a social actor/agent capable of meaning making and change. This aspect of GTM is extraordinarily relevant in this project as these tweets are a snapshot in Egypt’s revolutionary timeline. My dataset captures tweets that revolve around people responding to the context and temporality of their reality, i.e. Egyptians mostly, tweeting in response to the daily evolution of their Egyptian revolution.

DATA COLLECTION

Upon IRB approval, my data was gathered from Twitter’s comprehensive historical archives through DiscoverText (<https://discovertext.com/>) a cloudbased text analysis data science software. While Twitter provides Twitter users with a search operator through its “advanced search” options, it does not produce a comprehensive search payload (Twitter, 2018). DiscoverText partnered with Twitter to facilitate search and retrieve services on Twitter’s comprehensive historical archives. The tweets gathered through my search query in DiscoverText were made available in human language and included all metadata such as included images, links, and numbered retweets and replies for example. The data aggregation facilitated by DiscoverText added layers of depth to otherwise text-based data, ensuring this

project had access to valuable rich data which Charmaz (2006) defines as “data that is detailed, focused, and full.”

The following search query is what I created to define the search parameters for this projects dataset:

Rule Text: (#Egypt OR #Mubarak OR #Jan25 OR #Tahrir) (place_country:eg OR bio_location:"Egypt" OR bio_location:"Cairo" OR bio_location:"مصر" OR place:Egypt OR place:Cairo OR place:مصر)

Start Date: 01/20/2011

End Date: 02/12/2011

The hashtags Egypt, Mubarak, Jan25, and Tahrir were all popularly used among Twitter users discussing the Egyptian revolution and thus they served to both capture all tweets with any single use or combined use of the hashtags, while excluding all other unrelated tweets. The location parameters included the location Egypt and Cairo in both English and Arabic and they served to limit the payload to include tweets from users who self-identified as being in Egypt through Twitters bio options. Here again, the location parameters also served to exclude those outside of Egypt from the payload, creating a dataset focused on conversations around the Egyptian revolution by those in Egypt at the time. Finally, the start and end dates limit the payload to tweets within the 18-day revolutionary period. These parameters resulted in a total of 375,710 total “units” or tweets included within my comprehensive dataset.

While large and thus rich with potential, the enormity of the payload was far too large for any single researcher to manage, so I made the following decisions to carefully create a smaller datasets while maintain the integrity of the project goals:

- Through DiscoverText I was able to remove duplicate tweets, reducing the total number of tweets from 375,710 to 225,179.
- I ran a clustering report to remove near duplicate clusters (>80%) leaving a single unit in the overall dataset for analysis. Clusters are groups of data, in this case, units/tweets which are near duplicates. I set an 80% match duplicate filter to leave the original cluster seeds within the overall dataset, but remove clusters with an 80% or higher match. Duplicates were mostly retweets with the original tweet originating from a single user, which have been considered in the Analysis (see chapter 4). This reduced the total number of tweets from 225,179 to 185,456.
- I applied a filter to capture English language-only tweets (>75%), leaving a small margin for machine classification error and tweets in 3ngleezy. 3ngleezy is a language born of text messaging functions wherein Arabic words are spelled in Latin texts available on the keyboard on a mobile device. The filter captures tweets written in 75% English or more, removing those that do not match the criteria from this dataset. This reduced the total number of tweets for from 185,456 to 145,449, which served as my master dataset from which I created the subsets used for microlevel daily analysis.
- Within this dataset, I created a subset for each individual day within my search query, resulting in 24 total subsets.
- Among these 24, only 8 days/subsets had a total volume of 10,000 tweets/units or more, indicating high levels of user activity on those particular days. In order to continue to reduce the size of my dataset but still ensure that I captured salient data, I chose to focus upon the tweets within these 8 days. This created a data subset totaling 105,560 tweets.

- Finally, to create the data subset I utilized for analysis, I gathered a small random sampling from each of these days totaling 5,283 tweets.

Observation

The tweets aggregated from Twitter through DiscoverText are what Charmaz (2006) describes as “extant texts” as they were created outside of the influence of the researcher and outside of the purpose of this project (p. 37). Moreover, DiscoverText has provided more than the monomodal text from the tweet. Rather it has provided a comprehensive aggregate of all of the tweets in their multimodal form, including the capacity to view live links, videos, replies, along with the account holder’s profile and associated content (Hocks, 2013). “Text” in this project is applied loosely, reflecting “a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes” wherein music or images for example may encode action or emotion (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 2). I began by gathering metadata from my comprehensive dataset to capture some of the more general trends. I captured the following indicators:

- Total unique users (6,239)
- Comprehensive language ratios (57% English, 43% Not English)
- Top Twitter usernames (top 10 usernames and total number of tweets by user recorded)
- Top user locations (Egypt; Cairo, Egypt; Cairo)
- Top retweets (coming from Wael Ghonim, as the most retweeted user)
- Top replied tweets (Ghonim and Anderson Cooper most replied tweets)
- Top 75 single key terms (captured via screenshot)
- Top 75 bigram key terms (captured via screenshot)

I made record of the more salient aspects of these indicators and reviewed the data in depth to better understand the makeup of my comprehensive dataset. Charmaz (2006) states researchers can compare the detailed findings in a dataset to a larger discourse of which the data is connected to (p. 35). This overview of the larger dataset helped contextualize the trends I documented in the eight smaller subsets that served as the focal point of this study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Eight days, eight subsets

Upon the creation of the smaller data subsets, I used grounded theory to conduct the data analysis. Charmaz (2006) describes data analysis as a recursive process, wherein the data-gathering, coding, and memo writing all contribute to the generation of theory in development. Moreover, she states “the logic of grounded theory coding differs from quantitative logic that applies preconceived categories or codes to the data. Codes emerge as you scrutinize your data and defines meanings within it. Through this active coding, you interact with your data again and again and ask many different questions of them” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Within my project, codes were developed to capture the daily action and conversations found within tweets that made up each of the eight days. As the revolution progressed, the conversations changed and thus so did the codes and the associated memos which accompanied both the new codes and each day. Constructivist data analysis facilitated the emergence of codes and memos develop from the tweets found within the dataset.

DiscoverText, SPSS, Qualitative and Qualitative Processes

Since I was gathering an enormous amount of data in a variety of modes and I was unfamiliar with the extent of organizing, coding, and analytical capacity within DiscoverText, I chose to utilize SPSS alongside DiscoverText to meet the needs of my project. Within

DiscoverText, I was able to organize and manage my data according my particular search parameters. After the end of a series of executive decisions to selectively splice the data, I was able to create data subsets into “buckets” of data which housed the comprehensive “unit” or tweets, which means that every tweet was connected to the user’s active Twitter profile. This connection to active and open Twitter user profiles facilitated the observation of demographic information such as gender, location, profession, and when the user made such information available. The connection to a user’s active Twitter profile also meant I was able to capture other modes of communication such as videos, photos, hyperlinks, and voice recordings, which were coded accordingly. Finally, as I would review each tweet individually I would capture demographic information when possible, tag tweets when other modes of communication were included, and create codes to reflect the activity in the discourse upon which certain trends began to emerge in the data wherein I then created code categories for those trends. This process was both emergent and recursive.

I repeated this process for data subset associated with each of the eight days that comprised the overall dataset for my project. The only codes that were intentionally included in each day’s subset were the demographic identifiers and codes that indicated other modes of communication present in a tweet. I allowed the codes to emerge from each data subset individually rather than impose my own notions of what may emerge from each new subset as per my experience with the previous subset. This approach, however, resulted in a hundred of codes and many code categories. While most of the codes were only salient within the respective data subset, many of the code categories emerged across all subsets. The code categories which appeared across all subsets included:

- Demographic identifiers

- Multimodal communication included
- Call to action
- Expressing (usually emotion)
- Reporting and/or Sharing (updates, anecdotes, information)
- @ing, or “at-ing,” meaning to address a specific user by hyperlinking their user handle
- God (reference to, mention of)
- News (official)
- Police (behavior, location)
- Requests
- Situation (specific to a current situation)

Many codes are housed within each category and many of the tweets were coded with more than one code, thereby placing tweets in several code categories at once.

Upon completing the initial round of coding the most prominent code categories emerged. During the phase of recursive revisiting of coding and memo writing I recognized that several codes outside of the parameters of an established code category did not fit securely, and as a result I had to create subcategories in order to capture these tweets to include them for analysis. While limited in frequency, these codes identified trends among sentiments shared on a particular day, as a type of thematic undercurrent, often times guiding the conversations in the more prevalent code categories. Some of smaller subcategories include “Foreign: related to foreign influence or intervention,” “Politicians: mentioned by name, referring to specific statement,” Revolution,” and “Questions.”

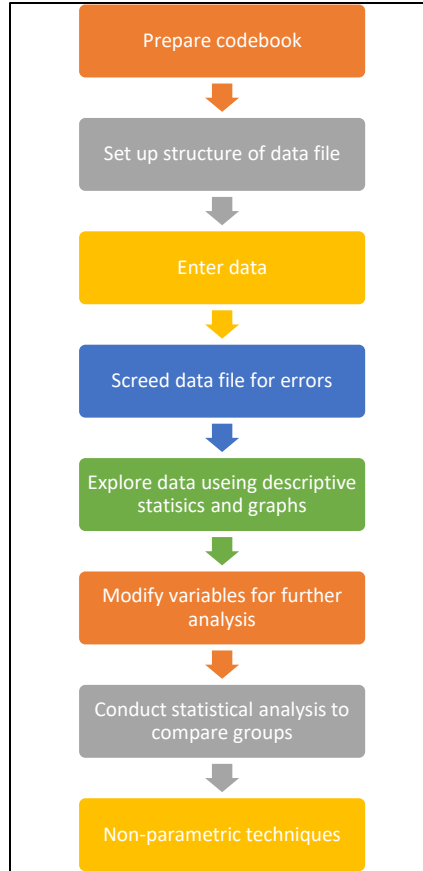


Figure 1. The Data Process

I used IBM’s Statistical Package for the Social Science to (SPSS) to organize, manage, identify and analyze trends across my coded dataset. Using DiscoverText to export data and accompanying codes to an Excel document I was able to create a “codebook” in which I used my existing codes to label and define my variables, and prepared my data file for SPSS by assigning a number to each response in order to obtain values from each participant for each variable. The data process in which I engaged is represented in Figure 1, which has been adapted from Pallant’s *SPSS Survival Manual* (2001, p. 28) and further detailed in Chapter 5 “Analysis.” In brief, the descriptive phase of my analysis involved using SPSS to obtain a summary of the descriptive statistics of the variables in my dataset by utilizing my codebook to provide a

comprehensive summary of the cases in my data. To gather more detailed information, I used the “Frequencies” procedure in SPSS to explore descriptive statistics for categorical variables for which the interpretation from the output is also discussed in Chapter 5.

POSITIONALITY OF THE RESEARCHER AND REFLEXIVITY DURING THE ANALYSIS

Grounded theory requires that the researcher engage in reflexivity at all stages of the research process. Gentles, Jack, Nicholas, & McKibbin (2014) describe reflexivity as a “generalized practice in which researchers strive to make their influence on the research explicit—to themselves, and often to their audience” (p. 1). Constructivist grounded theorists recognize that all researchers maintain a certain degree of presuppositions both consciously and subconsciously and thus, “constructivism fosters researchers’ reflexivity about their *own* interpretations as well as those of their research participants” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131; emphasis in original). Sultana (2007) describes reflexivity in research as involving researcher accountability through constant self-reflection and representation while also critically examining both power relations and politics in the research process (p. 376). With these considerations in mind, I took deliberative measures to reflect upon my own positionality, particularly during the data gathering and data analysis phase.

As a Mexican-American woman, raised on the border between Mexico and the United States, within a relatively stable and safe, mostly first-world upbringing, I realize that through my considerably privileged upbringing I have an inherent lens for viewing and interpreting the world. For example, the concept of the social movement during the Arab Spring brought to mind the Occupy Wallstreet movement which took place in the US. This idea of a relatively safe space wherein governing officials and law enforcement officials generally abide by certain laws and respect a general notion of human rights standards while regulating the spaces populated by

protesters was my only exposure to a grand scale popular movement. This clearly, however, was not at all the situation Egyptians in Tahrir Square found themselves in. While observing the Arab Spring unfold in Egypt and other MENA regions, I was sincerely shocked and outraged by the seemingly lawless environment and human rights abuses prevalent among all of the popular demonstrations. I realize my own positionality contributed to the shock I experienced, understanding that such a reality exists while witnessing the revolutions unfold in real time, then again while conducting this research. I understand that my worldview contributes to my perceptions of normal and or acceptable behavior and experiences, and thus I recognize that in order to better understand and contextualize the Egyptian revolutionary experience, I needed to engage in research pertinent to the Egyptian culture.

Through my previous five year marriage to a native Moroccan, I have familial experience within Islamic, Moroccan, and to some extent North African culture. I have spent time in Morocco, engaging with my in-laws at the time, which facilitated a grass roots experience differing from a visiting tourist's experience. Over the course of my marriage I was immersed in Islamic practices and very much a part of the local Muslim community in El Paso, Texas. I made many Muslim friends both foreign and domestic, and I was regularly engaged in participatory learning through various classes and volunteer work at the local Masjid (Islamic place of worship). In addition to my experiences in my personal life, I also enrolled in Arabic language and cultural immersion courses at my institution for several semesters, expanding my understanding of Islamic and MENA cultures beyond my own personal experience. Finally, I also engaged in secondary research through various levels of scholarly and non-scholarly readings, like the Quran, English based Egyptian media and news websites, a variety of blogs, and scholarly publications regarding the MENA region and Egypt herself to name just a few.

While my research is observational, my own life experiences alongside my deliberate research efforts have helped me recognize and negotiate the spaces of cultural gaps to create more informed interpretations of my participants and their tweets.

While it is impossible to completely remove researcher biases, the purpose of reflexivity in grounded theory should be used to “respond primarily by acknowledging *where* researcher interactions have importantly influenced research processes, [and] while any analysis one may decide to provide about *how* these interactions may have benefited or undermined the research does not need to be exhaustive and should never be excessive. (Gentles, Jack, Nicholas, & McKibbin, 2014, p. 5; emphasis in original). Charmaz (2011) argues, “engaging in reflexivity and assuming relativity aids us in recognizing multiple realities, positions, and standpoints – and how they shift during the research process for both the researcher and the research participants” (p. 169). My efforts though recognizing my positionality through engaging in reflexivity throughout my researching and analysis process have helped me resist applying my presuppositions onto my data in order to allow my interpretation of the data to be well informed through my life experience, research efforts, and educational experiences at the tertiary level. It is important to understand that my academic training has created in me the capacity to think deeply and critically, and through reflexivity I am able to recognize and resist research bias, but ultimately my findings are indeed an interpretation and partial, yet still bring to light a story and perspective about the Egyptian revolution that may not otherwise be told.

Chapter 5: Analysis

This chapter will begin by discussing the phases of data analysis I undertook in order to create a manageable dataset in size suitable for a single researcher while ensuring the integrity of payload. I discuss the executive decisions I took in splicing and reducing the payload, resulting in eight subsets, totaling 5,583 tweets individually analyzed. I detail the most salient aspects of the comprehensive dataset in order to correlate overarching findings to detailed and specific findings in the smaller eight subsets. Viral retweets were given special attention as they served to provide a telling narrative surround the most important topics or themes found both in the comprehensive dataset and on each specific day of analysis. Upon discussing comprehensive findings, I detail findings in each of the eight subsets which correlate to the eight days of highest user activity, essentially delving into a micro level analysis for each day. Finally, I discuss findings according to Gee's (2011) five rhetorical tools.

The analysis of my data occurred in phases, essentially beginning with creating order in a very large and very messy payload. In the section bellow I discuss the processes I engaged towards creating an organized, manageable dataset. In short, I removed exact and near duplicate tweets while leaving only one “seed” or version of the tweet in the dataset for analysis. While those duplicated tweets were removed from the comprehensive dataset, the exact and near duplicate tweets were grouped into clusters and housed in a “clusters” bucket—the term DiscoverText uses to describe a space for data storage in the software. Upon deduplication I used a filter separate tweets according the date the tweets were posted and I created respective dataset for each date. It is within these daily datasets and clusters that I was able to interrogate my data in meaningful ways.

The clusters, or groupings which are mostly retweets, provide a “high level sense of the data landscape... offering a roadmap to the digital footprint of viral Tweets” (DiscoverText, 2020, homepage). I captured the most retweeted or viral retweets for the overall comprehensive dataset as well as the most viral retweets in each of the daily data subsets. In this way I was able to capture the undercurrent conversations, themes, moods, taking place on Twitter during the select timeframe both from a high level bird’s eye view at the comprehensive level and a closer view though analyzing retweets among each of the daily data subsets as well. While I do not heavily theorize upon retweeting practices, viral tweets offer meaningful insight and as such it is seemingly beneficial to understand why people engage in retweeting practices as it offers a more ample understanding of my data and thus research as well. In “Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspect of Retweeting on Twitter” boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010) suggest several reasons why people may retweet to include the desire to amplify or spread tweets to new audience, to publicly agree with someone, to validate other’s thoughts, as an act of friendship, loyalty, or homage, to recognize a or refer to less popular people or less visible content, or to make one’s presence as a listener visible (p. 6). While these reasons are not explored in this study, they are nonetheless valuable and certainly create a more robust interpretation of data.

Within the daily data subsets, I engaged in open ended coding practices guided by Constructivist data analysis, rooted in Charmaz’s (2006) Constructivist Grounded Theory wherein codes arose and developed from the data itself, proving to be unique for each day’s correlating dataset. Once the coding process was complete, themes and trends became evident within each day and I was able to create categories and subcategories to organize the tweets in my dataset for further theorization. After this process I considered Gee’s (2011) five theoretical tools “that are centered in different theories about how language ties to the world and culture” (p.

150). Considering the location of the revolution and the parameters of the dataset that limited users to be located in Egypt at the time, I utilized Gee's (2001) tools because they offer a meaningful explanatory framework that is expansive enough to encompass the full rhetorical situation of the individual's use of Twitter during the Arab Spring. Briefly, he labels these tools as "situated meaning tool, social languages tool, intertextuality tool, figured worlds tool, and the big d discourse tool" to bring about a theory based requirement of situated meaning making throughout the analysis. Briefly, he describes the notion of situated meaning, arguing that "we as humans actively build meanings 'on line' when we used language in specific contexts" (Gee, 2011, p. 150). The "social languages" tool is connected to the meanings and activities associated with social and cultural groups and how those variances are present in the observed communication practices. (Gee, 2011, p. 150 and 161). The "intertextuality" tool refers to the practice of making reference to or alluding to what others have said. (Gee, 2011, p. 150 and 165). The "figured worlds" tool considers the speakers and audience's perception of a pictured or simplified world which "captures what is taken to be typical or normal" (Gee, 2011, p. 150 and 170). Finally, the Big "D" Discourse tool refers to the way "the person is using language...interacting, believing...valuing...and using various objects, tools, technologies in certain sort of environments to enact a specific socially recognizable identity and engage in one or more socially recognizable activities" (Gee, 2011, p. 181) These tools were complementary to my existing codes and organizational structure as they added a layer of depth to theorize upon the discursive practices within the tweets while also furthering organizational needs and advancing structure and terminology.

MAKING MESSY DATA MANAGEABLE

Using the search parameters I created, the total payload from DiscoverText yielded a total of 375,710 tweets. Within DiscoverText, I ran a deduplication filter which identified and removed exact or near duplicate tweets from the overall dataset, leaving a “single seed,” or one instance of the tweet for analysis in the dataset. Duplicates are usually retweets (RT’s) and are an important indicator of a shared conversational sentiment and thus duplicate clusters can be particularly telling when considering the virality of a tweet and/or the popularity of an author/Twitter user. The practice of retweeting contributes to the “conversational ecology,” serving to both diffuse information and engage in conversation. Those retweet clusters—a cluster being a group duplicate or near duplicate tweets, which appeared more than 50 times in the overall dataset—were evaluated within this project, as they provide a thematic understanding of the conversations on the days they appeared with high frequency. Declustering the data, however, allows the duplicate tweets to exist in conversation, but not overwhelm other voices in the dataset. The total number of tweets remaining after declustering was 185,456, which I then grouped into daily “buckets” as per the 18-day time frame of the Egyptian revolution. Only after I grouped these tweets was I able to discern the frequency of tweets on each given day, and only those days with over 10,000 tweets, which totaled eight, were selected for closer analysis. Within each of the eight days, I took a 5% random sample to conduct a tweet-by-tweet analysis. Table 1.1 shows a breakdown of the eight days by date and tweet total.

Table 1.1. Eight Day Description

Date of Interest	Number of tweets (Thousands)
January 25, 2011	10,231 tweets
January 26, 2011	10,803 tweets
January 27, 2011	10,409 tweets
February 2, 2011	13,723 tweets
February 3, 2011	13,163 tweets
February 4, 2011	12,830 tweets

February 10, 2011	17,443 tweets
February 11, 2011	16,958 tweets

In order to correlate the daily buckets to the overall dataset, I took note of particular descriptives among the large dataset and the smaller daily subsets. Within the large comprehensive dataset, there are 6,239 total unique users or individual Twitter accounts. The overall language ratio between English tweets and Non- English (i.e., Arabic, French, and other) tweets, is 57% to 43% Non- English, respectively, indicating English as the most predominate language used on Twitter within this dataset. There is a total of 3,403 embedded images, roughly 1.9% of the dataset, and 3,736 embedded videos, roughly 2% of the dataset, suggesting this aspect of multimodality is not employed with marked significance. The inclusion of URL's or links, however, is much higher, totaling 34,822, nearly 19% of the total dataset, indicating that linking practices are an important aspect of the communication practices on Twitter. Table 2.1 indicates the top users-- those individual Twitter accounts tweeting in the highest numbers.

Table 2.1. Top Users

Twitter Handle	Language	News Handle or Individual	Location	Total tweets
EgyFeeds	Arabic	News reposts but not a news site	Egypt	2692
hassanyahya	Arabic	Individual, Cairo Egypt	Cairo, Egypt	1934
Elazul	Mostly English	Individual	USA and Cairo	1764
AkherElAkhbar	Arabic	Individual	Cairo	1637
ahramEgypt	English	News	Egypt	1469
virtualactivism	English	Individual	USA/Egypt	1426
3arabawy	English and Arabic	Individual/journalist	Cairo, Egypt	1392
25Egypt	Arabic	Individual	Cairo, Egypt	1384
CaireneGirl	English	Individual	Cairo, Egypt	1276
MasrawyFans	Arabic	News	Cairo, Egypt	1160

The majority of the identified top users are individuals, not news organization sites (only 2), indicating that the majority of tweets in this dataset are communication from individuals rather than news organization sites. Among these top users, both English and Arabic language use is mostly equal, and only two of the top users indicate a shared location in the US, while all other users are identified as having Egypt or Cairo as their location. These descriptives provide broad insight regarding the body composition of the tweets in the comprehensive dataset and can help identify similar and/or varying patterns in the smaller daily subsets. The most popular code categories that emerged from my dataset are “Expressing” used to capture a variety of emotive and/or opinion-based tweets. Calls to Action used to capture the many ways Twitter users called upon others to support and/or participate in the ProDemocracy movement. And Information sharing, used to capture details regarding the activity surrounding the movement.

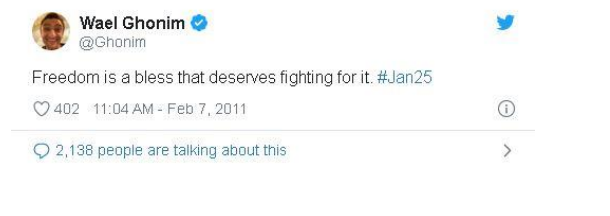
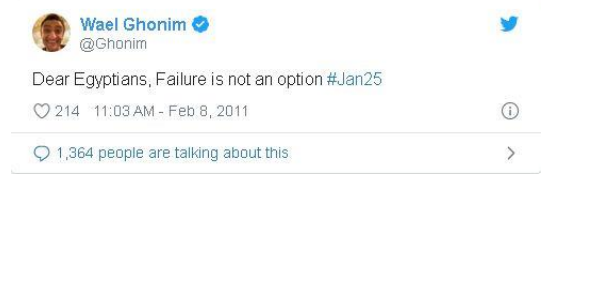

Viral Retweets.





























Within the comprehensive dataset and among the smaller daily subsets there are several tweets that have been retweeted with high frequency. Through a closer reading of these popular retweets one can gain a broadstroke understanding of some of the more popular conversational undercurrents taking place on Twitter, both within these select days and during the overall revolutionary time period. Boyd, Golder, and Lotan (2010) suggest that retweeting practice can be seen “as the act of copying and broadcasting, the practice contributes to a conversational ecology in which conversations are composed of a public interplay of voices that give rise to an emotional sense of shared conversational context” (p. 1). Through declustering of the dataset, I have grouped the most popular retweets of the revolution, finding that the majority of the retweets originate from tweets by Wael Ghonim, a popular Egyptian Activist and, arguably, an unofficial leader of the movement. Several of his most popular tweets are discussed in Table 3.1

below. On the left column the original tweet has been made available and on the right column there are descriptive factors that include the number of RT's, the date the tweet appeared, general coding examples, and a brief summary describing what the tweet “does.”

It is important to note that retweeting practices displayed here fall within the category of “preservers” which boyd, Golder, Lotan (2010) describe as users who seek to “preserve as much of the text of a tweet as possible” in order to preserve the meaning of the tweet as initially received, and, thus, to ensure a continuum of that message as they retweet (p. 5). This set of retweets fits securely within the category of “preservers” as these retweets have met the requirements of the “clustering” algorithm in DiscoverText, which ensures tweets are clustered in groups for such they are an exact or near duplicate match of the original body of the tweets.

Table 3.1. Wael Ghonim tweets and descriptive factors




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most popular: 334 RT • 2/7/2011 • RT's continued to swell into the thousands. • Expresses the value of freedom such that it is worthy of the struggle to attain it.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 267 RT's • 2/8/2011 • Addresses Egyptians as fellow countrymen and a nod towards solidarity, and urges the importance of seeing the struggle of the revolution through to the removal of Mubarak
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 228 RT • 2/11/11 • Addresses fellow EDUCATED Egyptians; Expresses urgency; Call to action: urges a return home to rebuild. Post Mubarak removal

 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>Dear Western Governments, You've been silent for 30 years supporting the regime that was oppressing us. Please don't get involved now #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 443 6:53 AM - Feb 11, 2011 </p> <p>💬 3,425 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 206 RT • 2/11/11 • Addresses Western Gov't; accusations of decades long complacency; urges them to stay out of the Egyptian revolution
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>Dear Egyptians, Go back to your work on Sunday, work like never before and help Egypt become a developed country. #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 135 6:17 PM - Feb 11, 2011 </p> <p>💬 1,126 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 203 RT • 2/11/11 • Addresses Egyptians; call to action: return to work post Mubarak removal to encourage country development
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>An officer just called me to tell me: I escaped from the service after ElAdly asked us to fire live bullets randomly on protesters. #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 79 10:29 PM - Feb 8, 2011 </p> <p>💬 1,175 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 191 RT • 2/8/11 • Information sharing; reporting from a secondary source; implies information from a police official; defected after El Adly (Major General Egyptian Police) ordered live fire on protesters
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>We are hoping that the "Friday of Martyrs" will be the world largest funeral to bid farewell to 300 Egyptians #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 67 8:34 AM - Feb 9, 2011 </p> <p>💬 670 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 141 RT • 2/9/11 • Expressing hope; recognition of protesters death; hope for world recognition of "martyrdom"
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>A government that is scared from #Facebook and #Twitter should govern a city in Farmville but not a country like #Egypt #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 149 6:29 AM - Jan 26, 2011 </p> <p>💬 1,483 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 140 RT • 1/26/11 • Expression through sarcasm; indirect reference to government SNS censorship; FB, Farmville and Twitter mentioned; expressing: gov't inaptitude in governing
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>Gave my 2 cents to Dr. Hosam Badrawy, who was reason why I am out today. Asked him resign cause that's the only way I'll respect him #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 93 11:30 AM - Feb 7, 2011 </p> <p>💬 644 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 131 RT • 2/7/11 • Sharing: conversation shared w/Egyptian national football coach; asked him to resign; credits coach to his presence out (presence implied in streets/protesting)
 <p>Wael Ghonim  @Ghonim </p> <p>Proud to be an Egyptian . . . ختور اى مصري #Egypt #Jan25</p> <p>♡ 91 5:13 PM - Feb 8, 2011 </p> <p>💬 401 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 111 RT • 2/8/11 • Expressing: Egyptian Pride, Arabic language use also included

A general theme found in these viral tweets by Wael Ghonim is his personal identification as an Egyptian wherein he intentionally situates himself as a fellow countryman. He performs his Egyptian identity to form a bond of solidarity with other Egyptians in which he calls on them to actively participate in a variety of ways. @Ghonim expresses criticism of Western government involvement and criticism of the Egyptian regime as well as expressing pride in being Egyptian himself. The themes found in his tweets thus offer some insight as to the prevalent sentiment surfacing and resurfacing within the overall communicative geography of this dataset.

Among these RT's, only a few others appeared frequently enough to make the top 10 list. While these users are far less popular, their tweets were RT'd such that they are indeed worthy of note and may be found in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2. Additional Frequent Retweets and Descriptive Factors

 <p>Mohamed Ahmos @MohamedAhmos</p> <p>FREEDOM LOADING ██████████ 99% [Error: Please remove Mubarak and try again!] #Jan25 #Egypt #Mubarak #Tahrir</p> <p>376 10:09 AM - Feb 4, 2011</p> <p>3,187 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 193 RT • 2/4/11 • Expressing: hope for Mubarak's removal; his exit is near; use of contemporary ideograph (loading bar)
 <p>Dominic Kavakeb @DominicKavakeb</p> <p>It's so vital that world understands this is not a divided #Egypt. This is the state attacking the people. #jan25 #tahrir</p> <p>297 6:50 AM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>3,486 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 170 RT • 2/2/11 • Expressing: urgency and clarity, Egypt is not divided; state vs. people
 <p>Nevine @NevineZaki</p> <p>A pic I took yesterday of Christians protecting Muslims during their prayers #jan25 http://yfrog.com/h02gvcij</p> <p>780 5:42 PM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>4,734 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 126 RT • 2/2/11 • Sharing: personal photo user took herself (link, dead); Christians protecting Muslims in prayer during protest • Note: I have seen this photo

These tweets also went viral and were highly retweeted, suggesting that notions of freedom and solidarity were prevalent sentiments found throughout the datasets. All three of these tweets above display a level of solidarity among protesters and, interestingly, two of these



three do so both through language in text and through multimodality either through ideograph or photos, essentially communicating a message with and beyond textual discourse.















TWEETS ON EACH DAY



January 25, 2011

There are 10,231 total tweets captured on this day, 946 unique users, and the language ratio is 53% Non-English to 47% English, making this the only day of analysis wherein English is not the predominant language used. Tweets including images comprise roughly 4.5% while tweets containing videos are less frequent at only about 2.3%. URL's, on the other hand, are more prevalently used, appearing in about 18% of total tweets. The top 10 users on this day are mostly individuals, with a single news feed being the top producer of tweets overall. Table 3.3 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.3. January 25, 2011

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 RT • @ing specific users; call to action: please help spread the news; direct reference to Twitter and the act of tweeting; directing accreditation to Tweeting practices and a direct correlation between tweeting and news spreading about the revolution; media blackout credited to the regime; media blackout began/mentioned early
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 RT • Expressing: excitement (onomonopia); positive emotion attached to Anonymous; Group disables NDP website; cites NDP via @ing; cites popular activist via @ing directing and citing his link (photo link, dead); use of #Egypt w/in the sentence; popular author and feminist voice; woman

<p>Dima Khatib ديمة الخطيب  @Dima_Khatib </p> <p>Al Jazeera Bureau Chief in Cairo says protests started spontaneous but are turning into something more organised & durable #Egypt #jan25</p> <p>♡ 1 2:42 PM - Jan 25, 2011 </p> <p>🗨️ 37 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 RT • Woman; journalist; Reporting information: crediting AJ news bureau chief: protests becoming organized and durable; longevity implied?
<p>Thoton Akimoto @thoton9 </p> <p>【速報】カイロからUstream中継 エジプトの反政府デモ ムバラク大統領の退陣求め、肖像画燃やす 市民がネットで連絡とりあう「フェースブック革命」とも ustream.tv/channel/cairod... #egypt #news #japan</p> <p> IBM Watson Media @IBMWatsonMedia</p>  <p>♡ 4 9:12 AM - Jan 25, 2011 </p> <p>🗨️ 36 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 RT • Man, Not English, Japanese inferred through other hashtags; the only embedded video in the whole dataset; link included (dead); cell phone video, balcony view, night time footage of violence unfolding on the streets, Arabic spoken/heard
<p>Alshaheed @Alshaheed </p> <p>Doctors are needed in Tahrir square now please to help protesters #Jan25 #Egypt</p> <p>♡ 2:23 PM - Jan 25, 2011 </p> <p>🗨️ 35 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 RT • Gender not specified; Call to action: Doctors needed in Tahrir; Medical attention for protestors requested; specific location mentioned; specific task mentioned
<p>Dima Khatib ديمة الخطيب  @Dima_Khatib </p> <p>Lots and lots of gas bombs on Tahrir Square.. Heavy police presence + ambulances everywhere #egypt #jan25</p> <p>♡ 1 4:05 PM - Jan 25, 2011 </p> <p>🗨️ 34 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 RT • Woman; journalist; Reporting activity: violence, weaponry, ambulance presence; Reporting police activity: heavy presence; specific location mentioned
<p>Tom Trewinnard @Tom_El_Rumi </p> <p>Unbelievable scenes in Ramses http://youtu.be/o-wZpF6P7sQ #jan25</p> <p>♡ 2 6:32 AM - Jan 25, 2011 </p> <p>🗨️ 28 people are talking about this ></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 RT • Man; Specific location mentioned; link (dead); expressing: disbelief regarding activity specific location; activity not specified













 <p>Alshaheed @Alshaheeed</p> <p>Suliman Saber Ali is the second victim in Suez. Egyptian Police opened fire on protesters killing him and Mustafa Reda. #Jan25 #Egypt</p> <p>1:20 PM - Jan 25, 2011</p> <p>27 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 RT • Gender not specified; Sharing information: deaths of protestors as a direct result of Egyptian police and open fire; specific names of dead included
 <p>Alshaheed @Alshaheeed</p> <p>All who live close 2 Tahrir square asked 2 unlock their wifi passwords so public use their internet instead of mobile coverage #Jan25 #Egypt</p> <p>11:13 AM - Jan 25, 2011</p> <p>26 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 RT • Gender unknown; Call to action: unlock wifi passwords for public use if your within a two block radius; specific location mentioned; specific task requested






Among the most predominant themes among these popular retweets on this day are those that fall in the category of “information sharing” and “calls to action.” Interestingly, Twitter and its role in the relaying of news surrounding the revolution is the most popular retweet on this day. The act of Tweeting has some significance here such that Tweets and/or the act of Tweeting is credited as a means of circumventing a media blackout. Other forms of information sharing include sharing descriptions of scenes on the ground, video, and video links, as forms of evidence and information as well. Those falling under “call to action” directly relate to the needs of protestors wherein one tweet calls to the need of doctors on location and the other tweet speaks towards a technical need of accessible wifi for those on location. On this day, descriptions and evidence towards the reality and validity of a growing revolution are thematically relevant as was sharing the tangible needs of the people on location.

January 26, 2011

There are 10,803 total tweets captured on this day, 1,092 unique users, and the language ratio is 52% English to 48% Non-English. Tweets including images make up about 2.3% and videos about 2%. URL’s within tweets, however, make up about 20% of the overall dataset. The top 10 users are all individuals, with the exception of one news organization account Table 3.4 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.4 January 26, 2011

 <p>Amnesty International USA  @amnestyusa</p> <p>#Egypt's Twitter block attempt 2 stop world fr getting info from activists. Stand in solidarity w Egyptian activists! RT http://ow.ly/3KHMN</p> <p>8 10:57 AM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>125 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 RT • Human rights org; Call to action: RT and support activists; Sharing information: SNS censorship; Twitter mentioned; link
 <p>Philip DeFranco  @PhillyD</p> <p>Our generations revolutions will happen when citizens take to the streets with a rock in one hand and a camera phone in the other. #Egypt</p> <p>22 9:50 AM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>79 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 RT • Man; Expressing: opinion towards success of “our” (unknown who) revolutions, violent resistance (rock) documentation and dissemination (cell phone); reference to successful Egyptian revolution?
 <p>Garach Jedao Shkan @ClipperChip</p> <p>Egypt: President's son and family 'have fled to the UK' http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/Aki/English/Security/?id=3.1.1591050596 #OpEgypt #Jan25</p> <p>3 1:22 PM - Jan 25, 2011</p> <p>43 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 RT • Gender unknown; link (dead); Sharing information: update regarding royal family movement; adjective “fled” (to UK)
 <p>Garach Jedao Shkan @ClipperChip</p> <p>Operation Egypt Press Release (Video Version): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBa13MQv3Xo #Anonymous #OpEgypt #Jan25 #SidiBouzid</p> <p>1 3:26 PM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>24 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 RT • Gender unknown (appears twice this day); youtube link (live, watched); Sharing information: Anonymous propaganda video; antiregime
 <p>Shadi Hamid  @shadihamid</p> <p>US, at very least, needs to start distancing itself from Mubarak, by stepping up public criticism of repression #Egypt #jan25</p> <p>4:50 PM - Jan 25, 2011</p> <p>27 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 RT • Man; journalist; Call to action: requesting US gov’t public response; Expressing: opinion on US position; Expressing: critical of Mubarak and repression
 <p>benwedeman  @bencnn</p> <p>Crowd growing at journalists syndacite some pushing and shoving. #Jan25 #egypt</p> <p>6:22 AM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>26 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 RT • Man, Journalist; Sharing update: live situation update; location mentioned; escalating physical disorder, not quite violent
 <p>Jeremy  @baysocialist</p> <p>Who cares about Obama's #SOTU speech? The real news today is being made by the Egyptian working class. #Jan25</p> <p>4:50 PM - Jan 25, 2011</p> <p>16 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 RT • Man; Expressing: dismissal of US political event (SOTU); Expressing: opinion towards value of Egyptian “working class” implies revolutionary movement

 <p>Committee to Protect Journalists  @pressfreedom</p> <p>Journalists beaten, websites blocked amid protests in #Egypt #jan25 #censorship</p> <p>1 2:01 PM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>20 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 RT • Organization; Reporting: violence (targeted: journalists) AND website censorship w/a direct correlation and/or response to protests
 <p>Jacob Appelbaum @joerror</p> <p>I am very hopeful that Egypt will end the reign of Mubarak and I hope that the rest of the United States takes action in solidarity! #jan25</p> <p>5 2:56 PM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>21 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 RT • Man; Expressing: In support of protestors; Hopeful for successful revolution; Expressing call to action AND hope: foreign citizens (US) will take action (unspecified) and stand in solidarity
 <p>Dima Khatib  @Dima_Khatib</p> <p>Just take a look at this picture. Egyptian people: so brave. Egyptian police: such cowards http://on.fb.me/h2mVCL #egypt #jan25</p> <p>5 3:14 PM - Jan 26, 2011</p> <p>26 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 RT • Woman; journalist; link (dead); Call to action: view photo; Expressing: negative sentiment towards Egyptian police; adjective: cowards; Expressing: positive sentiment towards Egyptian people; adjective: brave





























Half of the most popular retweets on this day are originally authored by journalists or account for official organizations (i.e., Amnesty International and The Committee to Protect Journalist). The tweets from both of these organizations express concern regarding the freedom of the press and are directly related to the regime’s use of internet censorship. The tweets produced by the journalists include the reporting of information surrounding the situation developing on the ground and a general sense of criticism towards repression enacted by the regime on the Egyptian people. Rumors of the royal family’s departure from Egypt and a propaganda video expressing heavy criticism of the Egyptian regime created by the resistance group known as “Anonymous” were also among the most popular retweets. Finally, among these tweets there is a general sense of positive sentiment towards the Egyptian revolution in support of their resistance.




January 27, 2011

There are 10,409 total tweets captured on this day, 1,232 unique users, and the language ratio is evenly split at 50%. Tweets including images make up about 1.5% and videos about

2.2%. URL's within tweets, however, make up about 21% of the overall dataset. The top 10 users are mostly individuals, except for two news organization accounts. Table 3.5 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.5. January 27, 2011

 <p>The Guardian  @guardian </p> <p>In case you missed it: @Guardian reporter Jack Shenker (@HackneyLad) beaten + arrested in #Egypt http://gu.com/p/2mkfz/tw #jan25</p> <p>♥ 4 1:10 AM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>72 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 RT • News reporting agency; linked to their own article (live); Reporting: targeted violence; @ing to cite specific user; specific user named AND a victim of regime violence and arrest
 <p>Budz @Budzaya </p> <p>@nytimes Please spread the word. We at #Egypt are being banned from all online and mobile presence! Help! #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 2 3:14 PM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>95 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 RT • Gender unknown; Call to action: spread news regarding censorship; Call to action @ specific news agency; Call to action: help
 <p>Mona Eltahawy  @monaeltahawy </p> <p>I am a 43-yr old #Egyptian. This is the most exciting time of my life. Thank you fellow Egyptians for your courage! My heart is yours #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 1 3:02 PM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>40 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 RT • Woman; Journalist; Expressing: Egyptian Pride; Expressing: Thanks/Gratitude towards demonstrators
 <p>Michael Moore  @MMFlint </p> <p>DominoTheory finally in action as the people take 2 the strts in US-backed dictatorships! 1M protesters may fill #Egypt strts!</p> <p>♥ 11 3:46 PM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>156 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 RT • Man; Celebrity: US; Expressing: critical of US; Expressing: positive sentiment (inferred) towards demonstrators
 <p>Mona Eltahawy  @monaeltahawy </p> <p>Friday: A Million Egyptians Want to March for Freedom and Dignity "Walk Like an Egyptian": http://twitpic.com/3tvel4 #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 2 10:23 AM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>42 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 RT • Woman; Journalist; Feminist voice; Sharing: photolink (reference to US pop song); Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrations
 <p>Jacob Appelbaum @loerror </p> <p>I need to borrow some Sat phone and Sat internet uplink for Egypt - please contact me ASAP for in country deployment. #jan25 #egypt</p> <p>♥ 4 4:27 PM - Jan 27, 2011 </p> <p>53 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 • Man; Request: technological assistance/need for Egypt; Specific location mentioned: Egypt

























 <p>Weddady @weddady</p> <p>ALERT ALERT ALERT: DOUBLE CONFIRMATION: INTERNET DOWN RT @manal: Confirmed from sources in alex & cairo #Jan25</p> <p>4:11 PM - Jan 27, 2011</p> <p>33 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 RT • Man, Revolutionist; Expressing: urgency; Sharing: Confirmed information; Sharing: Internet down; Specific location mentioned; RT; @ing user to cite
 <p>Lara Setrakian @Lara</p> <p>El Baradei has landed...pandemonium at Cairo airport. #Jan25</p> <p>10:55 AM - Jan 27, 2011</p> <p>54 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 RT: • Woman; Journalist; Information sharing: Reporting public movement; Politician: named; El Baradei; specific location mentioned;
 <p>Jacob Appelbaum @loerror</p> <p>I just lost all of my machines in Egypt. #jan25 #egypt</p> <p>3:38 PM - Jan 27, 2011</p> <p>40 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 RT • Man; Information sharing: personal loss of material/equipment (technology implied); Specific location mentioned










The majority of these tweets originate from popular, verified Twitter accounts, indicating a certain level of popularity usually attributed to holding the status of public figure or celebrity. The Guardian’s Twitter account reported the beating and arrest of one of their journalists in Egypt. Journalist Mona Elathawy appears twice. Both tweets express a solidarity as a fellow Egyptian and pride in being Egyptian, while one of the tweets tweet also promotes a march in solidarity for freedom in Egypt on a specific day. Celebrity Michael Moore’s tweet expresses a positive sentiment in support of the revolution while also sharing a critical sentiment towards the US in labeling the Mubarak regime a “US backed dictatorship.” The second most viral tweet of the day seems to have been created by an average individual who directed their tweet directly at the New York Times (via @ing practices) in order to report internet and mobile censorship in Egypt while also asking for help. Finally, a second user also appeared twice in the data set and in both of his tweets discussed technology. More specifically, in one tweet he expresses a need for particular communication technologies and later his tweet reports the loss of all of his “machines.”

February 2, 2011

There are 13,723 total tweets captured on this day, 1,545 unique users, and the language ratio is 62% English to 38% Non-English. Tweets including images and videos make up about 1% each. URL's within tweets, however, make up about 12% of the overall dataset. The total unique users are all individuals, except for two news organizations. Table 3.6 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.6. February 2, 2011

 <p>Dan Nolan  @Dan_Nolan9 </p> <p>Army doing nothing to stop this civilian battle outside cairo museum. Tanks sit amongst a flurry of rocks as battle ebbs n flows. #Egypt</p> <p>3 6:20 AM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>108 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 RT • Man; Journalist; Expressing: critical sentiment towards Egyptian army; Specific location mentioned; Information Sharing: reporting military presence on location; Sharing: violence on location
 <p>matthew cassel  @matthewcassel </p> <p>US taxpayers are funding the thugs attacking unarmed children, women and men protesters in Tahrir Square right now. #Egypt #Jan25</p> <p>8:55 AM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>65 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 RT • Man; Journalist; Specific location mentioned; Expressing: negative sentiment towards violence towards demonstrators (military implied); Sharing: violence on location; Expressing: critical of US
 <p>Tim Marshall @twitius </p> <p>#Egypt saw man being beaten to death. intervened with 2 other men. His blood is all over us but he survived.</p> <p>2 7:54 AM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>75 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 RT • Man; Sharing: personal experience on location; Sharing: violence on location; Sharing: personal involvement on location
 <p>Al Arabiya English  @AlArabiya_Eng </p> <p>The number of people wounded in violence in Cairo increases to 611 from 403, the health minister says #Egypt #Cairo #Jan25 #Protests</p> <p>6 1:07 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>110 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 RT • News reporting account; Al Arabiyya; Information sharing: death toll; numbers mentioned; Specific location mentioned
 <p>Nicholas Kristof  @NickKristof </p> <p>Shots fired, maybe warnings. Hoping we're not seeing provocations, violence between pro- and anti-#Mubarak factions.</p> <p>7 5:31 PM - Feb 1, 2011 </p> <p>84 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 RT • Man, Journalist; Information sharing: reporting violence on location: ProMubarak vs AntiMubarak

























 <p>Philip J. Crowley  @PJCrowley</p> <p>We are concerned about detentions and attacks on news media in #Egypt. The civil society that Egypt wants to build includes a free press.</p> <p>5 7:58 AM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>186 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 RT • Man, Journalist; Expressing: concern/worry; Sharing: violence, journalist; Expressing: need for free press
 <p>Al Jazeera News  @AJENews</p> <p>At least three army vehicles have been seized by pro-Mubarak supporters - http://aje.me/dkYlQt #Egypt #Jan25 #Cairo</p> <p>2 7:09 AM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>72 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 RT • News reporting account; Al Jazeera; Information sharing: situation on location; newlink; ProMubarak movement; Weapon (vehicle)
 <p>Gregg Carlstrom @gicarlstrom</p> <p>Pro-Mubarak rioters are now driving a bus into a crowd of anti-government protesters in Tahrir. #egypt</p> <p>3 2:45 PM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>56 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56 RT • Man, Information sharing: situation on location; Sharing: violence; Sharing: Pro Mubarak violence; Sharing: Anti Mubarak, targeted; Weapon (vehicle) Specific location mentioned
 <p>Hala Gorani  @HalaGorani</p> <p>Hearing more shots fired. Molotov cocktails being thrown (some from rooftops) outside Egyptian museum in Tahrir square. #Egypt</p> <p>2 10:57 AM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>46 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 RT • Woman, Journalist; Information sharing: violence on location; specific location mentioned; Weapons
 <p>Al Jazeera News  @AJENews</p> <p>Eyewitness accuses pro-Mubarak supporters, carrying sticks, stones & knives, of attacking the anti-government demonstrators. #Egypt #Jan25</p> <p>1 5:48 AM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>75 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 RT • News reporting account; Al Jazeera; Information sharing: violence on location; Sharing: Pro Mubarak violence; Sharing: Anti Mubarak targeted; Weapons


































The majority of retweets on this day originate from journalists or the accounts from official news reporting organizations, namely Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya. All of the tweets report some level of violence, either violence on location, concern regarding targeted violence and/or detention of both journalists and demonstrators, and many reporting weaponry in use (i.e. shots fired, Molotov cocktails, use of vehicles to cause harm, and knives, stones, and sticks). The overarching theme found throughout the retweets on this day reflect a reporting of violence and concern for those effected by the violence during the demonstrations on this day.


February 3, 2011

There are 13,163 total tweets captured on this day, 1,489 unique users, and the language ratio is 62% English to 38% Non-English. Tweets including images and videos make up about 1.6% each. URL's within tweets, however, make up about 16% of the overall dataset. The total unique users are all individuals, except for three news organizations. Table 3.7 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.7. February 3, 2011

 <p>AI Jazeera News  @AJENews </p> <p>Hundreds of anti-government protesters are making their way to #Tahrir Square for a 10th day of demonstrations. http://aje.me/eL6YOW #Egypt</p> <p>♥ 4 11:11 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>83 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: movement on location; Newslink; specific location mentioned
 <p>John Perry Barlow @JPBarlow </p> <p>"We know that if we give up and leave the #Tahrir Square, they will hunt us one by one. So, if we must, we will die here."</p> <p>♥ 8 12:19 AM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>73 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83 RT • Man; use of quotations (implied citation/secondary information); Expressing: willingness to die for the cause; Expressing: fear of targeted violence
 <p>Department of State  @StateDept </p> <p>Information on the status of U.S. citizen evacuations from #Egypt: http://go.usa.gov/Ypx</p> <p>♥ 4 9:05 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>76 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 RT • Government account: US DoS; Information sharing: safety US citizens; link
 <p>Democracy Now!  @democracynow </p> <p>Journalist Robert Fisk: Obama Admin Has Been Gutless & Cowardly in Dealing w the Mubarak Regime. Interview: http://ow.ly/3PGF9 #egypt</p> <p>♥ 10 9:59 AM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>65 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 RT • News reporting account; link; interview; journalist cited; Expressing: Critical of US;
 <p>Breaking News  @BreakingNews </p> <p>Crowd in Cairo, #Egypt, attacks pickup truck, pulls out and beats driver - NBC</p> <p>♥ 9 7:56 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>119 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 RT • News reporting account: Information sharing: violence on location; specific location mentioned; Information sharing: crowds

 <p>BBC Breaking News  @BBCBreaking </p> <p>UK Foreign Secretary William Hague calls violence in Egypt reprehensible and says harassment of journalists is unacceptable #Cairo #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 8 11:14 AM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>85 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: political statement (foreign, West); Expressing: concern/worry: targeted violence (journalist)
 <p>Jacob Appelbaum @joerror </p> <p>For those that say it is not for Obama to act - This is a repeat of Tiananmen square - we must act to stop this while we can! #jan25 #egypt</p> <p>♥ 4 9:10 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>67 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73 RT • Man; Call to action: participate to stop violence (US, individuals); Expressing: urgency; Juxtaposition: Tiananmen Square
 <p>Ali Seif (no lol) @BloggerSeif </p> <p>I'm leaving Tahrir now, tanks seem to be leaving slowly. It will be like yesterday, it will be a murder. FOREIGNERS LEAVE NOW! #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 3 7:14 AM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>56 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68 RT • Gender unknown; Sharing: person movement on location; Sharing: personal experience with violence on location; Sharing: continued/consecutive days of violence (murder); Call to action: foreigners leave
 <p>HuffPost  @HuffPost </p> <p>Heavy gunfire at Tahrir Square happening right now, 1 dead, 7 wounded http://huff.to/egyptnews #egypt</p> <p>♥ 5 8:01 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>131 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: violence on location; weapons; specific location mentioned; Sharing: deaths, numbers mentioned; Sharing: injuries, numbers mentioned; newslink
 <p>Breaking News  @BreakingNews </p> <p>Gunfire escalates as #Egypt protesters chase down pro-Mubarak supporters - NBC, Al Jazeera</p> <p>♥ 16 8:21 PM - Feb 2, 2011 </p> <p>127 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 RT • News Reporting account; Information sharing: violence on location; specific location mentioned; weapons; Anti Mubarak vs. Pro Mubarak, cites another news agency
 <p>CNN Breaking News  @cnbrk </p> <p>Police detain at least two humanitarian workers in #Egypt, Amnesty International reports. http://on.cnn.com/dQalQm</p> <p>♥ 6 10:11 AM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>120 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61 RT • News reporting account: Information sharing: arrests/detentions on location; newslink; cites a humanitarian account; Sharing: targeted detention; humanitarian workers
 <p>John Dickerson  @jdickerson </p> <p>Christians protecting Muslims while they pray. #Egypt http://bit.ly/tLJvk (via @RachaelBL)</p> <p>♥ 3 12:07 PM - Feb 3, 2011 </p> <p>61 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 RT • Man; Journalist; @ing to cite a user; photolink; Christians protecting Muslims in prayer during protest • Note: I have seen this photo

 <p>Travel - State Dept @TravelGov</p> <p>#Egypt: U.S. citizens wishing to depart #Egypt on USG flight should proceed to airport ASAP after the morning end of curfew.</p> <p>15 8:19 PM - Feb 2, 2011</p> <p>248 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 RT • Government account: US DoS (Travel); Information sharing: safety US citizens; Sharing: directions/advice; Specific location mentioned
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Tweets originating from the accounts of news reporting organization are most predominate on this day. This time, there exist tweets from a wide swath of news organizations, to include *Al Jazeera*, *BBC*, *Democracy Now*, and the *Huffington Post*. Tweets report growing crowds and continued violence on location. The *BBC* reports a statement from a UK diplomat condemning the violence and targeted detention of journalists, while *Democracy Now* shares an interview from a US reporter who expresses a highly critical opinion regarding President Obama’s response to the Mubarak regime. The second most viral tweet of the day is one that implies a direct quote from a demonstrator on the ground, expressing solidarity with other demonstrators and a willingness to die for their cause if necessary. Another tweet comes from a demonstrator on location, sharing their own movement on the ground, suggesting they have witnessed violence and death while participating in demonstrations and essentially warns all foreigners to leave as they feel violence will escalate. Another user creates a juxtaposition of Tahrir Square and Tiananmen Square, urging the Obama Administration to act. Finally, two official US government accounts appear on this day, both sharing information regarding the safe evacuations of US citizens from Egypt.





February 4, 2011

There are 12,830 total tweets captured on this day, 1,541 unique users, and the language ratio is 58% English to 42% Non-English. Tweets including images and videos make up about 2% each. URL’s within tweets, however, make up about 20% of the overall dataset. The total

unique users are all individuals, except for three news organizations. Table 3.8 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.8. February 4, 2011

 <p>NidhalBettaieb @NidhalBettaieb</p> <p>80 police cars have arrived at #Tahrir Square, #Cairo. All media evacuated. No cameras. A genocide is being prepared. #egypt</p> <p>6 5:09 PM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>81 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88 RT • Man; Sharing information: reporting heavy police presence on location; Expressing: fear of targeted violence (genocide); Specific location mentioned; Information sharing: media evacuated from location; Numbers mentioned
 <p>Edmond Terakopian @terakopian</p> <p>UK Photographer Lewis Whyld from PA has been arrested in Egypt. Please RT & report in all media. #Egypt</p> <p>9:42 AM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>67 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 RT • Man; Sharing: targeted detention, journalist; Call to action: RT; Call to action: share in all media; Journalist named; West (UK)
 <p>CNN Breaking News @cnnbrk</p> <p>U.S., #Egypt discuss ways to move political transition forward, U.S. official says http://on.cnn.com/eC3pac</p> <p>20 7:39 PM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>75 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: political statement (US); link; Expressing: foreign support of political transition (US)
 <p>John Perry Barlow @JPBarlow</p> <p>Chomsky in the Guardian: It's not radical Islam that worries the US – it's independence gu.com/p/2mqch/tw/#Jan25 #Egypt</p> <p>25 12:58 PM - Feb 4, 2011</p> <p>136 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 RT • Man; Sharing: News report; link; Scholar statement; Expressing: critical of US; Chomsky
 <p>Democracy Now! @democracynow</p> <p>How Pro-Democracy Activists Reclaimed #Tahrir Square After Mubarak Attacks. 23-min Video Report by @sharifkouddous http://ow.ly/3Qm9K #Egypt</p> <p>14 9:18 AM - Feb 4, 2011</p> <p>83 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 RT • News reporting account; @ing to cite journalist; Information sharing: video report on location; Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrators; Sharing: violence on location; Anti Mubarak vs Regime
 <p>Ali Seif (no lol) @BloggerSeif</p> <p>10 hours of interrogations and what's worse, I was one of 35 or so people in a room being asked what we are doing in Cairo now. #Jan25</p> <p>6 6:04 PM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>106 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 RT • Gender unknown; Sharing: personal experience on location; Sharing: police detention; Sharing: police detention; Specific location mentioned

 <p>Ivan Watson ✓ @IvanCNN</p> <p>Al Jazeera reports "gang of thugs" stormed their Cairo office and set fire to it. #Egypt</p> <p>1 6:39 AM - Feb 4, 2011</p> <p>59 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 RT • Man, Journalist; Another news agency cited; Al Jazeera; Information sharing: targeted violence, journalist; Sharing: violence on location; Specific location mentioned; Sharing: News reporting office targeted
 <p>Garach Jedao Shkan @ClipperChip</p> <p>I have the feeling that Journalists around the world will avoid staying in #Hilton hotels after today. #Jan25 #BoycottHilton #Egypt #OpEgypt</p> <p>4 2:45 PM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>61 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67 RT • Gender unknown; Expressing: opinion, response to event; Sharing: violence on location (implied); Sharing: targeted violence, journalist (implied)
 <p>Nicholas Kristof ✓ @NickKristof</p> <p>This morning, the authorities tried hard to strangle today's #Egypt demonstrations. Tough checkpoints at bridges. #Fail</p> <p>2 8:47 AM - Feb 4, 2011</p> <p>62 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 RT • Man, Journalist; Information sharing: heavy police presence on location
 <p>Mona Seif ✓ @Monasosh</p> <p>#Jan25 RT @Elizrael: Ahmed Seif, human rights lawyer, father of @alaa and @monaSosh was arrested today. See (cont) http://bit.ly/f8Lzpm</p> <p>6 11:10 PM - Feb 3, 2011</p> <p>45 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 RT • Woman, Revolutionist; RT; @ing to cite user; Information sharing: targeted detention, human rights lawyer; link





















Half of these retweets originate from verified Twitter accounts, most of which are news agencies or journalists. Mona Seif, the daughter of the popular Human Rights Lawyer Ahmed Seif is the exception, however. Her tweet is itself a RT from another source reporting the arrest of her father and includes a link to another source for further reading. The most viral tweet of the day originates from an average individual whose tweet report the arrival of a large police presence on location, details an internet and mobile phone service blackout, and makes the claim that a “genocide is being prepared.” Another non-verified individual user tweets to report the arrest of yet another journalist, while another user tweets to describe their own recent experience in police detention per the revolution. One journalist tweets to report on the growing police presence surrounding Tahrir square, while another shares a claim from the local Al Jazeera office reporting “a gang of thugs storming news offices in Cairo.” *Democracy Now* shares a video













report from one of their own journalists on location, describing the demonstrators in resistance to the regime as “Pro Freedom Demonstrators” and their efforts towards maintaining power in Tahrir square. Finally, a user tweets to share an article in *The Guardian* discussing Noam Chomsky’s critical opinion of US relations to Egypt.

February 10, 2011

There are 17,443 total tweets captured on this day, 2,190 unique users, and the language ratio is 57% English to 43% Non-English. Tweets including images make up about 1% and videos about 1.2%. URL’s within tweets, however, make up about 11.5% of the overall dataset. The total unique users are all individuals, except for one news reporting account. Table 3.9 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.9. February 10, 2011

 <p>Department of State  @StateDept </p> <p>President Obama: I know that the Egyptian people will persevere, they must know that they will continue to have a friend in the USA. #Jan25</p> <p>♥ 5 9:48 PM - Feb 10, 2011 </p> <p>💬 103 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 RT • Government account: US DoS; Information sharing: political statement (US) (Obama); Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrators; Sharing: pledge to offer continued support
 <p>Anderson Cooper  @andersoncooper </p> <p>Two hours of live #egypt coverage tonite on #ac360 10p-12a. Join us.</p> <p>♥ 20 4:30 PM - Feb 10, 2011 </p> <p>💬 118 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89 RT • Man; Journalist; Information sharing: upcoming news coverage; Call to action: watch; Specific time mentioned
 <p>The New York Times  @nytimes </p> <p>From @TheLede: Mubarak Pledges to Remain in Office Until September http://nyti.ms/ecMoRo #Egypt</p> <p>♥ 4 2:05 PM - Feb 10, 2011 </p> <p>💬 74 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: political statement; @ing to cite a journalist; link; Another news agency cited; Mubarak pledge to stay
 <p>Democracy Now!  @democracynow </p> <p>NEWS: #WikiLeaks Docs: Torture-Linked Egyptian Police Were Trained in the United States. http://ow.ly/3UaDK #egypt #jan25</p> <p>♥ 13 1:12 PM - Feb 10, 2011 </p> <p>💬 75 people are talking about this </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 RT • News reporting account; Information sharing: police violence; Sharing: critical of US; Expressing: critical of US, Another news account mentioned; wikileaks

 <p>Alan Fisher  @AlanFisher</p> <p>Huge protests planned across #Egypt on Friday likely to be much much bigger</p> <p>3 2:06 PM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>83 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77 RT • Man; Journalist; Information sharing: demonstrations planned; Expressing: Opinion, demonstrations will grow
 <p>David Corn  @DavidCornDC</p> <p>Mubarak: "I have lived for this nation...I will not leave it until I am buried in the ground."//That kinda sounds like an invitation #Egypt</p> <p>2:03 PM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>62 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72 RT • Man; Journalist; Expressing: Anti Mubarak sentiment; Sharing: political statement (Mubarak); Mubarak: refusal to step down
 <p>Dima Khatib  @Dima_Khatib</p> <p>Mubarak's TV address in one hour. at 10pm Cairo time. According to state TV #jan25 #egypt</p> <p>11:55 AM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>49 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 RT • Woman, Journalist; Information sharing: upcoming news coverage; Information sharing: political statement (Mubarak); Secondary information; referencing State TV statement
 <p>Weddady  @weddady</p> <p>Hosni Mubarak's departure is being engineered as a ruse to hand over power to the military to fool egyptians REGIME IS INTACT #Jan25</p> <p>9:12 AM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>58 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61 RT • Man, Revolutionist; Expressing: Opinion, Regime/Military will remain intact; Expressing; Anti Mubarak sentiment
 <p>BBC Breaking News  @BBCBreaking</p> <p>Secretary General of ruling NDP party,Hossam Badrawi, tells BBC has just told President #Mubarak in person that he should 'step aside'</p> <p>6 9:29 AM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>77 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61 RT • News Reporting Agency; Information sharing: political statement (domestic); Information sharing: domestic consent to remove Mubarak; Hossam Badrawi
 <p>تياً لكم يا طواغيت  @ArabRevolution</p> <p>To his Palace! All Egyptians should march to all of his palaces. In Cairo, Alex, Sharm...etc Tomorrow! #Egypt #Jan25 #Tahrir #Mubarak</p> <p>2 2:05 PM - Feb 10, 2011</p> <p>54 people are talking about this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 RT • Gender Unknown; Revolutionary account handle; Call to action: Egyptians to participate (march); Specific location mentioned; Sharing: directions/advice






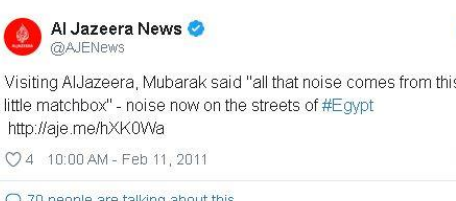

Apart from one tweet, the tweets that went viral on this day come from verified Twitter accounts, the majority of which belong to news reporting agencies or journalists. The most popular retweet, however, originates from an account belonging to the US Department of State who tweets to share a statement of support and solidarity with the people of Egypt from President Obama. Next, popular CNN journalist Anderson Cooper promotes his live coverage of




the events on location and asks users to watch, while another reporter provides a time to watch an upcoming statement from Mubarak himself. The New York Times tweet is a retweet of another news story sharing Mubarak's pledge to remain in office for several more months; similarly, another tweet coming from a journalist quotes Mubarak's promise (or threat) to stay in office indefinitely. *Democracy Now* tweets to share Wiki Leaks documents linking US police training to Egyptian Police training, expressing a critical sentiment towards the US. The *BBC* account tweets to share an Egyptian Diplomat's position supporting a Mubarak step down. A popular revolutionary tweets to share his opinion that Mubarak's removal leaves the regime intact, implying his removal is not enough. Finally, a individual news reporting account calls on all Egyptians to march to the ruling party palaces. The thematic undercurrent on this day reflects a shifting towards supporting the people of Egypt and/or Mubarak's removal from office. The sharing of Mubarak's statements indicate a standoff of sorts, while he claims he intends to stay in office, all the while a member in leadership among the Egyptian ruling party vocalizes support of his removal amid other tweets reporting growing crowds and calls towards even more participation in support of his removal.

February 11, 2011

There are 16,958 total tweets captured on this day, 2,434 unique users, and the language ratio is 60% English to 40% Non-English. Tweets including images make up about 1.5% and videos about 1.2%. URL's within tweets, however, make up about 11% of the overall dataset. The total unique users are all individuals, except for three news organizations. Table 3.10 provides the most viral tweets, providing a general thematic undercurrent on this day.

Table 3.10. February 11, 2011

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 141 RT • New reporting account: New York Times; link (shared a link to their own story); Photo; Information sharing: celebration after Mubarak steps down
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91 RT • Marketing account; Information sharing: Mubarak steps down; Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrations; Link
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 RT • Man; use of contemporary ideograph (loading bar); use of contemporary ideograph (loading bar complete); Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86 RT • Man, Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrators; Expressing: relief
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 RT • News reporting account; Al Jazeera; Call to action: watch; link; Information sharing: upcoming news coverage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 RT • News reporting account: Al Jazeera; link to their own article; Expressing: Anti Mubarak sentiment; Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrations (implied)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72 RT • News reporting account; Al Jazeera; Link to their own article; Information sharing: movement on location; Sharing: Army has relinquished control; specific location mentioned

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 RT • News reporting agency; Information sharing: Political Statement (El Baradei); Call to action: Rebuild (culture and intellect); Not English included (Spanish)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 RT • Man; Expressing: eulogizing (Bouazizi and Saeed) Expressing: gratitude; Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68 RT • Woman; Expressing: positive sentiment towards demonstrations; Expressing: Anti Regime sentiment

Without surprise, the retweets on this day mostly reflect positive excitement surrounding Mubarak’s removal. Half of the tweets originate from news reporting agencies, this time mostly from *Al Jazeera* that tweets to report the “noise now on the streets;” to share a statement towards the need to rebuild Egypt culturally and intellectually from a popular Egyptian diplomat; to share the standing down of police control on location; and to share information and updates surrounding the demonstrations. The most popular retweet of the day comes from the *New York Times*’ tweets sharing a link to photos of the “celebration” in Egypt. Similar to the ideograph depicting an “almost complete” loading bar stating the words “freedom loading,” another loading bar appears, representing the complete removal of Mubarak. Several users express a positive sentiment regarding the events in their tweets. Finally, among these viral tweets is one user’s recognition and honoring of Mohammed Bouazizi and Khaled Saeed.

GEE’S (2011) FIVE THEORETICAL TOOLS

Throughout the data gathering and coding process, many patterns of persuasion in a variety of unique and interesting ways emerged from tweets. As the most prominent codes arose

throughout each day, sometimes codes were similar to each other throughout the eight-day time frame, and were many times different from each other such that the day's codes reflected the discourse and activity happening on each particular day. As the revolutionary period progressed, and the situation was fluid and dynamic, the activity, needs, and related discourse on Twitter changed daily, reflecting the changing situation. Overall several of the generally themed overarching code categories emerged throughout each day (i.e., information sharing, sentiment expression, call to action, police/military/demonstrator movement), but many of the sub-categories within the larger code categories changed to reflect the nuances of activity occurring daily (i.e. the kinds of information shared, the expression of sentiment attached to news or activity, calls to action reflected current needs, and movement on the ground entailed different behavior and responses thereby requiring the subcategories to reflect those changes).

Tweets in the Larger Conversational Ecology using Gee's (2011) Rhetorical Tools

Once I had an a conceptual perception of the kind of activity the discourse on Twitter reflected, both through the broad-stroke understanding of thematic undercurrents through the analysis of viral retweets and through the emergence of code categories on a daily tweet-by-tweet basis, I wanted to better understand what these tweets were doing in a larger conversational ecology. While the codes I created emerged directly from the data, users displayed a wide swath of deliberate, intuitive, and innovative rhetorical strategies. In describing what these users are doing on Twitter, I found Gee's (2011) rhetorical tools lend themselves well toward bringing about a framework for discussing the rhetorical discursive activity in this analysis. The codes themselves reflect the activity on Twitter and emergent patterns became evident throughout the coding and subcoding phases of the analysis. Gee's (2011) rhetorical tools have allowed me to put forward my findings with the language and framework of Discourse Analysis within the field

of RWS. These tools are described below in detail, while examples of how these tools apply will be discussed in depth later in this chapter.

Gee's (2011) "situated meaning" tool considers word use and meaning beyond general meanings and requires an evaluation of the use of words in specific context to the author and listeners' situation. The notion of a "situation" not only echoes the current event wherein the discourse reflects, such the revolution, but asks how the specific environment like the country wherein the revolution takes place and the author's worldview contribute to the understanding of words and meaning used. Gee (2011) argues that humans build meaning online through language use and context, but also argues that to more fully comprehend a message, listeners work to situate the words and meanings within the author's context alongside their own knowledge and experiences (pgs. 150-154).

Gee (2011) defines his "social languages" tool as "styles of varieties of language (or a mixture of languages) that enact and are associated with a particular social identity" (p. 156). It reflects vernacular choices reflecting its own distinctive grammar for example, such that the speaker/author can enact a particular identity or ensure that the listener can recognize the particular identity enacted. Gee (2000) describes a range of social languages to include language of medicine, academia, or street gangs, for example, and argues that the social language can be "authorized and issued by different 'voices' to different purposes and effects" (p. 160).

Gee's (2011) "intertextuality" tool refers to the practice of alluding to another text, author, or media, possibly through a variety of ways. He describes the practice of direct and indirect quoting, mirroring the particulars of language style, or mimicking a particular grammar style or phrasing without necessarily mirroring the word use (pgs. 165-166). He defines the mixing of voice or languages to convey a message as hybridity and asks that the roles and

functions of intertextuality and hybridity be considered when theorizing upon the purpose of the message.

Gee (2011) defines his “figured worlds” tool as simplified theories of the world based on stories in our mind about what is normal and typical. He argues that what counts as a typical story for people will differ by their social and cultural groups, yet a figured world is a picture of a simplified world that captures what is taken to be typical or normal and includes typical participants, activities, forms of language and object and environment (Gee, 2011, pgs. 169-171). Gee’s (2011) concept of figured worlds pulls from Holland’s (1998) *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, wherein she describes this concept as ““a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation wherein similar characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others’ (p. 52)” (p. 170). He argues that figured worlds are not static and change when new knowledge or change occurs, but in order to arrive at an understanding toward what figured world a speaker/author is assuming, one must fill in some assumptions regarding what that speaker may find typical or normal in order to have constructed their message to fit in that figured world.

Finally, Gee’s (2011) “big D” discourse tool is the study of both language and people’s actions, interactions, values, beliefs, and uses of object, tools, and environments within social or institutional settings” (pg. 181). In essence, Gee (2011) suggests that for any communication one must interrogate both language use and ways of behaving and operating in the discourse. He argues that Discourses are about being “kinds of people” (emphasis in original) and that big D discourse must go beyond language (Gee, 2011, pgs. 178 and 181). Specifically, he suggests that “we [the researcher] can analyze communication in terms of the Discourses they express...or in terms of how they [the speaker] talk about and imply things about Discourses and how

Discourses inter-relate in the world...but also say or imply things about other, sometimes competing Discourses” (Gee, 2011, pg. 182). As researchers, we must consider notions of communicating, being, acting, or performing in a Discourse to help understand the speaker’s/author’s bid towards recognition in that space.

The following section is organized by day and provides details regarding the demographic- and coding-makeup for each, as well as a discussion surrounding the most relevant code categories. Example of tweets within some of these code categories are also discussed in terms of persuasion, I interrogate what the tweet does and theorize upon how it does it.

Eight days of Revolution in Focus

January 25, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in the dataset are 521 tweets, giving rise to a total of 170 codes created to identify, capture, and categorize the discursive activity in the tweets. The demographic makeup of this day is as follows: 58% men, about 30% women, and an unidentifiable gender about 4.5%. The most prevalent code outside of demographic indicators is “specific location mentioned,” meaning the author provided some level of specificity regarding a location within the tweets; this code appeared in about 30% of the dataset. Among the most prevalent themes found is “information sharing,” specifically through reporting. The codes most salient in this category include “reporting movement on the street, reporting growing or large numbers of protestors, reporting one’s own location, reporting violence and nonviolence (on location), and providing descriptions as seen among the crowds.” Expression of sentiment is also notable here; codes in this category include “expressing excitement, expressing a positive sentiment towards demonstrators, expressing shock/surprise, and expressing hope.”

Tweet:

via @HebzyA protesters heading from tahrir street to kasr el nil singing 'belady belady' #jan25

This tweet for example, is crossed coded with “reporting movement on the streets,” “specific location mentioned,” and “providing descriptions as seen among the crowds,” along with the code “3ngleezy” and “woman.” This tweet is a RT, wherein this author references or cites the original author through “@ing” practices, in this case by directly including the original author’s Twitter handle “HebzyA” with the “@” aroba included at the beginning of the handle (i.e., @HebzyA), thereby creating a clickable hyperlink to the original author’s Twitter page.

This tweet mentions movement along specific locations, “tahrir street to kasir el nil,” providing detailed context to the spaces occupied by human bodies. Finally, the tweet includes the use of two languages, English and 3ngleezy. In brief, 3ngleezy is a language born in text messaging spaces to meet the needs of the Arabic language speaker and listener. 3ngleezy is transcribed Arabic utilizing Latin letter and symbols intended to capture the sounds of Arabic through the available means of characters on a keyboard found in mobile devices. The 3ngleezy here “belady belady” can reference the Egyptian national anthem, titled *Bilady Bilady Bilady*, or the words themselves loosely translate to “oh, my country, my county.”

Retweeting practices coupled with the citation and/or direct referencing practices found in this tweet can be understood through Gee’s (2011) “intertextuality” tool. Retweeting practices can be understood to mean more than a copy and a share without attached sentiment, but rather, retweeting without making substantial changes or commentary on the original tweet as to not alter the original intent of the message can be understood as a way to share in the sentiment or meaning of the original message. Citing through the act of “@ing” (pronounced at-ing) is another way to show alignment while also giving credit.

Alongside intertextuality, this text can also be understood through the “social languages” tool. The original tweet is written in English and 3ngleezy, bringing two different languages together. 3ngleezy in particular is interesting to think about as it is a sublanguage within the many dialects of the Arabic language. 3ngleezy implies a certain degree of youth and privilege as it has roots in communicating in text message or social media applications before Arabic language letters became available, both technologies usually most utilized by youth with money to afford the technologies. The “social languages” tool helps capture the coming together of the English-speaking world and the 3ngleezy speaking world in one communication.

Finally, to fully appreciate the 3ngleezy in the tweet, and to understand the reference made in the singing of “belady belady” as well as the street names “tahrir street to kasir el nil” the author(s) are communicating in and assuming a degree of contextual situated meaning, thereby making Gee’s (2011) “situated meaning” tool relevant here. This tweet enters in the conversational ecology through retweeting and citing and expresses a shared sentiment through intertextuality. Through the use of several social languages, it can reach and appeal to multiple audiences on several layers of discourse. An understanding of situated meanings provides context for interrogation while also assuming a degree of understanding from a shared primary audience.

January 26, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 961 tweets with a total of 517 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 54% men, about 31% women, an unidentifiable gender at about 3%, and a Twitter account for an official news agency also at about 3%. The code “specific location mentioned” is important, appearing in about 19% of all units. Codes indicating citation practices appear in notable frequencies, as does

the mention of Twitter by name in tweets. The most prevalent themes found include “call to action, expression of sentiment, and information sharing.” Some of the subcodes appearing in the category of “call to action” include a “call to retweet” and a “call to watch or follow a specific journalist or tv channel.” In the category of “expression of sentiment” are the subcodes “expression of positive excitement, expressing Egyptian pride, expressing anger, and expressing an anti-Mubarak sentiment.” In the category of “information sharing,” the subcodes appearing include “reporting censorship: internet blocking, police activity, and detailed reports of injury and/or death.”

Tweet.

#improudtosay that #Jan25 is one of the big moments in Egypt's history

This tweet is coded with “man,” “Egyptian Pride,” and “historical impact.” Gee’s (2011) “situated meaning” tool is useful as this tweet implies that the audience understands the current impact of the ongoing demonstrations at the time. On this day, the use of the hashtag #Jan25 was still early, and demonstrations were still gathering steam. To imply historical impact this early in the revolutionary period suggests a degree of hope but also a contextual understanding of the growing revolution in Egypt. January 25th is National Police Day in Egypt, a holiday that commemorates the death of Egyptian police officers at the hands of the British Army in the late 1950’s for refusing to stand down in conflict. #Jan25 however holds an entirely different meaning altogether as it was intended and came to represent the revolutionary movement towards the pro-democracy position.

Additionally, Gee’s (2011) “social languages” tool is helpful in theorizing upon the use of embedded hashtags as a part of the tweet itself, rather than adjacent to a completed thought at the end of a tweet. The use of hashtagging at the time was largely isolated to the Twitter

platform, implying that the authors' use of #improudtosay, rather than including the text without the hashtag, involves purpose and a degree of awareness from the author and Twitter audience. The expression of Egyptian pride on Twitter becomes more prevalent in this dataset, as the revolution gains popularity and success becomes more feasible. As hashtags are intended to create an archive of tweets connected to the hashtagged phrase, it can be hypothesized that a phrase such as "#improudtosay" coupled with #Jan25 (also embedded as a part of the message) is not only a specialized communication for Twitter, but it is intended to add to or create an archive reflecting those hashtags.

January 27, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 729 tweets with a total of 679 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 54% men, about 31% women, unidentifiable gender at about 4%, official news handles at about 3.5%, and accounts affiliated with "resistance groups" at about 3%. The codes' specific location appeared in about 7% of all tweets, but in this dataset, codes indicating censorship appeared with greater frequency. The subcodes in this category include the code "SMS services down" appearing in about 22% of all tweets, and "Internet blocked" appearing in about 11% of all tweets.

Discussions regarding censorship appear heavily on this day; other subcodes appearing with notable frequency include "@ing specific communication companies, providing work arounds, providing technical help, call to action to hold communication companies accountable, and expression of isolation in the communication blackout." These subcodes cross over and share relevance in other important code categories such as "call to action" which includes the "call to RT, call to help/save us, and a call to support the revolution." Information sharing appears in the form of technical help and updating the status of mobile and internet access.

Tweets.

- a. WORLD, HELP US GET OUR MESSAGE OUT! They are blocking internet, Facebook, SMS, Twitter &more. Help Egypt! #Jan25 Jan25 RT PLZ

This tweet is coded as follows: “man, Facebook, SMS services down, Twitter, call to action: get our voices heard; Help/Save us, Tell the world, and Censorship.”

- b. No free country in the world would block #facebook #Twitter #BBM and mobile text messages our freedom of speech is getting violated #Jan25

This tweet is coded as follows: “woman, Facebook, Internet blocked, SMS services down, Twitter, censorship, freedom of speech violation.”

Gee’s (2011) situated meanings tool is helpful towards theorizing how the audience should fill in the gaps to make the most sense of these speech acts. In the first tweet, the use of the pronoun “us” and “they” in the sentences “World, help us get our message out...they are blocking the internet...” forces the reader to assume who us and they are. Situated meaning helps here, allowing the reader to assume the Egyptian people are “us” and the government is “they.” Having this understanding brings about significant meaning such that the tweet is asking for help by calling on other Twitter users to retweet or RT. RT also understood through situated meaning, making the most sense among other Twitter users. In the second text, there is a similar use of hashtagging embedded within the tweet’s message understood through the situated meaning and “social languages” tool much like the sample tweet discussed under 1/26/2011.

Gee’s (2011) “figured worlds” tool brings about an added layer of depth towards understanding the discursive practice found here. Both of these tweets make assumptions about what their audience may deem as typical or normal behavior in their own worlds. The authors make an appeal towards a violation of certain freedom’s Egypt herself has been known to

traverse. The impact of a globalized world, prevalent in a time of highly available information sharing and communicative technologies (i.e., the profuse impact of Western cinema, availability of SNS, and growing access to the internet) can influence the figured world and correlating value systems an author may conceive of an audience. The first tweet appeals to the world as whole for the intended audience, while the second directly references a human rights violation through the lack of free speech. These appeals seem to be directed towards notions of freedom wherein the figured world the author assumes of its audience is a Western world. Alongside the use of English, the phrase “no free country would...” found in the second tweet implies that Egypt is not free (which it had not been for over 30 years) but implies an appeal to a free English speaking country like the UK, Canada, or the US for example. The figured world tool helps tease out the implications of the tweets appeal to a certain kind of freedom originating from individuals marching, fighting, and dying for freedoms they may have not yet to experienced themselves in Egypt.

February 2, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 689 tweets with a total of 483 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 48% men, about 30% women, unidentifiable gender at about 6%, and official news handles at about 2%. The code “specific location mentioned” appears with greater frequency on this day than the previous day, appearing in about 23% of all tweets. The most prevalent codes appearing on this day reflect growing violence and negative sentiments. More specifically, codes in the category of “expressing sentiment” include “anti-Mubarak sentiment, expressing anger, expressing shock/surprise, expressing sadness and expressing distress or worry.” Subcodes in the code category of “call to action” include “calling for Mubarak’s ouster” and a call to “stop

violence/killing/chaos.” In the code category of “information sharing,” the most salient subcodes reflect violence, including the codes “violence committed by proMubarak thugs, violence mentioned in general (w/o attributing blame to specified parties, weapons, injuries, and clashes.”

Tweet.

if Army against us, Allah wz us, to all fucking pro-Mubark wt do y say about this photos of Tahrer #Jan25

This tweet is coded as follows “man, specific location mentioned, Addressing: Mubarak supporters, Police: and/or Army: anti law enforcement sentiment.” Gee’s (2011) “situated meaning” and “social languages” tools are important here. Standing alone, the implications of this tweet may become lost, but as a part of the larger conversational ecology both in Egypt at the time, as well as on this particular day, the situated meanings allow the reader to connect the dots between implied knowledge and what is said in the tweet. The phrase “if the Army against us” refers to the lack of response to protect Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak demonstrators from violence enacted by “pro-Mubarak [supporters].” The pronoun “us” then implies the author is a demonstrator in opposition to Mubarak, and that “Allah (the Arabic word for God) wz us” is on their side. Speaking in hostile opposition to “pro-Mubarak [supporters]” he calls for an addressing of “this photos of Tahrer” which in context to the day’s events, suggests the mounting evidence of Pro-Mubarak supporters riding camels and horses, armed with knives and other weapons, targeting Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak supporters. The “situated meaning” tools allows for depth and meaning to come into play through context, as evidenced in this tweet.

Moreover, the “social languages” tool allows for a reader to bring about a more comprehensive understanding of the tweet through an awareness of multiple languages and intertextuality. Here the term “Allah” is the Arabic word meaning God in reference to Islam

which could go misunderstood in this tweet, yet the implication is powerful in a majority Islamic nation as the author claims God is on his side, and not the other Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak demonstrators. The spelling of the preposition with as “wz” makes sense in the lens of social languages, as it is a phonetic spelling of the English word “with” as an Egyptian with a heavy Egyptian accent would pronounce it. Thereby, without an understanding of the language sounds and use, this message in this tweet may get cloudy or altogether lost.

February 3, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 660 tweets with a total of 328 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 43% men, 40% women, unidentifiable gender at about 4%, and official news handles at about 2%. The code “specific location mentioned” appears in about 11% of all tweets as well. The most prevalent codes appearing on this day surround political statement and news surrounding political discussions and implications. More specifically, the code, “Politician: Suleiman” appears in almost 32% of tweets on this day. Other subcodes in this code category that appear include “Politician: negative sentiment” and “Politician: direct quote.” Other subcodes in the category of “expressing sentiments” include “anti-regime sentiment, anti-Mubarak sentiment, expressing disagreement/dissatisfaction w/political statement, expressing anger, and expressing laughable/sarcasm.” The most salient subcode in the “call to action” category is the “call to remove Mubarak and the call to remove the regime.”

Tweet.

Omar Suleiman: "#Mubarak is our father". Darth Vader was Luke's father &it didn't go smoothly between the Empire &Rebel Alliance #Jan25

This tweet is coded as follows: “man, Expressing: disagreement/dissatisfaction w political/regime Statement, Politician: Mubarak = Father, Politician: named, negative sentiment, Politician: statement/quote shared, Politician: Suleiman, Sharing: Western reference, pop culture.” Situated meaning and to some extent, the figured worlds concepts are helpful towards bridging the thoughts and assumed realities referenced in this tweet. It begins with “Omar Suleiman,” who was an Egyptian Army general that would soon become vice president upon Mubarak resignation. While Mubarak’s name may have resonated generally with those following the revolution in Egypt, recognizing Omar Suleiman’s name at face value implies an audience with a vested interest or at least a heightened understanding of the political landscape in Egypt at the time. Quoting Suleiman, “#Mubarak is our father” is a reference to a speech given on this same day wherein he stood in support of Mubarak and in direct opposition of Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak demonstrators. This portion of the tweet implies an audience with specified knowledge and current with the political situation.

The second portion of the tweets implies a different form of situated or contextual meaning tied to a figured world wherein a *Star Wars* reference is not only normal but understood with some depth. While the American epic space-opera media franchise “Star Wars” is never mentioned by name, the reference to Darth Vader, Luke, the Empire, and Rebel Alliance, requires that the audience relate Mubarak to Darth and the Empire and the Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak demonstrators to Luke and the Rebel Alliance, if the tweet is to make any sense. The suggestion and metaphor is quite savvy and perhaps even an effective appeal, but only in so much as the audience receives both portions of message. The author’s intended, implied, or imagined audience would be someone who maintains a certain depth of interest in the revolution

such that the named politician is recognized, and his speech listened to. They must also have exposure to American cinema, Star Wars specifically, and understand and appreciate the value system apparent in the movie's storyline.

February 4, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 643 tweets with a total of 422 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 46% men, about 40% women, unidentifiable gender at about 6.5%, and official news handles at about 3%. The code "specific location mentioned" appears in here again in greater frequency in roughly 30% of all tweets. In the category of "information sharing," the most relevant subcodes include "sharing large number of demonstrators, sharing celebrity and popular journalist presence on location, sharing peaceful experience on location, and sharing personal involvement or movement" to name a few. In the category of "expressing sentiment" some of the subcodes appearing include "anti-Mubrark sentiment, expressing anticipation of successful revolution, expressing praise of prodemocracy demonstrators, and expressing Egyptian pride and a love of Egypt herself.

Tweets.

a. Amr Moussa, Ammar El Sherei3y, Sherihan, all seen in #Tahrir Sq ! :) #jan25 #egypt
This tweet is coded as follows: "Woman, Specific location mentioned; Situation: celebrities, journalist, and opposition leaders seen on location."

b. Around 2 million ppl in tahrir, fear is history now and freedom is the only concern. Long live egypt. #jan25 #tahrir #egypt
This tweet is coded as follows: "Woman; Expressing: anticipating successful revolution; Expressing: Love for Egypt; Sharing: large numbers of demonstrators, Sharing: numbers/demographic/size/specifics"

In this dataset many tweets described the arrival of popular opposition leaders/politicians and celebrities in popular locations where large Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak gather to protest. Another popular trend on this day includes tweets that report the amassing of people on location as well. Both of these tweets follow this trend and in applying Gee's (2011) "situated meaning" tool, the named politicians and celebrities witnessed in specific and meaningful locations, like Tahrir Square which serves as the epicenter of the Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak resistance, create a sense of increased importance towards the activities taking place on this day. Opposition leaders and celebrity sightings on location, coupled with reports of millions in attendance, creates a perception that the popularity and perhaps the success of the revolution's goals all the more real. Situated meaning towards understanding the names dropped for important people and location create the significance of listing those people and places altogether. Abbreviated words and hastagging practices are found in both tweets, making the "social languages" tool relevant, as these tweets are engaging in communication practices suited for a Twitter audience.

February 10, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 651 tweets with a total of 266 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 48% men, about 35% women, unidentifiable gender at about 8%, and official news handles at about 3%. The codes appearing on this day mostly reflect upon Mubarak's speech with the most telling codes falling in the code category of "expressing sentiment" wherein the subcode "anti-Mubarak sentiment" appears in 15% of all tweets and expressing "anger" appears in 9% of all tweets. Outside of the demographic indicators "man" and "woman" these two codes appear with the most frequency on this day. Other related codes include "expressing disappointment in Mubarak's speech," and "expressing Mubarak's disconnect from reality and the people." The

code category “call to action” appeared through a variety of subcode categories such as “call to remove Mubarak, call to join demonstrations” in several ways. The underlying sentiment on this day is an overall disappointment in Mubarak’s speech, expressing negative sentiment towards Mubarak, and an outspoken call to action towards his removal.

Tweets.

- a. #egypt: more from Tahrir "He won't go until he's removed. So we'll remove him"

This tweet is coded as follows: “man; Expressing: forcible removal of Mubarak; Sharing: quote/commentary from fellow demonstrator.”

- b. I hope he is ready for the millions marching towards his palace. #Jan25 I know I will be among them.

This tweet is coded as follows: “man; Expressing: joining march to Mubarak’s palace; Expressing: march to Mubarak palace to occur.”

Both of these tweets require some level of situated meaning in order to “fill in” the subject pronoun of the sentence in each tweet to understand both authors are referring to Mubarak. What is interesting in these tweets is that they both imply future behavior necessary to achieve their goals as a member of the larger collective community of Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak demonstrators. While it is was not possible to follow-up with these users to verify their claims of physical participation, Gee’s (2011) “big d discourse” tool investigates the word use along with ways of acting, interacting, believing, etc. Big D discourse inquires as to what language the Discourse is a part of and what kind of person or identity is the speaker seeking to enact. If big D discourse is a way of being in the world, these authors have announced they intend on doing more than “talking the talk,” they intend on “walking the walk.”

In the first tweet, while it is a retweet, the original author claims, however vaguely, that he will actively participate in removing Mubarak. The identity enacted here is one of a ready and willing participant of the Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak camp. The author of the second tweet claims/announces he will be an active participant among the millions marching towards Mubarak's palace. Here again, the identity enacted in this moment and in this space is similar to the first author's enacted identity, a willing and active participant of the Pro-Democracy/Anti-Mubarak camp. In their declaration to participate in this way, these authors have implied a value system wherein they are aligned with the goals of the revolution such that they are willing to use their bodies, like millions of others who claim will do the same in order to achieve the agreed upon goal within the collective communities they are a part of. Gee (2011) argues that "Discourses are about being 'kinds of people' and in these tweets, both actors enact an identity of being the active demonstrators/protestors/revolutionaries.

February 11, 2011

On this day, the total number of units coded in this dataset are 651 tweets with a total of 283 codes and subcodes. The demographic makeup of this day includes about 50% men, about 34% women, unidentifiable gender at about 6%, and official news handles at about 2%. Mubarak announced his resignation on this day and the vast majority of all codes reflect a positive sentiment towards the day's events and, thus expectedly, "expressing sentiment" appears with the most frequency. In the code category of "information sharing," subcodes reflecting sharing the celebrations on the ground and sharing and/or announcing his removal and related political statements make up majority of conversation on Twitter on this day.

Tweet.

He is goneeee, people are screaming in the street almost crying TA7YA MASR TA7YAAA
MASRRRR, i can't believe myself i love you

This tweet is coded as follows: “man, 3ngleezy: understood, Expressing: excitement/use of !
and/or ALL CAPS, Expressing: Emotional response, crying.

Mubarak handed over power to the Egyptian military and resigned as President on this day. The vast majority of tweets in this dataset reflect the day’s events in some sort of positive sentiment. These tweets fall in line with this theme as well, describing a positive sentiment towards Mubarak’s resignation. Situated meaning and social languages concepts lend themselves to further theorizing the discursive practices in this tweet. Taken out of context, this tweet could very well be interpreted as mourning rather than celebratory, particularly if the 3ngleezy is lost upon the reader. Placed within the context of the conversational ecology developing throughout this day the phrase “he is goneee” refers to Mubarak’s resignation, “he” meaning Mubarak himself. “People are screaming in the street almost crying...” implies an emotive response with positive connotations. The rest of that statement is in 3ngleezy, which translates to “LONG LIVE EGYPT, LOOONG LIIIVE EGYYYPT.” The inclusion of 3ngleezy, a social language in the Arabic speaking world implies that the author’s imagined audience is somewhat young, tech savvy, and able to read English, Arabic, and 3ngleezy. This same category of author and reader would be a close match to the assumed author and reader utilizing the Twitter platform.

In short, this chapter has provided a detailed overview of the research process wherein I managed a payload of over 300,000 tweets. I captured, analyzed and discussed some of the most salient aspects of the comprehensive dataset, providing details regarding the demographic body of twitter users, language indicators, and viral retweets. I correlated these overarching findings to

the eight daily subsets, essentially conducting the same analysis on a micro level. Finally, this chapter discussed findings on an individual tweet basis according to Gee's theoretical framework utilized to explain the rhetorical discursive activity found in my datasets.

While a large amount of detailed demographic data was unveiled in this chapter, the following and final concluding chapter will provide a detailed discussion regarding these findings in direct connection to my research questions. Chapter 6 will also discuss the implications and limitation of this study, and detail avenues for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Through this project, I have asked the following research questions:

1. What can rhetors learn about individuals who employ Twitter as a platform for rhetorical agency and persuasive discourse practices in Egypt during the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring?
2. What can rhetors learn about the productive force of the performative in digital space and its connections to transformative notions of reimagined or refashioned futures?

Briefly revisiting the most salient aspect of the comprehensive dataset, finds reveal there was a 6,239 total unique users or individual Twitter accounts with the overall language ratio between English (EN) tweets and Non- English (NE) (i.e., Arabic, French, and other) tweets, were 57% EN to 43% NE indicating English as the most predominate language used on Twitter within this dataset. There was a total of 3,403 embedded images, roughly 1.9% of the dataset, and 3,736 embedded videos, roughly 2% of the dataset, suggesting this aspect of multimodality is not employed with marked significance. With that said however, other research suggested that photos and videos were an extremely important aspect of the disseminating force at the time. The inclusion of URL's or links however, was much higher, totaling 34,822, nearly 19% of the total dataset, indicating that linking practices were an important aspect of the communication practices on Twitter. The majority of the identified top 10 users were individuals, not news organizations (of which there were only 2), indicating that the majority of tweets in this dataset are communications from individuals. Finally, among these top users, both English and Arabic language use is mostly equal, and only two of the top users indicate a shared location in the US, while all other users are identified as having Egypt or Cairo as their location.

Within the daily subsets, Table 4.1 below identifies those tweets coded with an author with identifiable gender, either man or woman. While women were not present in equal number in this dataset, their presence was significant, almost always at least half as present as men. My findings are in line with the other research discussed in depth in Chapter 3, wherein scholarship suggests women were a significant presence in online spaces, revealing statistical relevance and thus inevitable influence.

Table 4.1. Tweets by Gender

	1/25	1/26	1/27	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/10	2/11
Men	58%	54%	54%	48%	43%	46%	48%	50%
Women	30%	31%	31%	30%	40%	40%	35%	34%

Table 4.2 below indicates the growing number of total tweets as the revolution progressed. My research confirms growth in the total number of twitter users, and remarkably, a steady increase in the use of English to tweet, resulting in again, English as the predominant language used in both the daily subsets and the comprehensive dataset as well. These findings suggest that Twitter users became aware of their impact towards the dissemination of information, effectively encouraging more use and perhaps recruiting more users as well. As some of the code categories emerged with significance in the dataset, those urging the use of English seem to show significance here. The most pervasive codes discussed in Chapter 5 will be related further in this chapter.

Table 4.2. Growing Number of Total Tweets

	1/25	1/26	1/27	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/10	2/11
Total	10,231	10,803	10,409	13,723	13,163	12,830	17,443	16,958
Tweets								
Total	946	1,092	1,232	1545	1489	1541	2190	2434

Unique users								
Language	53 NE	48 NE	50 NE	38 NE	38 NE	42 NE	43 NE	40 NE
Ratio %	47 EN	52 EN	50 EN	62 EN	62 EN	58 EN	57 EN	60 EN

Trends in the dataset suggest that as Twitter users became aware of their impact in online space, i.e. when particularly circumstantial hashtags began to trend on Twitter for example, such as #Jan25 for example there was an increase of Twitter users as well as increased English language. Observing an increase of English as an intentional language used to communicate on Twitter alongside the emergence of popular code categories wherein a call to action and vital information sharing occurred on a large scale, findings reveal discursive performances on Twitter generated new and/or alternative discourses, promoting ideological shifts among users and as evidence would suggest, exceeded the boundaries of thoughts and hopes, and of online spaces and individual performances, resulting in resistance of influential and significant impact.

Important towards contextualizing the persuasive power in some of the emerging codes, I have briefly revisited transgressive theories here. Pennycook (2010) states “the transgressive is a reflexive questioning of ‘the culture that has defined it in its otherness’” (p. 41). Transgression functions as a means of challenging the status quo, but also creates “new frames of thought” that “investigate the ways in which common sense, the normal, the law, the taken-for-granted, the given are arbitrarily fixed round relations of power, yet also complicit with what they exclude” (p. 41). Transgression then seeks to investigate the normative, the categorization of the normative and non-normative, then moves to investigate the mechanisms between and beyond

these elements. Specifically, Pennycook's (2010) concept of transculturation is especially relevant as transcultural and transidiomatic practices are heavily present on Twitter in this dataset. Moreover, it appears that Twitter provided an "alternative space of cultural production" wherein the "constant process of borrowing, bending, and blending of cultures" served to create spaces of ideological dissent. It is in these spaces where invention may have occurred, leading to reimagined futures among protesters who fought for democratic ideals surrounding ideas of freedom they, themselves may have never experienced in Egypt but were exposed to in digital spaces like Twitter (p. 47). In this Egyptian context, the productive power of discursive performances.

Defining performativity, Pennycook (2007) states "the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity" (p. 69). Butler (1997) and Pennycook (2008) argue that theories of the performative hold transformative properties and asking what forms of "the performative can be enacted by those who are not socially sanctioned to do so" (Pennycook, 2008, p. 69). Concerned then with the traditionally marginalized or disempowered, they claim performativity must not "foreclose on the possibility of an agency that emerges from the margins of power" (2008, p. 69). Butler (1997) maintains that performativity "provides a way of thinking about relationships between language and identity that emphasize the productive force of language in constituting identity rather than identity being a pre-given construct that is reflected in language use" (Pennycook, 2008, p. 70). Coupled with Gee's methods of Discourse Analysis, discussed in depth in Chapter 5, findings reveal that discursive performances were savvy and extraordinarily persuasive in a multitude of ways for a wide swath of perceived audiences.

The most popular code categories that emerged from my dataset are “Expressing” used to capture a variety of emotive and/or opinion-based tweets. “Calls to action” used to capture the many ways twitter users called upon others to support and/or participate the ProDemocracy movement. And “information sharing,” used to capture details regarding the activity surrounding the movement. Some of the most salient examples of subcodes in each code category include:

- Expressing: Negative sentiment towards Mubarak and/or the regime and/or towards ProMubarak supporters, Positive sentiment towards ProDemocracy movement and/or demonstrators, Pride in Egypt herself or in being Egyptian, Hope, Worry
- Call to Action: Removal of Mubarak, Specific requests to meet the specific needs of protestors (i.e. doctors, technical requests), Tweet and/or Retweet Please, Please Help and/or Save us, Use #Jan25, Watch and/or follow particular news organizations, journalist, or people, Support the revolution, Join protests
- Information Sharing: situation on the ground, reporting movement on the street, reporting growing or large numbers of protestors, reporting one’s own location, reporting violence and nonviolence (on location), injury or death, descriptions as seen among the crowds, information in support of movement (.e. technical help to circumvent the media blackout), specifics as to how to join demonstrations

Through analyzing the most prevalent code categories that emerged from the data set “call to action” and “expressing” indicated that Twitter was a space where emotions were expressed, mostly negative and/or dissenting feelings and opinions towards the Mubarak himself, his regime, and his supporters. Or alternatively, positive emotions directed towards the AntiMubarak or ProDemocratic movement’s ideologies and/or participants. These discursive performances increased in volume as the demonstrations progressed, as did those tweets coded as “call to

action.” “Calls to action” usually asked for help in digital and physical ways to support the Prodemocracy movement. Twitter was not only a space for ideological debate, but it transgressed those boundaries and urged tangible participation in online and in physical spaces which can be understood as another manifestation of the productive power of the performative.

Twitter user and Egyptian national Wael Ghonim was the most popularly retweeted user found in this dataset. He often made appeals to other Egyptians through deliberately using his Egyptian nationality to directly address and petition fellow Egyptians, often calling them into action through his tweets. Other discursive performances utilized language in specialized ways. The use of 3ngleezy for example appealed to a particular demographic, usually the young, tech savvy, and somewhat privileged class of Arabic speakers. Some tweets in the dataset indicate an intentional use of the English language as the revolution progressed, calling on others to Tweet in English and calling for translators to help with that endeavor. Some tweets highlight the character traits of the Egyptian demonstrator as peaceful and modern, seeking the freedoms denied to them as Egyptians by the standards set forth in other governing nations, appealing to those audiences in solidarity. There were many instances of Egyptian citizens taking the common place discursive practices of news reporters and journalist, mirroring language use in their tweets like “CONFIRMED, UPDATE, REPORTING” for example, and in the latter days of the revolution in this dataset, those tweets emerged with significant frequency. Research findings have shown that Twitter participants in this Egyptian context engaged creative discourse practices and a variety of discursive performances towards wildly successful persuasive end goals.

In line with the existing research, I also found that Twitter facilitated a relative safe space for the sharing of alternative political and ideological ideas. To use Pennycook’s framework,

Twitter served as a contact zone where transcultural and transidiomatic practices are heavily present. Twitter provided an “alternative space of cultural production” wherein the “constant process of borrowing, bending, and blending of cultures” served to create spaces of ideological dissent. Revisiting my research questions, I have asked:

1. What can rhetors learn about individuals who employ Twitter as a platform for rhetorical agency and persuasive discourse practices in Egypt during the 2011 Egyptian Arab Spring?

Using Gee’s framework, the data revealed that Twitter users in Egypt employed a wide swath of deliberate, intuitive, and innovative rhetorical strategies to appeal to and persuade a wide swath of perceived audiences. The discursive choices found in my tweet-by-tweet analysis reveal that in their discursive practices, Twitter users made deliberate rhetorical choices to enter and move conversations in digital spaces, many times urging tangible participation, calling on their local and international, audiences to listen, support, and participate in a variety of ways, both digitally and physically.

And

2. What can rhetors learn about the productive force of the performative in digital space and its connections to transformative notions of reimagined or refashioned futures?

The emerging code categories reveal Twitter served as space for individuals to express political and ideological dissent, but they also urged tangible participation, and provided information to facilitate participation. The spaces between “Expressing” to “Call to Action” to “Information Sharing” suggest that discursive performances were powerfully persuasive. It is in these spaces where invention may have occurred, leading to reimagined futures among protesters who thought

and fought for democratic ideals surrounding ideas of freedom they, themselves may have never experienced in Egypt but were exposed to in digital spaces like Twitter.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Rewards and Benefits to the Field

Grabill and Pigg (2012) argue “as a discipline historically charged with understanding public discourse and preparing participants for public engagement, rhetoric has both a responsibility and an opportunity to help make sense of such scenes and that will require dynamic methods and analytical tools able to grow with and account for the rhetorical activity taking place online” (p. 116). I think this project addresses their call. RWS and Big Data, albeit technologically and methodologically challenging, are a good fit. Understanding the role of digital discourse in the larger social fabric of society can contribute greatly to long standing and contemporary themes in RWS. This project offers insight into the discourse and social negotiations in non-traditional public spheres where civic engagement quite often occurs, which is particularly true for the all too often 3rd world other, as they are often perceived to be absent or at the margins of civic discourse. Finally, it also facilitates an exploration of the connections between globalization, language use and social media, and social resistance thereby contributing to themes in Digital Rhetoric, specifically to concepts of what rhetoric “does.”

Transnational digital research studies like this one add to the body of inquiry in RWS and works towards expanding our reach as scholars and as a field. Grabill and Pigg (2012) argue “it is essential [for RWS] to come to terms with how best to understand public interactions in the messy places that characterize most online forums” (p. 115). I think this project speaks towards exactly that. The desire for training in data science could create a demand to include data science and methods in RWS coursework. Engaging big data in new and challenges ways adds layers to

theories and methods through our researching processes that could be modeled, revised, and expanded upon. More specifically, there is a growing call within RWS towards clearly defining and locating digital rhetorical studies as an emerging field by focusing on theories, methods, and practices that inform and produce digital rhetorical scholarship. My study is a meaningful and substantial contribution to the emerging body of scholarship and field development within Digital Rhetoric.

By engaging in substantial research in Big Data, my experience highlights the challenges of applying traditional rhetorical theories and methods to new media compositions and networked spaces, urging in dynamic methods and analytical tools to grow with and account for the rhetorical activity taking place online.

Douglas Eyman (2015) argues for an alignment of theories and methods to include both classical and contemporary rhetoric to networked text and new media as objects of study, but stressed for the development of new theories and methods to account for gaps in traditional spaces (Eyman, 2015, p 34). This project does just that. Engaging big data in new and challenging ways adds layers to theories and methods and through our researching processes we continue to extend our reach as scholars in the field.

Data Science and Social Media have many hard science elements, but also holds significant and immediate relevance into social sciences. RWS is in many ways already well suited to analyze this kind of data. Projects like mine encourage multidisciplinary approaches but most importantly call on RWS as a field to broaden our application of contemporary methodologies to include data science and big data projects.

Digital Projects promote Digital Literacies for Scholars, Practitioners, and Students.

Technological Critical Literacies as proposed by Selber (2004) and Selfe (1999) mirror similar sentiments by Yancy (2004), Gee (2010), Hocks (2003), and Grabill (2007), whom all argue that education in the digital literacies should create technologically functional and critical literacy to transcend the classroom and promote critical social and cultural awareness. SNS like Twitter have significant value within the classroom as it can be utilized to bridge academic practices to contemporary real-world current events. More specifically, Yancey (2004) states “education needs to get in step with life practices and should endeavor to assist students to negotiate through life” (p/ 305). Gee (2010) argues that digital media and learning includes “the study of powerful forms of social organization and complexity in popular culture, can teach us how to enhance learning in and out of school and how to transform society and the global world as well” (p. 15). Teaching and learning through Twitter projects like mine help manifest those ideas into applicable scholarship through both tangible examples of digital tools and their power in societies, but in teaching Big Data theory and analysis, students, scholars, and practitioners can gain a deepened understanding of how such change occurs. In the best cases, through merging traditional scholarship with contemporary studies like mine, we may all learn to more effectively teach and enact such change. Along this same vein, Hocks (2003) argues “we must offer students experiences both in the analytic process of critique, which scrutinizes conventional expectation and power relations, and in the transformative process of design, which can change power relations by creating a new vision of knowledge” (p. 644). Finally, Grabill (2007), reflecting upon Community Action theory, argues the critical issue with respect to the social impact of information technologies is the extent to which non expert, nontraditional users of technologies, especially those typically marginalized, can become

productive with advanced information technologies in a way that expands local capacity to achieve citizen objectives (p. 12). While I did not explore Community Action theory in my study, it most certainly lends itself to Grabill's (2007) outlined objectives. Most recent definitions of technological literacy reflect the need to address more than the immediate scholastic requirement, but rather, are utilized to transcend the classroom to promote critical awareness, facilitate digital democratization wherein information technologies are making civic engagement, political activism, and social awareness accessible to the digitally-informed.

Within the last decade, scholarship in RWS has weighed in on the importance of the multisensory and multimodal user/producer experience beyond commonplace applications to encompass critical social and cultural awareness. The application and viability of technologies beyond which had become commonplace took on a variety of forms and served a variety of purposes, educational and social alike. Yancey (2004) and Gee (2010) advocate digital participation as a method of transcending classroom limitations and expanding user/producer experiences to encompass, address, and challenge, the complexities found in social and cultural contexts both within and beyond the academy. Digital studies like mine very much adheres to the transcending qualities and social implications advocated by Yancey (2004) and Gee (2010), which largely reflect the movement of contemporary scholarship.

Technology in the classroom continues to expand to include sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and cultural landscapes. Engaging in multimodal discourse projects like this transnational digital research project, forces us to broaden our skill sets, expand or create new ways of analyzing the ever-evolving technological landscape. We are encouraged to become both student and scholar, learning with depth and proficiency the value and impact of technologies, their practical and theoretical application applications, thereby benefiting ourselves

that which we in turn may offer our students. Endeavors in digital research facilitate the opportunity to continue to broaden the definition of literacy and continue to reflect the widening technological, pedagogical, and disciplinary landscape within RWS.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations

The limitations of this project include accessibility, manageability, and researcher positionality. Accessibility to the data was the most difficult aspect in attempting to move forward with this project. As Twitter data became available for research, only those with the skill set to capture Twitter data through a streaming API or Firehose were able to quickly access and collect comprehensive data as per their search query requirements. While there is a search option for the public Twitter user, the public search tool is not intended to produce a compressive payload, and the tweets themselves cannot be saved in any sustainable way on the public facing Twitter platform. Acquiring historical Twitter data is available through Twitter's Developer options and through 3rd party data collection companies, but acquisition is costly. Over the course of at least a year, I struggled to find a way to gather data for academic purposes at an affordable cost. I stumbled upon DiscoverText which proved viable as it allowed me to rent access to my data payload at an affordable cost for a limited amount of time. In this way, I feel quite lucky to have been able to complete this project because through my research in Twitter data acquisition, I discovered that many other researchers said they abandoned research projects due to lack of access.

With that said, however, the business model of the individual or group monthly user license with DiscoverText has come offline and all access to projects under these licenses have been revoked. They now only offer institutional, self-hosted, yearly and perpetual bulk user

licenses with mandatory service and training agreements, citing sustainability issues. This proved to be a limitation as I approached the end of my project as I was no longer able to access my comprehensive payload, or any of the smaller datasets I had not yet exported. Moreover, I was no longer able to utilize their management and analysis tools, limiting my capacity to return to exploring particular aspects of this project if necessary. Most regrettably, it greatly limits my capacity to explore other avenues of research connected to the comprehensive dataset, as all I have possession of are the datasets I exported necessary to complete this project. I am unable to revisit the comprehensive dataset to apply new analytic or thematic lens for further discovery.

Another limitation of this project is the small sample size I utilized for completion. At well over 300,000 tweets, the payload was simply too large for a single researcher to manage. While I took steps to ensure that I did not compromise the integrity of the data output and thus my project, at just over 5,200 tweets examined, I cannot claim this dataset is representative of the entire payload. Also, I chose to examine English only tweets, pulling tweets from 57% of the comprehensive payload, meaning 43% of the comprehensive payload went unexamined altogether. This project cannot claim to have explored the dataset containing mostly Arabic language tweets, and thus is limited to the English language only perspective and the correlating English language ideological assumptions. Despite these challenges this research project made significant progress in our understanding of persuasion, performance, and transference on social media in social protest.

Future Research

The avenues for future research return to the limitations of the project itself. At a cost, access to the overall comprehensive payload would become available. It would then become possible to examine more tweets within the lens of this research project either by myself as an

individual researcher with more time to continue this research, or through the use of a research team, an aspect of human and machine learning for which DiscoverText is particularly adept. Exploring the Arabic language tweets in the dataset would be an exciting cultural and linguistic endeavor as it would add depth to this project in these areas. It would be especially interesting to see what codes emerged from this aspect of the data and how it compares to my own findings.

As Big Data is by nature, generally big in its payload, it provides fertile research grounds for rich and meaningful analyses for many thematic and theoretic lens'. Research in Big Data thereby lends itself towards multidisciplinary approaches, encouraging cross disciplinary projects which RWS scholarship is particular well-suited. Returning to the area of Implications of this Study, among the most exciting aspects of exploring Big Data and contemporary technologies is that studies are new and methods evolving. While challenging, developing theories is trailblazing work, serving to expand upon the ways RWS, Big Data, and Twitter should be theorized upon alongside the creation of new methods necessary to press forward in meaningful ways to meet the needs of the contemporary scholarship.

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Vita

Audrey Fay Cisneros was born in El Paso, Texas. The first child of Jose Luis Cisneros and Maria Beatriz Cisneros, she graduated from Del Valle High School, El Paso, Texas, in the spring of 2000. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science degree and Master of Rhetoric and Composition from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2010 and 2012, respectively. In the fall of 2011, she entered the English Rhetoric and Composition Doctoral Program at The University of Texas at El Paso. While pursuing her degree, she worked as an assistant instructor for the Department of English. She has served as a Research Assistant and Grant Coordinator for a large scale multidisciplinary study under the direction of Dr. Ambler. She served as the Assistant Director of First Year Composition and as a Graduate Assistant for the PUENTES Program with the UTEP Graduate School. She was an invited participant in the Versatile PhD Seminar, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. She has received numerous grants during her tenure at UTEP, to include: the Literacy Course Enhancement Grant, The Strauss Fellowship Grant, and several Dissertation Research Awards to name a few. Finally, she is a Dissertation Completion Award Fellow. Her dissertation, *Microlevel Movements Matter: Persuasion, Identity Performance, Performative Agency, and Resistance in Egypt on Twitter During the Egyptian Arab Spring*, was supervised by Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf.

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